

Nostalgia Promotes Parents' Tradition Transfer to Children by Strengthening Parent-Child Relationship Closeness

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Abstract

Parental tradition transfer to children is pivotal for their socialization, identity formation, and culture perpetuation. But what motivates parents to transfer traditions to their children? We hypothesized that nostalgia, an emotion strengthening interpersonal bonds, would promote tradition transfer through parent-child relationship closeness. We tested these hypotheses using cross-sectional (Studies 1 and 4), cross-lagged (Study 2 and preregistered Study 5), and experimental (Studies 3 and 6) designs. In Studies 1 to 3, nostalgia was associated with, had lagged effect on, and promoted tradition transfer. In Studies 4–6, parent-child relationship closeness mediated the link between nostalgia and tradition transfer. The findings enrich our understanding of the vertical transmission of knowledge, customs, and values, offering insight into how intergenerational bonds are reinforced and cultural heritage is maintained.

Keywords

nostalgia, tradition transfer, parent-child relationship, relationship closeness

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The transfer of tradition—beliefs and rituals originating and performed in the past (Shils, 1981)—from parents to their children is common in human society (Legare, 2019). Regaling children with the origins of customs, getting them involved in time-honored activities, and taking them to visit places with historical, cultural, or religious significance are all tradition transfer examples through which parents share beliefs, habits, and rituals with their offspring. Tradition transfer plays a key role in children's socialization, identity formation, and culture maintenance (Legare, 2019; Tonkinson, 2013). However, the pertinent literature has been mostly confined to anthropology, history, folklore, and zoology. Little empirical work has probed the psychological processes that motivate parents to transfer tradition to children. Such work would advance understanding of the dynamics and drivers of intergenerational tradition transfer.

Why might some parents be more inclined to invest in tradition transfer than others? Primary reasons might be their closeness with the children and their emotional affinity with the past—specifically, the meaning, value, and sense of connection they derive from attempts to make the past live on through the present and into the future. These notions are directly relevant to nostalgia, a past-oriented and social emotion, defined as “a sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past” (*The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, 1998,

p. 1266). We propose that nostalgia predisposes parents to transfer tradition to their children and that parent-child relationship closeness mediates this effect. We tested these ideas in six studies, using complementary methods and levels of analysis.

Tradition Transfer

Tradition transfer is common in nature and carries evolutionary significance. It has been observed in many species, from dolphins to chimpanzees (Whiten, 2021). It operates through the offspring's capacity for social learning and, on the population level, allows for faster adaptation than genetic change (Whiten et al., 2007). Tradition transfer in humans involves the extensive accumulation of knowledge over generations (Dean et al., 2012), which has adaptive utility. For example,

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funerary ceremonies help relieve grief (Bosley & Cook, 1994), and celebrating collectively experienced transitions, such as the start of a new year, strengthens social connections (Zamani-Farahani et al., 2019). Moreover, tradition transfer comprises the passage of social norms, conventions, and habits (Tonkinson, 2013), facilitating children's cultural learning. In all, intergenerational tradition transfer equips younger generations with the knowledge that helps them adapt to societies and cope with future challenges.

By being exposed to and learning to partake in traditions, children may experience a sense of generational continuity, a connection with a lineage of prior tradition possessors (Shils, 1981). Indeed, engagement in long-established festivals fosters a sense of place, civic pride, and cohesion among children (Pasya et al., 2016). Consequently, passing on traditions to them might help consolidate their group identity and belonging. These processes have advantages for society as well, aiding social cohesion and the perpetuation of cultural (e.g., national, ethnic, and religious) values (Liao & Dai, 2020; Pasya et al., 2016).

To summarize, tradition transfer is widespread and serves important functions. Yet, an empirical understanding of the psychological processes that drive intergenerational tradition transfer is lacking. We aimed to fill this knowledge gap by examining how nostalgia might facilitate the transfer of traditions.

Nostalgia and Tradition Transfer

Nostalgia is pervasive across lifespans and cultures (Hepper et al., 2014, 2021). It is primarily a positive emotion tinged with yearning, usually experienced when people reflect on personally defining memories, particularly those shared with close others (Hepper et al., 2012). Nostalgia entails self-oriented (e.g., optimism and inspiration), social (e.g., helpfulness), and existential (e.g., meaning) benefits (Sedikides et al., 2015).

Nostalgic narratives typically refer to significant events from one's life that are shared with close others (Wildschut et al., 2006). A prototype analysis revealed that "social relationships," "childhood/youth," and "wanting to return to the past" are central features of the construct nostalgia (Hepper et al., 2012, 2014), suggesting that past and sociality are defining properties of this emotion. When one feels nostalgic, they may think of their past fondly, longingly, and warmly (Sedikides et al., 2015), and thus regard traditions as more relevant or meaningful. For example, when parents nostalgize about traditional celebrations they experienced in their family as a child, they may come to appreciate the relevance of family tradition and nurture it by spending more time with their own children. Put otherwise, nostalgic parents might place a premium on tradition and be willing, more than less nostalgic parents, to engage in tradition transfer behaviors with their children.

Experimental analyses of nostalgia, typically conducted in samples of adults, are consistent with this conjecture. Nostalgia infuses the individual with sociality (Sedikides & Wildschut, 2019). For example, nostalgic (vs. control) participants feel connected to close others, protected, supported, and loved (Juhl & Biskas, 2023). They also feel more securely attached and interpersonally competent (Juhl et al., 2021; Wildschut et al., 2006). So, when nostalgizing, one might recall days they spent with their family, feel connected to loved ones, and feel more competent in initiating interactions. Nostalgizing parents, then, might be willing to initiate joint activities with their children, including activities of which they have fond memories, and thus transfer traditions to them.

In summary, nostalgizing likely conduces to appreciating tradition and taking steps to continue it. When feeling nostalgic, one may view tradition more favorably and wish to transfer it to their kin. One may be eager to engage in joint activities with their children and wish to relay their own beliefs, values, and customs to them, ensuring continuation. Therefore, we hypothesized that nostalgia is positively associated with, and promotes, the transfer of tradition in the form of both attitudes and behaviors.

Parent-Child Relationship Closeness as a Mediator

How does nostalgia promote tradition transfer? We propose that parent-child relationship closeness mediates the link between nostalgia and tradition transfer. Nostalgia is positively associated with relationship closeness. At the trait level, nostalgia is positively linked to relational collectivism (emphasizing one's connection with close others or small social networks; Abakoumkin et al., 2020), group collectivism (emphasizing one's connection with larger groups or abstract categories; Abakoumkin et al., 2020), and collective effervescence (strong and often transcendent bonding with members of an assembly; Naidu et al., 2023). Furthermore, experimentally induced nostalgia strengthens relationship closeness. For example, romantic nostalgia (nostalgic for past experiences shared with one's romantic partner) enhances relationship closeness, optimism about the relationship, and satisfaction with one's romantic partner (Evans et al., 2022). That nostalgia galvanizes ties with people vital to one's nostalgic memories might extend to parent-child relationships. When parents recall a nostalgic event experienced with their children, they might feel closer to them.

The relevance of nostalgia for relationship closeness is not confined to a specific person in one's memories but can spill over to the entire group. For example, nostalgizing about an encounter with an overweight person, a mentally ill individual, or an older adult buttresses one's closeness with the group "overweight," "mentally ill," or "older adults," respectively (Turner et al., 2012, 2013, 2018). Thus, when

parents recall a nostalgic event shared with a family member (a recurrent theme of nostalgic memories; Hepper et al., 2012; Wildschut et al., 2006), they might feel more connected to their family as a whole. Consequently, they will feel closer to their children. Also, when parents look back upon their childhood (also a recurrent theme of nostalgic memories; Hepper et al., 2012; Wildschut et al., 2006), they might relive the time and re-experience the feelings they had when they were children themselves. Consequently, they will feel closer to their own children.

Parent-child relationship closeness could subsequently promote parents' attitudes toward transferring traditions. Relationship closeness entails two core facets: feeling close and behaving closely (Aron et al., 1992). Feeling close refers to emotional and attitudinal proximity, such as care, trust, and enjoyment of others' company (Aron et al., 1992). When feeling strongly connected to their children, parents might perceive greater responsibility for them, and therefore feel compelled to transfer cultural and family traditions to them. Also, when feeling closer to children, parents might experience increased trust in them and thus be more willing to share personal memories and values with them. Behaving closely refers to behavioral interactions, such as spending time together or engaging in joint activities (Aron et al., 1992). When feeling closer to children, parents might be more willing to spend time with them, which is a precondition for tradition transfer. Taken together, when closely connected to their children, parents may be more willing to share values, memories, feelings, and time with them, hoping that the children acquire the same meaningful memories and experiences. Hence, parents may be more willing to re-experience traditions with their children and transfer traditions to them.

Taken together, nostalgia is likely to facilitate parent-child relationship closeness, and higher parent-child relationship closeness is likely associated with stronger tradition transfer. We hypothesized that parent-child relationship closeness mediates the link between nostalgia and tradition transfer (i.e., attitudes, behaviors).

Overview

We tested our hypotheses in six studies involving Chinese and British participants. In the first three studies, we examined the link between nostalgia and tradition transfer. In cross-sectional Study 1, we assessed parents' nostalgia and attitudes toward tradition transfer (i.e., tradition transfer attitudes) as an initial test of the association between these constructs. In two-wave longitudinal Study 2, we used standard cross-lagged panel models (CLPMs) to establish the directional association between parents' nostalgia and tradition transfer attitudes. In experimental Study 3, we manipulated nostalgia, providing causal evidence for our hypothesis. In the last three studies, we addressed the underlying mechanism. In cross-sectional Study 4, we examined whether parent-child relationship closeness mediates the link between

nostalgia and tradition transfer attitudes. In three-wave longitudinal Study 5, we used CLPMs to test the association among nostalgia, parent-child relationship closeness, and tradition transfer attitudes. Finally, in experimental Study 6, we re-examined the effect of nostalgia on tradition transfer and the mediating role of parent-child relationship closeness. In Studies 2 and 5, we additionally tested whether nostalgia prospectively predicts parents' tradition transfer behaviors, further aiming to substantiate the link between nostalgia and tradition transfer. We preregistered Study 5 at https://aspredicted.org/TWX_QPS. We deposited data, materials, and preregistration on OSF (https://osf.io/v35ym/?view_only=fd3a5aff214c4543a1597d9f88798d54).

Study 1

Study 1, conducted with Chinese participants, constituted a preliminary test of the hypothesis that nostalgia is positively associated with tradition transfer attitudes. We assessed specific and general tradition transfer attitudes, for generalizability purposes.

Method

Participants. Aiming for $N = 250$ (Schönbrodt & Perugini, 2013), we recruited on the online platform Credamo 262 Chinese parents with at least one child aged 2 to 7 years.¹ We excluded 17 participants for failing the attention check. The final sample comprised 245 parents (123 mothers; 122 fathers; $M_{\text{age}} = 31.39$ years, $SD_{\text{age}} = 4.33$ years). A sensitivity analysis (G*Power 3.1; Faul et al., 2007) revealed that this sample enabled us to detect effects of $r = .18$ or larger at 80% power and .05 alpha level. Considering that our sample size was slightly smaller than recommended, we re-examined the cross-sectional association among variables in Studies 2, 4, and 5, and conducted a single-paper meta-analysis on the link between nostalgia and tradition transfer.

Materials and Procedure

Nostalgia. We assessed nostalgia with two scales, for convergent validity reasons (Campbell & Fiske, 1959), as per previous practice (Stephan et al., 2014; Zhou et al., 2008). The Nostalgia Prototype Scale (NPS; Cheung et al., 2017), administered first, comprises five statements (e.g., "I bring to mind rose-tinted memories") that incorporate central, cross-cultural features of the nostalgia prototype (Hepper et al., 2014). Participants rated each statement on frequency ($1 = I$ do this rarely, $7 = I$ do this very often) and importance ($1 = This$ is not important to me, $7 = This$ is very important to me). We averaged the 10 responses (5 statements \times 2 ratings) to form a composite ($M = 5.73$, $SD = 0.90$, $\alpha = .90$). The Southampton Nostalgia Scale (SNS; Sedikides et al., 2015) comprises seven items. Four measure propensity to nostalgize (e.g., How prone are you to feeling nostalgic?"; $1 = not$ at all, $7 = very$ much) or frequency of nostalgizing

(e.g., “Generally speaking, how often do you bring to mind nostalgic experiences?”; 1 = *very rarely*, 7 = *very frequently*). The other three items measure whether participants find nostalgia important, valuable, and significant (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). We averaged responses to create a composite ($M = 5.40$, $SD = 0.83$, $\alpha = .83$).

Tradition Transfer Attitudes. First, we measured specific attitudes with four items, each referring to a well-entrenched Chinese festival. For each festival, parents completed a bipolar scale on preference for a modern versus traditional activity. In the context of the Dragon Boat Festival, for example, one scale endpoint was labeled “go to the amusement park with my child and enjoy a good time” (*modern activity* = 1), whereas the other endpoint was labeled “watch or participate in the Dragon Boat Race with my child, allowing the child to experience the culture of traditional Chinese festivals” (*traditional activity* = 7; $M = 5.93$, $SD = 1.09$, $\alpha = .66$). Subsequently, we measured general attitudes, also with four items, on a unipolar scale (e.g., “I would celebrate traditional festivals with my child every year”; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 9 = *strongly agree*; $M = 8.02$, $SD = 1.10$, $\alpha = .88$).

Results and Discussion

The two nostalgia scales were highly positively correlated, $r(243) = .63$, $p < .001$, and yielded similar results. For brevity, we describe only analyses involving the NPS, and present analyses involving the SNS in Supplemental Materials.

We computed zero-order correlations between nostalgia and each indicator of tradition transfer attitudes (i.e., specific and general). Nostalgia was positively associated with both specific, $r(243) = .36$, $p < .001$, and general, $r(243) = .39$, $p < .001$, tradition transfer attitudes. Parents’ nostalgia was positively associated with both specific and general tradition transfer attitudes, in support of our hypothesis.

Study 2

In Study 2, conducted with Chinese participants, we employed a two-wave cross-lagged design to test the directional association between nostalgia and tradition transfer attitudes. We also measured tradition transfer behaviors, further probing the relation between nostalgia and tradition transfer.

Method

Participants. We enlisted the help of a local kindergarten in Beijing. A sample of 907 parents (670 mothers, 237 fathers; $M_{\text{age}} = 35.58$ years, $SD_{\text{age}} = 4.39$ years, 2 undisclosed) completed the questionnaire 17 days before the Chinese New Year (T1). They all had at least one child, 2 to 7 years old.

On the fifth day of the new year (T2), we asked participants to fill out the questionnaire again. A total of 598 parents (450 mothers, 148 fathers; $M_{\text{age}} = 35.66$ years, $SD_{\text{age}} = 4.24$ years) completed both questionnaires.

Materials and Procedures. We conducted this study in the context of the Chinese Spring Festival, the most popular festival in China, during which family members celebrate the Lunar New Year. Celebrations usually commence on the evening preceding Chinese New Year (i.e., the first day of the lunar calendar) and last until the Lantern Festival, held on the 15th day of the lunar calendar. At T1, 17 days before the new year, we assessed parents’ nostalgia and tradition transfer attitudes. At T2, the fifth day of the new year, we re-assessed parents’ nostalgia and tradition transfer attitudes and assessed the tradition transfer behaviors in which parents engaged during the festival. Thus, the interval between the two waves was approximately 3 weeks. We opted to examine the role of nostalgia for tradition transfer over a brief interval in response to calls for shortitudinal research (i.e., panel designs with short time lags; Dormann & Griffin, 2015). We chose a 3-week interval to allow sufficient time for nostalgia to manifest its influence while minimizing the role of confounding variables such as family or work-related changes.

Nostalgia. We administered the NPS and SNS at T1 and T2. Items were preceded by the stem “In general, . . .” (NPS: $M_{T1} = 4.56$, $SD_{T1} = 1.13$, $\alpha_{T1} = .95$; $M_{T2} = 4.55$, $SD_{T2} = 1.12$, $\alpha_{T2} = .96$; SNS: $M_{T1} = 4.18$, $SD_{T1} = 1.14$, $\alpha_{T1} = .93$; $M_{T2} = 4.29$, $SD_{T2} = 1.07$, $\alpha_{T2} = .94$).

Tradition Transfer Attitudes. Given that the results on specific and general tradition transfer attitudes were similar in Study 1, we only measured general tradition transfer attitudes in subsequent studies, for simplicity. We administered the same scale as in Study 1, with two modifications. We altered the response options from 9-point to 7-point, as per feedback from exit interviews. Also, we converted the item “I would celebrate traditional festivals with my child every year” into two items to assess attitudes toward more diverse forms of tradition transfer. The items were: “I would love to spend time taking my child to experience traditions and culture” and “I would love to spend time telling my child stories and origins of traditions” (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*; $M_{T1} = 6.14$, $SD_{T1} = 0.77$, $\alpha_{T1} = .90$; $M_{T2} = 5.99$, $SD_{T2} = 0.83$, $\alpha_{T2} = .93$).

Tradition Transfer Behaviors. We assessed tradition transfer behaviors with five items. They reflected the time parents spent in tradition transfer behaviors during the Spring Festival (e.g., “having my child engage in making traditional food, e.g., dumplings”; 0 = *not at all*, 100 = *very much*; $M = 50.97$, $SD = 25.87$, $\alpha = .91$).

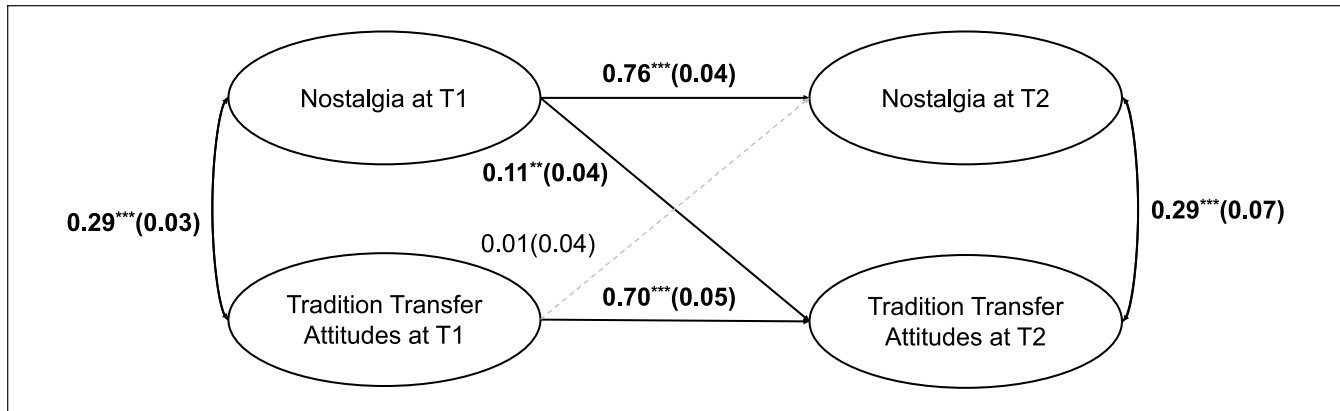


Figure 1. Standard Cross-Lagged Model in Study 2.

Note. Unstandardized coefficient and SE are displayed; gray dashed lines represent the nonsignificant paths.

** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Results and Discussion

Responses to the two nostalgia scales were highly positively correlated (T1: $r[905] = .75, p < .001$; T2: $r[596] = .83, p < .001$) and yielded similar results. We present results on the NPS only (see Supplemental Materials for SNS results).

We computed zero-order correlations between nostalgia, tradition transfer attitudes, and tradition transfer behaviors. Nostalgia at T1 was positively related to tradition transfer attitudes at T1, $r(905) = .30, p < .001$, and tradition transfer attitudes at T2, $r(596) = .30, p < .001$. Furthermore, T1 nostalgia was positively linked to T2 tradition transfer behaviors, $r(596) = .26, p < .001$. As hypothesized, nostalgia was cross-sectionally associated with tradition transfer attitudes, and was longitudinally associated with tradition transfer attitudes and behaviors.

Next, we examined the prospective associations between nostalgia and tradition transfer attitudes. We proceeded with structural equation modeling to test two-wave standard CLPMs, which examine the prospective effect of individual differences in one variable on the change in individual differences in the other variable (i.e., at the between-person level; Orth et al., 2021), using lavaan version 0.6-12 (Rosseel, 2012) in R version 4.2.1. To begin, we tested the measurement invariance across waves, a prerequisite for conducting cross-lagged analyses (Mackinnon et al., 2022). After establishing a baseline model requiring that the same factor structure applies across waves, we compared it with progressively more constrained models: (a) the metric model, including equality of factor loadings, (b) the scalar model, further including equality of manifest variable intercepts, and (c) the residual model, further including equality of manifest variable error terms. If the constrained models did not fit significantly worse, our measurements met the requirement of the corresponding measurement invariance (metric model: weak invariance; scalar model: strong invariance; residual model:

strict invariance).² We took a decrease in the comparative fit index (CFI) of more than 0.01 as the criterion of a significant decrease in model fit (Lindwall et al., 2011). Based on CFI, the scalar model did not fit significantly worse than the baseline model, whereas the residual model did fit significantly worse than the baseline model. Thus, our measures satisfied the prerequisite for interpreting cross-lagged results; that is, they exceeded the requirement of at least weak measurement invariance (Mackinnon et al., 2022).

We retained the structural constraints of the scalar model, implemented nostalgia and tradition transfer attitudes as latent variables, and tested the full cross-lagged model, $\chi^2(409) = 1,298.11$, Robust CFI = .941, Robust Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = .937, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .049, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .108 (Figure 1). The autoregressive paths for both nostalgia ($b = 0.76$, standard error [SE] = 0.04, $p < .001$) and tradition transfer attitudes ($b = 0.70$, SE = 0.05, $p < .001$) were significant, which also indicated that constructs were stable over the two waves. The path from T1 nostalgia to T2 tradition transfer attitudes was significant, $b = 0.11$, SE = 0.04, $p = .004$. However, the path from T1 tradition transfer attitudes to T2 nostalgia was not significant, $b = 0.01$, SE = 0.04, $p = .89$. Hence, after controlling for autoregressive effects, the nostalgia before the festival prospectively predicted tradition transfer attitudes during the festival, but tradition transfer attitudes before the festival did not prospectively predict nostalgia during the festival, consistent with our theoretical framework.

Parents' nostalgia was positively associated with tradition transfer attitudes, in replication of Study 1, and later tradition transfer behaviors. Moreover, nostalgia predicted tradition transfer attitudes over time, but tradition transfer attitudes did not predict nostalgia over time. Nostalgia conduced to tradition transfer attitudes, but the reverse pattern did not hold.

Study 3

Studies 1 and 2 documented the positive association between nostalgia and tradition transfer. However, these studies were correlational. In Study 3, we adopted an experimental design to examine the putative causal effect of nostalgia on tradition transfer. We tested U.K. participants for generalizability purposes.

Method

Participants. We needed 352 participants to detect a small-to-medium effect size ($d = 0.3$) with a power of .80 ($\alpha = .05$; G*Power; Faul et al., 2007). We recruited on Prolific 389 U.K. parents who had at least one child aged 2 to 7 years and randomly assigned them to conditions. We excluded four participants for failing the attention check. The final sample comprised 385 parents (262 mothers, 123 fathers; $M_{\text{age}} = 35.17$ years, $SD_{\text{age}} = 4.60$ years, 1 undisclosed; nostalgia condition $n = 190$, control condition $n = 195$).

Materials and Procedure

Nostalgia Manipulation. We manipulated nostalgia with the event reflection task (Sedikides et al., 2015), randomly assigning participants to reflect on either a nostalgic or an ordinary event from their past. Next, all participants listed four keywords summarizing the event and described it in writing.

Tradition Transfer Attitudes. Participants indicated whether they would engage in four tradition transfer activities: traditional songs, stories, cultural values and etiquette, and family history (e.g., “tell my children legends and folk stories, e.g., Robin Hood, Boudicca, Florence Nightingale”; 1 = *definitely not*, 7 = *definitely yes*; $M = 4.96$, $SD = 1.48$, $\alpha = .83$). We developed this measure on the basis of research into UK traditional customs and interviews with British people.

Nostalgia Manipulation Check. Finally, participants completed a three-item nostalgia manipulation check (e.g., “Right now, I am feeling quite nostalgic”; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*; Wildschut et al., 2006; $M = 4.53$, $SD = 1.80$, $\alpha = .99$).

Results and Discussion

Participants in the nostalgia condition ($M = 5.35$, $SD = 1.34$) felt more nostalgic than controls ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.84$), $t(354.14) = 9.85$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.00$, 95% confidence interval (CI) [0.80, 1.20]. The manipulation was effective. Furthermore, nostalgic parents ($M = 5.17$, $SD = 1.41$) were more likely to engage in tradition transfer activities than controls ($M = 4.76$, $SD = 1.52$), $t(383) = 2.70$, $p = .007$, $d = 0.28$, 95% CI [0.07, 0.48].

Study 4

In Study 4, conducted with Chinese participants, we tested whether parent-child relationship closeness mediates the link between nostalgia and tradition transfer attitudes.

Method

Participants. Aiming for $N = 250$, and hedging against attrition, we recruited 290 parents with at least one child 2 to 7 years old. Parents completed the study via Credamo 3 days before the Dragon Boat Festival. Twenty-one parents failed the attention check, yielding a final $N = 269$ (162 mothers, 107 fathers; $M_{\text{age}} = 31.28$ years, $SD_{\text{age}} = 3.31$ years).

Materials and Procedure. We conducted this study in the context of the Chinese Dragon Boat Festival, one of the four most popular traditional festivals. It commemorates the death of Qu Yuan (c. 340 BC–278 BC), a poet and politician of the State of Chu, who is said to have patriotically drowned himself in a river when his state fell to enemy forces. We assessed, 3 days before the festival’s commencement, parents’ nostalgia, tradition transfer attitudes pertaining to the festival, and parent-child relationship closeness.

Nostalgia. We administered the NPS and SNS (NPS: $M = 5.76$, $SD = 0.73$, $\alpha = .89$; SNS: $M = 5.44$, $SD = 0.78$, $\alpha = .86$).

Tradition Transfer Attitudes. We administered the general tradition transfer attitudes measure of Study 1 but converted it to a seven-point response option ($M = 6.28$, $SD = 0.63$, $\alpha = .84$).

Parent-Child Relationship Closeness. We slightly modified the Inclusion of Other in the Self (IOS) Scale (Aron et al., 1992) to assess parent-child relationship closeness. The modified IOS Scale depicts seven pairs of circles that vary in degree of overlap. The left-hand circle in each pair represents “self,” the right-hand circle “child.” Participants indicated which pair of circles “best describes your relationship with your children.” If participants selected the pair that were furthest apart, they received a score of 1, and, if they selected the pair with the greatest overlap, they received a score of 7, with the remaining pairs receiving the ordered scores in between ($M = 5.83$, $SD = 1.20$). The scores distribution was negatively skewed (skewness = -1.02 , $SE = 0.15$). Thus, we applied an exponential transformation (skewness = 0.32 , $SE = 0.15$). Given that the original and transformed scores yielded similar results, we report results based on the original scores here and those based on the transformed scores in Supplemental Materials.

Results and Discussion

Responses to the two nostalgia scales were highly positively correlated, $r(267) = .79$, $p < .001$, and yielded similar

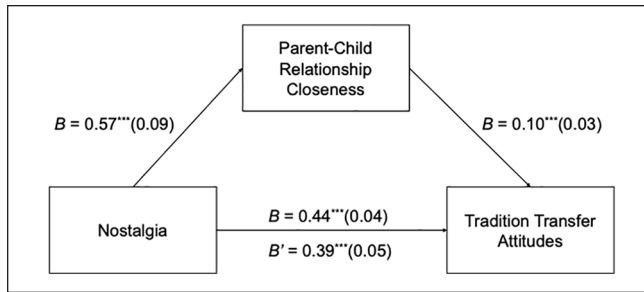


Figure 2. Parent-Child Relationship Closeness Mediates the Association Between Nostalgia and Tradition Transfer Attitudes in Study 4.

Note. Unstandardized coefficient and SE are displayed.

*** $p < .001$.

results. We report the NPS results here and the SNS results in Supplemental Materials.

Nostalgia was positively related to tradition transfer attitudes, $r(267) = .52$, $p < .001$, replicating previous findings. Next, we tested whether parent-child relationship closeness mediated the relation between nostalgia and tradition transfer. First, we entered nostalgia as independent variable, parent-child relationship closeness as mediator, and tradition transfer attitudes as dependent variable (Hayes, 2017; PROCESS 4.1; 5,000 iterations). The direct effect was significant, $b = 0.39$, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI = [0.29, 0.48], and so was the indirect effect, $b = 0.06$, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI = [0.01, 0.11] (Figure 2). Parent-child relationship closeness mediated the link between nostalgia and tradition transfer attitudes.

Nostalgia, as before, was positively associated with tradition transfer attitudes. Moreover, as hypothesized, parent-child relationship closeness mediated the relation between nostalgia and tradition transfer attitudes.

Study 5

Using a three-wave longitudinal study, we aimed in preregistered Study 5 (conducted with Chinese participants) to examine more thoroughly the directional links among nostalgia, parent-child relationship closeness, and tradition transfer attitudes, and to examine directly the mediational role of parent-child relationship closeness. We conducted this study during the Dragon Boat Festival—same as in Study 4, but in a different year. We assessed parent-child relationship closeness, along with nostalgia and tradition transfer attitudes, at all three waves. We also assessed tradition transfer behaviors enacted by parents during the festival in a further test of the link between nostalgia and tradition transfer.

Method

Participants. We enlisted the help of a kindergarten in Heilongjiang Province, China. A sample of 451 parents (387 mothers, 64 fathers; $M_{\text{age}} = 36.04$ years, $SD_{\text{age}} = 4.31$ years,

2 undisclosed), who had at least one child 2–7 years old, completed the questionnaire 27 days before the festival’s commencement (T1).

Thirteen days before the festival (T2), 365 parents (318 mothers, 47 fathers; $M_{\text{age}} = 35.99$ years, $SD_{\text{age}} = 4.45$ years, 2 undisclosed) who had participated in T1 completed the T2 measure. One day after the festival, 335 parents (297 mothers, 38 fathers; $M_{\text{age}} = 36.26$ years, $SD_{\text{age}} = 4.36$ years, 4 undisclosed) who had participated in T1 completed the T3 measure. The intervals between waves were 2 weeks. Our choice of brief intervals was driven by the same reasons as in Study 2 (Dormann & Griffin, 2015). Yet, we chose a slightly different time lag (i.e., 2 instead of 3 weeks), for generalizability. We used full information maximum likelihood estimation to address missing values at T2 and T3.

In our preregistration, we planned to exclude participants who failed the attention check (“Please choose 1 = strongly disagree”). Nearly one-third (145/451) of T1 participants failed it. An exit interview revealed that participants found it confusing and answered randomly. Considering that they answered other questions attentively, and we spotted no irregularities in their responses, we made an a priori decision to include all participants in the analyses. (For a similar issue, see Silber et al., 2022.) Analyses that excluded participants who failed the attention check at T1 yielded similar results (Supplemental Materials).

Materials and Procedures. We assessed nostalgia, parent-child relationship closeness, and tradition transfer attitudes at T1, T2, and T3. We also assessed tradition transfer behaviors at T3.

Nostalgia. We administered the NPS, with items preceded by the stem “In general, . . .” ($M_{T1} = 4.92$, $SD_{T1} = 1.38$, $\alpha_{T1} = .97$; $M_{T2} = 5.00$, $SD_{T2} = 1.36$, $\alpha_{T2} = .98$; $M_{T3} = 4.89$, $SD_{T3} = 1.38$, $\alpha_{T3} = .99$). Likewise, we administered the SNS with items preceded by the stem “In general, I feel . . .” ($M_{T1} = 4.51$, $SD_{T1} = 1.37$, $\alpha_{T1} = .94$; $M_{T2} = 4.59$, $SD_{T2} = 1.36$, $\alpha_{T2} = .95$; $M_{T3} = 4.60$, $SD_{T3} = 1.34$, $\alpha_{T3} = .95$).

Tradition Transfer Attitudes. We administered the same scale as in Study 2 ($\alpha_{T1} = .94$, $\alpha_{T2} = .96$, $\alpha_{T3} = .96$).

Tradition Transfer Behaviors. We assessed this construct with four items that reflected the time parents spent on tradition transfer behaviors during the festival. A sample item is: “Telling children stories behind the Dragon Boat Festival, e.g., stories about Yuan Qu, the famous poet” (1 = *not at all*, 100 = *very much*; $\alpha = .94$).³

Parent-Child Relationship Closeness. Given that the IOS was negatively skewed, we used both the IOS and the 4-item parent-child relationship closeness scale (adapted from Lockwood et al., 2004; sample item: “I feel very interconnected with my child”; 0 = *somewhat agree*, 100 = *strongly agree*) to assess parent-child relationship closeness. The latter scale

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations in Study 5.

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Nostalgia (T1)	4.92	1.38	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Parent-child relationship closeness (T1)	64.70	23.35	.41***	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3. Tradition transfer attitudes (T1)	6.14	1.04	.33***	.21***	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4. Nostalgia (T2)	5.00	1.36	.64***	.32***	.21***	—	—	—	—	—	—
5. Parent-child relationship closeness (T2)	62.54	24.60	.37***	.71***	.22***	.42***	—	—	—	—	—
6. Tradition transfer attitudes (T2)	6.20	1.04	.21***	.13*	.52***	.19***	.22***	—	—	—	—
7. Nostalgia (T3)	4.89	1.38	.70***	.42***	.29***	.75***	.46***	.17**	—	—	—
8. Parent-child relationship closeness (T3)	59.64	24.71	.40***	.67***	.16**	.48***	.77***	.16**	.50***	—	—
9. Tradition transfer attitudes (T3)	5.97	1.33	.16**	.06	.48***	.12*	.18**	.51***	.17**	.18**	—
10. Tradition transfer behaviors (T3)	61.75	25.10	.38***	.43***	.30***	.43***	.51***	.24***	.44***	.57***	.27***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

manifested lower skewness (T1 = -0.24 , T2 = -0.13 , T3 = -0.02) than the former (T1 = -0.66 , T2 = -0.39 , T3 = -0.28). Hence, we only report here results for the parent-child relationship closeness scale ($\alpha_{T1} = .80$, $\alpha_{T2} = .87$, $\alpha_{T3} = .89$), with IOS scale results reported in Supplemental Materials.

Results and Discussion

Responses to the two nostalgia scales were highly positively correlated; T1: $r(449) = .80$, $p < .001$; T2: $r(363) = .86$, $p < .001$; T3: $r(333) = .89$, $p < .001$, and yielded similar results. We report the NPS results here and the SNS results in Supplemental Materials.

Nostalgia and Tradition Transfer. We computed zero-order correlations among nostalgia, parent-child relationship closeness, tradition transfer attitudes, and tradition transfer behaviors (Table 1). Nostalgia at T1 was positively associated with tradition transfer attitudes at T1 $r(449) = .33$, $p < .001$, T2 $r(363) = .21$, $p < .001$, and T3 $r(333) = .16$, $p = .004$. Moreover, nostalgia at T1 positively predicted tradition transfer behaviors at T3, $r(333) = .38$, $p < .001$.

Nostalgia, Parent-Child Relationship Closeness, and Tradition Transfer Attitudes. We used CLPMs to test the associations among nostalgia, parent-child relationship closeness, and tradition transfer attitudes. First, we examined the stability of our measure. The metric model did not fit significantly worse than the baseline model, whereas the scalar model fit significantly worse than the baseline model, indicating that our measures met the requirement of weak measurement invariance. Thus, we (a) retained the structure of the metric model and (b) treated nostalgia, parent-child relationship closeness, and tradition transfer attitudes as latent variables.

We began by testing the equivalence of paths across time points. The constrained model did not significantly decrease

model fit. Therefore, we constrained all the paths to be equal across time points and ran the fully cross-lagged model, $\chi^2(1,535) = 3370.84$, Robust CFI = .925, Robust TLI = .922, RMSEA = .051, SRMR = .130. As shown in Figure 3, all of the autoregressive paths were significant, indicating the variables were relatively stable. After controlling for autoregressive effects, nostalgia prospectively predicted parent-child relationship closeness, $b = 0.12$, $p = .001$, while parent-child relationship closeness also prospectively predicted nostalgia, $b = 0.08$, $p = .019$. In addition, parent-child relationship closeness had a lagged effect on tradition transfer attitudes, $b = 0.11$, $p = .013$. The remaining paths were not significant. The indirect effect (T1 nostalgia \Rightarrow T2 parent-child relationship closeness \Rightarrow T3 tradition transfer attitudes) was significant, $b = .013$, 95% CI = [.000, .026], $p = .050$. Parent-child relationship closeness mediated the relation between nostalgia and tradition transfer attitudes.

Nostalgia, Parent-Child Relationship Closeness, and Tradition Transfer Behaviors. We tested whether parent-child relationship closeness mediates the link between nostalgia and tradition transfer behaviors. We used the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2017, Model 4; 5,000 iterations), entering T1 nostalgia as an independent variable, T2 parent-child relationship closeness as a mediator, and T3 tradition transfer behaviors as dependent variable. The direct effect was significant, $b = 4.29$, $SE = 0.95$, 95% CI = [2.42, 6.16], and so was the indirect effect, $b = 3.11$, $SE = 0.63$, 95% CI = [1.96, 4.42] (Figure 4). Parent-child relationship closeness mediated the longitudinal link between nostalgia and tradition transfer behaviors.

In summary, using diverse analytical methods, we obtained additional evidence for the directional link between nostalgia and tradition transfer, mediated by parent-child relationship closeness.

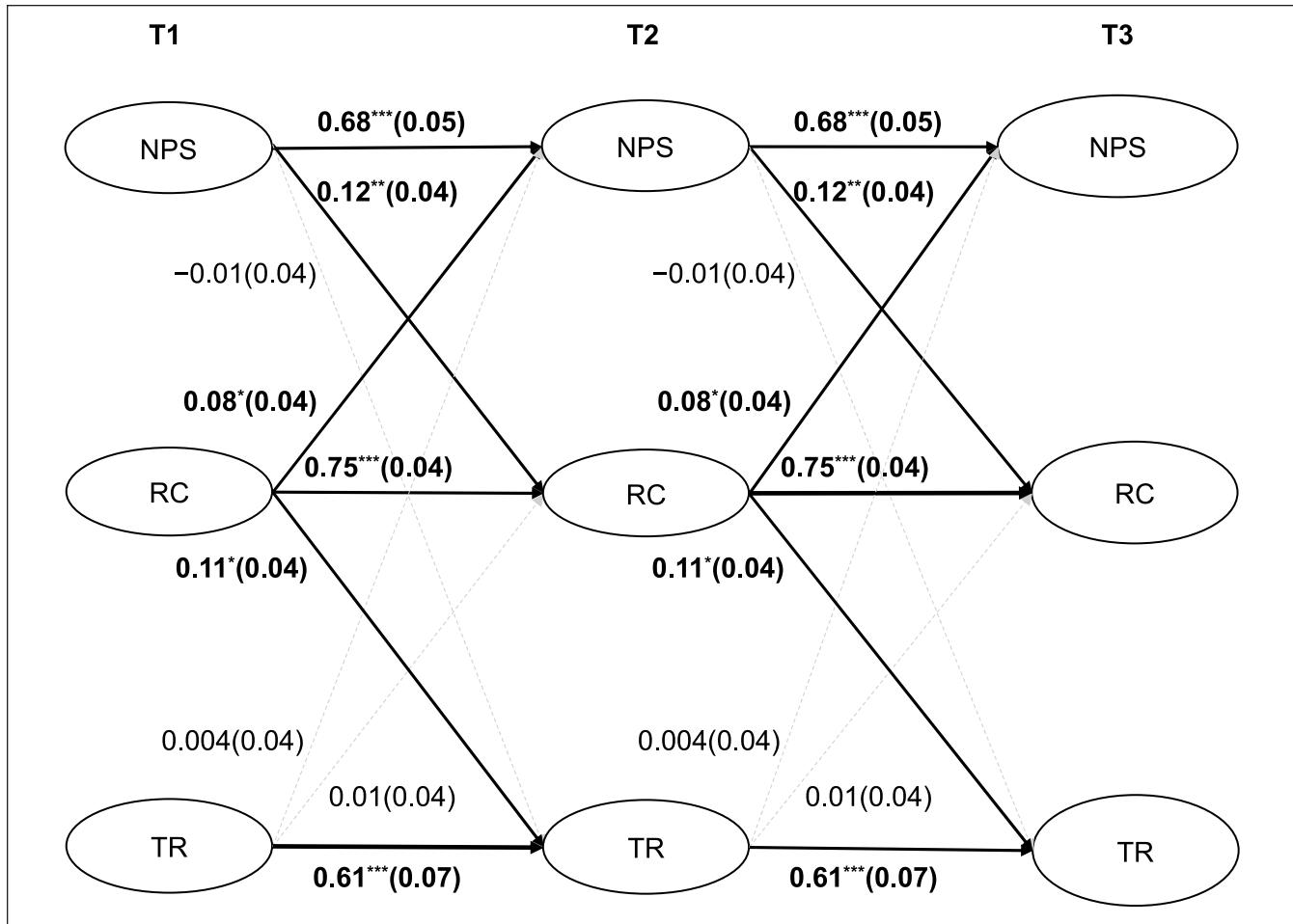


Figure 3. Standard Cross-Lagged Model in Study 5.
 Note. The CLPM depicts the longitudinal associations among nostalgia (NPS score), parent-child relationship closeness (Lockwood scale), and tradition transfer attitudes. Gray dashed lines represent the nonsignificant paths. Within-time correlations were estimated but were not shown in the figure for parsimony. Unstandardized coefficients and SE were reported. CLPM = cross-lagged panel models; NPS = latent variable of nostalgia measured by NPS; RC = latent variable of parent-child relationship closeness; TR = latent variable of tradition transfer attitudes.

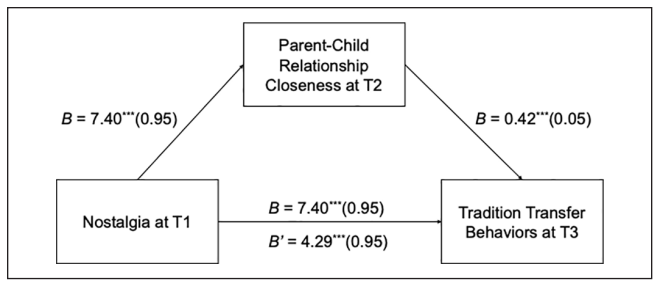


Figure 4. Parent-Child Relationship Closeness at T2 Mediates the Association Between Nostalgia at T1 and Tradition Transfer Behaviors at T3 in Study 5.
 Note. Unstandardized coefficient and SE are displayed.
 *** $p < .001$.

Study 6

In Study 6, conducted with British participants, we adopted an experimental design, examining the causal effect of nostalgia

on tradition transfer and the mediating role of parent-child relationship closeness.

Method

Participants. Similar to Study 3, we sought to recruit at least 352 participants. We recruited on Prolific 375 U.K. parents who had at least one child aged 2 to 7 years, and randomly assigned them conditions. We excluded two participants for not completing the questionnaire and four for failing the attention check. The final sample comprised 369 parents (246 mothers, 123 fathers; $M_{age} = 35.76$ years, $SD_{age} = 4.53$ years, 1 undisclosed; nostalgia condition $n = 186$, control condition $n = 183$).

Materials and Procedure

Nostalgia Manipulation. We manipulated nostalgia with music (Sedikides et al., 2022). We randomly assigned participants to listen either to a nostalgic or to a control song.

The nostalgic song, *Yesterday Once More* by The Carpenters (released in 1973), refers to the good old days and in particular to one's favorite songs from the past. It has successfully been used to evoke nostalgia (Zhang et al., 2021). The control song, *Lavender Haze* by Taylor Swift (released in 2022), refers to an “all-encompassing love glow” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lavender_Haze). We did not expect this pop love song to trigger nostalgia.

Parent-Child Relationship Closeness. We used the same parent-child relationship closeness measure as in Study 5 but made two changes to fit the state level. First, we mentioned that “parents’ feelings about their relationship with their children vary from moment to moment” and “how parents feel about their relationship with their children at one moment in time, may be different from how they usually feel.” Second, we added the stem “right now” (1 = *somewhat agree*, 100 = *strongly agree*; $M = 75.03$, $SD = 14.77$, $\alpha = .63$).

Tradition Transfer Attitudes. We relied on the tradition transfer attitudes measure of Study 3 but asked parents to indicate how much time they would like to spend on such activities (1 = *no time at all*, 7 = *a huge amount of time*; $M = 4.48$, $SD = 1.15$, $\alpha = .78$).

Nostalgia Manipulation Check. We concluded the experimental session with the same nostalgia manipulation check as in Study 3 ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 1.74$, $\alpha = .98$).

Results and Discussion

Manipulation Check. Participants in the nostalgia condition ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 1.65$) felt more nostalgic than controls ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.71$), $t(367) = 5.37$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.56$, 95% CI [0.35, 0.76]. The manipulation was effective.

Nostalgia and Tradition Transfer. Nostalgic parents ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 1.08$) reported that they would like to spend more time on tradition transfer activities than controls ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 1.21$), $t(367) = 1.98$, $p = .049$, $d = 0.21$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.41].

Nostalgia, Parent-Child Relationship Closeness, and Tradition Transfer Attitudes. Nostalgic parents ($M = 77.90$, $SD = 13.36$) reported stronger parent-child relationship closeness than controls ($M = 72.11$, $SD = 15.57$), $t(356.88) = 3.83$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.40$, 95% CI [0.19, 0.60]. We conducted a mediation analysis using the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2017, Model 4; 5,000 iterations). We entered the manipulation (0 = *control*, 1 = *nostalgia*) as independent variable, parent-child relationship closeness as mediator, and tradition transfer attitudes as dependent variable. The direct effect was not significant, $b = 0.08$, $SE = 0.12$, 95% CI = [-0.14, 0.31], but the indirect effect was significant, $b = 0.15$, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI = [0.07, 0.26] (Figure 5).

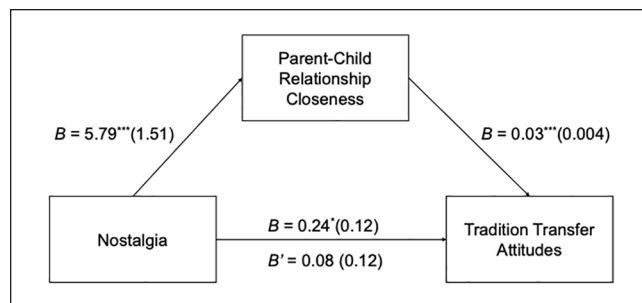


Figure 5. Parent-Child Relationship Closeness Mediates the Association Between Condition (0 = Control, 1 = Nostalgia) and Tradition Transfer Attitudes in Study 6.

Note. Unstandardized coefficient and SE are displayed.

* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

Parent-child relationship closeness mediated the effect of nostalgia on tradition transfer attitudes.

In all, experimentally induced nostalgia increased parent-child relationship closeness, which in turn enhanced parents’ willingness to spend time transferring traditions to their children.

Single-Paper Meta-Analyses

We conducted a single-paper meta-analysis to synthesize our findings (McShane & Böckenholt, 2017). Nostalgia was positively associated with tradition transfer attitudes cross-sectionally (Studies 1, 2, 4, and 5, $N = 1,872$; $Estimate = .40$, $SE = .06$, 95% CI = [.29, .52], $Z = 6.89$, $p < .001$)⁴ and longitudinally (Studies 2 and 5, $N = 963$; $Estimate = .27$, $SE = .05$, 95% CI = [.17, .36], $Z = 5.58$, $p < .001$)⁵. Also, nostalgia positively predicted later tradition transfer behaviors (Studies 2 and 5, $N = 933$; $Estimate = .33$, $SE = .07$, 95% CI = [.20, .46], $Z = 4.91$, $p < .001$). Moreover, nostalgia causally strengthened tradition transfer attitudes (Studies 3 and 6, $N = 754$; $Estimate = .25$, $SE = .07$, 95% CI = [.10, .39], $Z = 3.35$, $p < .001$). Nostalgia was positively associated with tradition transfer and promoted tradition transfer.

General Discussion

Transferring traditions to younger generations is crucial for cultural continuation (Pasya et al., 2016), contributing to societal cohesion and stability (Liao & Dai, 2020; Shils, 1981). It imbues children with a sense of identity and belonging and provides a useful context for cultural learning. What might facilitate tradition transfer? We hypothesized that nostalgia does so, and that parent-child relationship closeness mediates this link. We tested these hypotheses in six studies.

Summary of Findings

Nostalgia was positively associated with tradition transfer attitudes (Studies 1, 2, 4, and 5), had a lagged effect on

tradition transfer attitudes (Study 2), and predicted over time tradition transfer behaviors (Studies 2 and 5). In addition, experimentally induced nostalgia strengthened tradition transfer attitudes (Studies 3 and 6). Moreover, parent-child relationship closeness mediated the link between nostalgia and tradition transfer attitudes (Studies 4–6) and the association between nostalgia and tradition transfer behaviors (Study 5). By nostalgizing, parents experienced a closer bond with their children, and that bond strengthened their involvement in transferring traditions to their children.

Implications

This is the first systematic investigation into the psychological antecedents of intergenerational tradition transfer. Tradition transfer plays a crucial role in society, promoting social adaption, enhancing societal cohesion, and ensuring cultural continuation (Liao & Dai, 2020; Tonkinson, 2013). Belying its importance, research on it has been confined to anthropology, biology, history, and folklore studies, while the psychological drivers of tradition transfer have remained uncharted. Our work offers insight into the dynamics of tradition transfer from a psychological perspective. Using complementary methods, we established that nostalgia predisposes parents to celebrate time-honored festivities with their children and to engage in various tradition transfer activities (e.g., tell traditional stories and sing traditional songs) with their children, ascertaining that those traditions are preserved from one generation to the next. As such, the findings contribute to understanding the dynamics of the vertical transfer of traditions. Through nostalgia, a prevalent and fundamental emotion, parents feel a strong connection with their children and thus are prone to transfer traditions to the new generation, ensuring their continuation.

Our finding that nostalgia was positively correlated with (Study 4), had a lagged effect on (Study 5), and promoted (Study 6) parent-child relationship closeness consolidated nostalgia's function in fostering social connectedness. Nostalgia engenders feeling loved and connected to important others (Sedikides et al., 2015), cultivates secure attachment in close relationships (i.e., lower levels of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance; Wildschut et al., 2006), increases satisfaction with romantic relationships (Evans et al., 2022), and encourages the inclusion of outgroup members in the self (Turner et al., 2022). The current findings corroborate nostalgia's sociality (Juhl & Biskas, 2023), illustrating that the emotion is linked to the perceived closeness of parents with their children and suggesting its potential to foster secure parent-child attachment.

Our research also expanded the scope of the nostalgia literature. Previous work has mostly focused on nostalgia's psychological benefits for the individual, such as enhancing social functioning (Sedikides & Wildschut, 2019), imbuing life with meaning (Sedikides & Wildschut, 2018), and affording optimism or inspiration (Sedikides & Wildschut, 2016,

2020). By showing that nostalgia promotes tradition transfer from parents to children, our work suggests that nostalgia has intergenerational benefits, that is, strengthening ties between generations, which in turn, motivates parents to enhance cultural learning in their offspring.

There are many ways to think about the past (Cheung et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2021). Some include conservatism, legacy motivation, and reminiscence. We think it is unlikely that these constructs account for our findings. Nostalgia does not necessarily imply conservatism (Lammers & Baldwin, 2020; Stefaniak et al., 2021). Conservatism is characterized by believing that the past was superior to the present, whereas nostalgia draws strengths from the past to support future progress (e.g., promoting approach motivation, fostering inspiration and creativity; Sedikides & Wildschut, 2020, 2023). Also, nostalgia is distinct from legacy motivation, which is targeted toward building a legacy that will last the test of time (Sligte et al., 2013). It is not clear how festival attendance or singing traditional songs (e.g., "I'm a Little Teapot") would build a legacy. Finally, reminiscence involves recalling past experiences, but such recall does not necessarily implicate nostalgizing. Indeed, although the benefits of reminiscence are null, mixed, or negligible (O'Philbin et al., 2018; Woods et al., 2016), nostalgizing confers critical psychological benefits (Sedikides et al., 2015; Wildschut & Sedikides, 2022, 2023). Moreover, in experimental manipulations of nostalgia, reminiscing is reflected partially in the control condition where participants recall common events from their life. Finally, random assignment to conditions (Studies 3 and 6) further reduces the likelihood that conservatism, legacy motivation, or reminiscence account for the effects of nostalgia.

Our research has interventional implications. Nostalgia might be a means to improve the parent-child relationship and promote tradition transfer. The emotion could be evoked through reflection on the past, pictures, music, scents, or tastes (Reid et al., 2015, 2022; Sedikides et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2021). Prototype analyses suggested that looking back upon time spent with family and friends, recalling the time in childhood, and seeing souvenirs might precipitate nostalgia (Hepper et al., 2012, 2014). These techniques could be easily implemented in existing family intervention, and it would be worthwhile to examine their potential complementary influence in fostering relatedness and parental investment.

Limitations and Future Directions

We demonstrated that promoting parent-child relationship closeness is one probable mechanism underlying the relationship between nostalgia and tradition transfer. Future investigations could explore additional underlying mechanisms. Besides sociality, yearning for the past is a central nostalgia feature (Hepper et al., 2012). Nostalgia is probably linked to stronger tradition transfer attitudes or behaviors through preferences for past experiences (e.g., activities tied

to a tradition). A sequential mediation involving established psychological benefits of nostalgia is also possible. For example, increased parent-child relationship closeness may subsequently be linked to higher self- or intergenerational-continuity (connection between one's past and present self or between one's own past experiences and their child's current experiences; Sedikides et al., 2016) and elevated meaning in life (van Tilburg et al., 2019).

Follow-up investigations could examine a reciprocal association between parent-child relationship closeness and tradition transfer. We found that parent-child relationship closeness predicted later tradition transfer attitudes and behaviors. However, stronger tradition transfer behaviors might also have a downstream effect on relationship closeness. Recipients of traditions experience a sense of identity and continuity, referring to a connection with a lineage of prior possessors of a tradition (Shils, 1981). Thus, when parents transfer traditions to children, children might feel more connected to their parents—not only that they are cared about and worthy to be invested in, but also that they have a meaningful role in family rituals. Identity refers to embracing family members who adopt the same tradition (Shils, 1981). Therefore, after transferring traditions to children, parents might feel more connected to their children to the extent that their children experience similar traditional conventions and rituals as they did. In all, tradition transfer creates shared memories and values between parents and children, potentially building a deep and meaningful bond between them.

Not only does nostalgia promote tradition transfer, but tradition transfer may also breed nostalgia. That is, traditions are potent elicitors of nostalgia (Wang & Chen, 2022; Wildschut et al., 2018). When parents transfer traditions to their children, they may think of their own parents similarly transferring traditions to them, thus becoming nostalgic. The reciprocal relation between nostalgia and tradition transfer is worthy of empirical scrutiny.

When measuring tradition transfer, we sampled traditions that were neutral, positive, or culture-supportive. Future studies could examine whether nostalgia promotes the transfer of outdated or harmful traditions. On the one hand, nostalgia might engender a general preference for past experiences and thus might make parents willing to transfer traditions, even harmful ones. On the contrary, nostalgia usually refers to warm and happy memories (Hepper et al., 2012). Nostalgia, then, might motivate parents to transfer traditions that are linked to their fond, rewarding, and other-oriented (i.e., sociable) memories, to which they personally relate and value; such memories may not necessarily entail harmful traditions. Regardless, differentiating negative traditions from neutral or positive ones and examining the role of nostalgia in transferring them are topics worth pursuing.

In Studies 2 and 5, we used relatively short time lags (3 weeks and 2 weeks, respectively). Future investigations could employ longer time lags to extend understanding of the temporal dynamics of nostalgia's influence on tradition

transfer. We recruited parents of children aged 2–7 years old. Children this age (a) spend considerable time with their parents (i.e., more than older children and adolescents; Buhrmester & Furman, 1987), (b) begin to learn about social and cultural norms and values (Grusec & Kuczynski, 1997), and thus (c) should be amenable to traditional (and culturally meaningful) experiences and messages offered by their parents. Considering that children's age and parent-child dyads' gender composition might moderate the observed effects, we conducted exploratory analyses controlling for these two variables in Study 6. The analyses (Supplemental Materials) yielded similar results as those reported. Yet, follow-up research may address more thoroughly the relevance of these variables. Finally, our work sampled a limited range of traditions and participants from only two cultures. Future studies could sample additional traditions and cultures.

Coda

Feeling nostalgic predisposes parents to transfer tradition to their children. Perceived parent-child relationship closeness mediates this link. The present work further showcases the sociality of nostalgia by demonstrating its implications for family relations and rituals. Moreover, it provides a psychological perspective on and unveils the dynamics of intergenerational tradition transfer. If families are a cornerstone of culture and traditions, then nostalgia helps to account for their stabilizing property.

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Data Availability Statement

We conducted all reported studies according to APA ethical standards for the treatment of human subjects. We preregistered Study 5 at AsPredicted (https://aspredicted.org/TWX_QPS). Data, materials, and preregistration can be found on OSF (https://osf.io/v35ym/?view_only=fd3a5aff214c4543a1597d9f88798d54).

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Supplemental Material

Supplemental material is available online with this article.

Notes

1. Initially, we sought to recruit parents whose children were of kindergarten age—typically 3 to 6 years old. However, children's ages varied beyond our intended window. We decided in advance, in this and all studies, to include parents of children aged 2–7 years in data analyses.
2. In the NPS, each statement is rated on frequency and importance. All cross-lagged models in Studies 2 and 5 encompassed error structure. It included the covariance between error terms of the same ratings at different time points (e.g., the frequency rating of the first NPS statement at T1 and the frequency rating of the first NPS statement at T2). The error structure also included the covariance between error terms of frequency and importance ratings of each NPS statement at the same time point (e.g., the frequency rating of the first statement at T1 and the importance rating of the first statement at T1). We constrained the error term covariances to equality across waves to simplify models.
3. We also measured tradition transfer behaviors with a checklist. We instructed participants to check the tradition transfer behaviors in which they engaged during the festival. However, we realized at the study's conclusion that this measure was unfit for purpose. The measure assessed the diversity, not frequency, of tradition transfer behaviors. Thus, we only analyzed the 4-item scale.
4. In Studies 2 and 5, we used the correlations between T1 nostalgia and T1 tradition transfer attitudes.
5. In Study 5, we used the correlation between T1 nostalgia and T2 tradition transfer attitudes.

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