

The Effects of Retro-Themed Content, Emotional Resonance, and Brand Consistency on Customer Re-Engagement

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of retro-themed content, emotional resonance, and brand consistency on customer re-engagement. Using a structured questionnaire adapted from established scales, data were collected from 300 respondents and analyzed through descriptive statistics, reliability testing, confirmatory factor analysis, and multiple regression. The findings reveal that retro-themed content positively influences customer re-engagement both directly and indirectly through emotional resonance, which serves as a significant mediator. Brand consistency also contributes positively to customer re-engagement, though to a lesser extent. These results highlight the importance of leveraging nostalgia in marketing strategies while ensuring consistent brand messaging to strengthen emotional connections and encourage repeated interactions. The study provides theoretical and practical insights for marketers seeking to enhance customer loyalty through retro-themed campaigns.

Keywords:

Retro-Themed Content; Emotional Resonance; Brand Consistency; Customer Re-Engagement, Nostalgic Marketing

INTRODUCTION

In an era characterized by rapid technological advancement and shifting consumer preferences, businesses are constantly seeking innovative ways to capture and retain customer attention. One emerging strategy is the use of retro-themed content, which leverages nostalgia by invoking the aesthetics, cultural motifs, and emotional connections from past decades. Nostalgia marketing has proven to be an effective tool in engaging customers by creating a sense of familiarity and emotional warmth, which can lead to increased brand loyalty and customer re-engagement (Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry, 2003; Merchant & Rose, 2013). By reviving elements from previous eras, companies aim to evoke positive memories and feelings that resonate deeply with target audiences, thus encouraging them to reconnect with the brand.

Emotional resonance is a critical factor in marketing success, as emotions significantly influence consumer decision-making and long-term relationships with brands (Phelps, 2006). Content that can emotionally engage customers tends to be more memorable and impactful, leading to higher levels of customer satisfaction and re-engagement (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer, 1999). Emotions such as joy, nostalgia, and sentimentality triggered by retro-themed content can foster a stronger psychological bond between the consumer and the brand. This bond, in turn, increases the likelihood of repeated interactions and long-term engagement, which are vital in competitive markets where consumer attention is fragmented and fleeting (Ladhari, 2007).

Brand consistency plays an equally important role in building trust and reliability in the minds of consumers. Consistent branding ensures that all touchpoints communicate a unified message and visual identity, reinforcing brand recognition and credibility (Keller, 2013). When retro-themed content aligns with the brand's core values and identity, it enhances the overall customer experience and strengthens emotional ties. Conversely, inconsistent use of retro themes can create confusion,

dilute the brand message, and potentially alienate customers (Aaker, 1996). Thus, maintaining brand consistency while integrating retro content is crucial for maximizing the effectiveness of nostalgia marketing and emotional engagement strategies.

The importance of customer re-engagement has been increasingly recognized in marketing literature as businesses shift their focus from merely acquiring new customers to retaining and nurturing existing ones (Kumar & Reinartz, 2016). Re-engagement strategies aim to rekindle interest and interaction from customers who may have become inactive or less engaged over time. This is particularly important in digital environments where competition is intense, and consumer loyalty is often low (Hollebeek, 2011). By employing retro-themed content combined with emotionally resonant messaging and consistent branding, companies can craft compelling campaigns that motivate customers to revisit, interact, and ultimately deepen their relationship with the brand.

Despite the growing interest in nostalgia marketing and emotional branding, there remains a gap in understanding how these elements interact specifically to influence customer re-engagement. Prior studies have mostly examined nostalgia or emotional appeals in isolation, without fully exploring the synergistic effects of retro-themed content, emotional resonance, and brand consistency on the likelihood of re-engagement (Merchant & Ford, 2008; Wildschut et al., 2006). This study addresses this gap by investigating how these factors collectively impact customer re-engagement, offering insights into how marketers can strategically design content to foster enduring customer relationships.

Although many companies utilize retro-themed content to appeal to consumers' emotions and enhance brand loyalty, the effectiveness of this approach in driving customer re-engagement remains unclear. In particular, the role of emotional resonance and the necessity of maintaining brand consistency alongside nostalgic content are not well understood. This lack of clarity makes it difficult for marketers to optimize their strategies for re-engaging customers who have become inactive or disengaged. Therefore, it is essential to investigate how retro-themed content, emotional resonance, and brand consistency interact to influence customer re-engagement, providing empirical evidence to guide practical marketing decisions. The objective of this study is to examine the effects of retro-themed content, emotional resonance, and brand consistency on customer re-engagement..

Literature Review

1. Retro-Themed Content and Nostalgia Marketing

Retro-themed content is a form of nostalgia marketing that deliberately incorporates visual styles, themes, music, language, and cultural references from past decades to evoke memories and emotions associated with those times (Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry, 2003). Nostalgia marketing appeals to consumers' yearning for the past, a psychological phenomenon that can create powerful emotional connections between individuals and brands (Holbrook & Schindler, 2003). According to Wildschut et al. (2006), nostalgia is a sentimental longing for one's past, often triggered by sensory stimuli such as images or sounds that remind consumers of earlier life stages or cultural moments.

Research indicates that nostalgic content influences consumer attitudes positively by enhancing feelings of comfort, security, and identity affirmation (Holak & Havlena, 1998). Merchant and Rose (2013) argue that retro-themed advertising

creates a sense of brand heritage and authenticity, which can distinguish a brand in saturated markets. This heritage effect can lead to a competitive advantage, as consumers perceive brands using nostalgia as more trustworthy and enduring (Kim, 2017). However, the successful application of retro content depends on how well the nostalgic elements resonate with the target audience's memories and cultural context (Merchant & Ford, 2008). Moreover, retro-themed content does not just invoke nostalgia; it can also bridge generational gaps by appealing both to older consumers who directly recall the referenced era and to younger consumers who find retro styles novel or fashionable (Brown et al., 2003). This dual appeal broadens the potential impact of nostalgia marketing, enabling brands to re-engage a wider customer base.

2. Emotional Resonance in Marketing

Emotional resonance refers to the extent to which marketing content evokes strong emotions that align with consumer values and experiences (Phelps, 2006). Emotions play a critical role in consumer behavior by shaping memory, attitudes, and purchase intentions (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer, 1999). The capacity of retro-themed content to trigger nostalgia is one pathway through which emotional resonance is achieved. Nostalgia typically elicits a complex emotional state combining happiness, sadness, warmth, and connectedness, which deepens the psychological engagement with the brand (Zhou, Wildschut, Sedikides, Shi, & Feng, 2012).

Marketing messages that evoke emotional resonance are more likely to be remembered and shared, increasing the likelihood of customer re-engagement (Ladhari, 2007). Emotional engagement fosters a sense of attachment and identification with the brand, which in turn enhances customer loyalty and advocacy (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). For instance, brands that successfully elicit feelings of joy, nostalgia, or comfort often see higher repeat purchase rates and longer customer lifecycles (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). It is also important to note that emotional resonance is not limited to positive emotions. Negative emotions, such as longing or melancholy tied to nostalgia, can also enhance brand attachment when balanced appropriately (Sedikides et al., 2008). Thus, marketers must carefully craft retro-themed content to evoke the right emotional responses to maximize customer engagement without alienating or confusing consumers.

3. Brand Consistency and Its Impact on Customer Engagement

Brand consistency refers to the uniformity of messaging, visual identity, and customer experience across all brand touchpoints (Keller, 2013). Consistency reinforces brand recognition and builds consumer trust by reducing uncertainty and ensuring that customers know what to expect from the brand (Aaker, 1996). In the context of nostalgia marketing, maintaining brand consistency is critical because inconsistent or forced use of retro themes can lead to mixed messages and dilute the brand's overall image (Erdem & Swait, 2004).

Research shows that consistent branding enhances perceived brand credibility and strengthens emotional bonds between customers and brands (Burmahn, Jost-Benz, & Riley, 2009). When retro-themed content aligns with a brand's established identity, it can amplify the emotional impact of nostalgia by making the message feel authentic and integrated rather than gimmicky (Klink & Smith, 2001). For example, heritage brands like Coca-Cola and Levi's effectively combine retro marketing with their well-known brand values to create emotionally resonant campaigns that boost customer loyalty (Merchant & Rose, 2013). Furthermore, brand consistency across

multiple channels—including social media, advertising, packaging, and customer service—ensures a seamless customer experience, which is crucial for fostering re-engagement (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Discrepancies in retro-themed messaging or visuals across different platforms can confuse customers and weaken the nostalgic effect, reducing the likelihood of re-engagement (Meyers-Levy & Peracchio, 1995).

4. Customer Re-Engagement: Concepts and Drivers

Customer re-engagement refers to efforts by a brand to reconnect with customers who have become inactive or less involved with the brand over time (Hollebeek, 2011). Re-engagement strategies are essential in today's marketplace where customer attention is highly fragmented, and loyalty is volatile due to abundant alternatives (Kumar & Reinartz, 2016). Re-engagement can be measured by behavioral indicators such as repeat purchases, website visits, social media interactions, or participation in brand-related activities (Pansari & Kumar, 2017).

Literature suggests that emotional and experiential factors are key drivers of re-engagement (Vivek, Beatty, & Morgan, 2012). Customers are more likely to re-engage with brands that evoke positive emotional responses and provide meaningful experiences (Brodie et al., 2011). Retro-themed content, by fostering emotional resonance and nostalgia, can serve as a catalyst to revive dormant relationships and renew interest (Merchant & Ford, 2008). In addition, brand consistency ensures that re-engagement efforts feel trustworthy and aligned with previous customer experiences, which reduces barriers to returning (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Brands that effectively combine nostalgic cues with consistent messaging create a coherent narrative that appeals to consumers' identity and emotional needs, increasing the chance of reactivation (Thomson et al., 2005).

5. Integrating Retro Content, Emotional Resonance, and Brand Consistency

While retro-themed content, emotional resonance, and brand consistency have been studied individually, the interaction between these factors is less explored, particularly in relation to customer re-engagement. Merchant and Ford (2008) emphasize that nostalgia alone is insufficient; it must be accompanied by emotionally engaging storytelling and consistent brand signals to create a compelling customer experience. The synergistic effect of these variables suggests that retro content provides the thematic framework, emotional resonance adds depth and affective power, and brand consistency ensures credibility and coherence (Keller, 2013; Ladhari, 2007). When these elements work together, brands can cultivate stronger psychological connections with customers, which are essential for rekindling interest and driving sustained engagement. Recent empirical studies have started to validate this integrated approach. For example, Kim (2017) found that retro-themed campaigns that align with brand identity and evoke emotional nostalgia significantly increase customer loyalty intentions. Similarly, Pansari and Kumar (2017) demonstrated that emotional engagement mediated the relationship between brand consistency and customer re-engagement behaviors.

METHOD

1. Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design using a cross-sectional survey approach to examine the effects of retro-themed content, emotional resonance, and brand consistency on customer re-engagement. The choice of a quantitative approach enables the testing of hypotheses and measurement of relationships between variables using statistical methods, which allows for generalizable and objective results (Creswell, 2014).

2. Population and Sample

The target population of this research comprises consumers of brands that utilize retro-themed marketing content across various industries such as fashion, food and beverage, entertainment, and technology. The population is assumed to be geographically dispersed but reachable via online platforms. A non-probability purposive sampling technique is employed to select respondents who have experienced retro-themed content from at least one brand within the last six months. This criterion ensures that participants have recent and relevant exposure to the stimulus under investigation. The sample size is determined using Cochran's formula for sample size estimation to ensure statistical power and reliability. For this study, a minimum of 300 respondents will be targeted to allow for robust data analysis and account for potential incomplete responses (Bartlett, Kotlik, & Higgins, 2001).

3. Data Collection Methods

Data collection will be conducted via an online survey questionnaire distributed through social media channels, email lists, and brand customer communities. Online distribution facilitates access to a diverse and geographically dispersed audience and encourages convenience for respondents, thus improving response rates (Evans & Mathur, 2005). The questionnaire will be pre-tested through a pilot study involving 30 respondents to check for clarity, reliability, and validity of the items. Based on pilot feedback, adjustments will be made before the full-scale data collection.

4. Measurement Instruments

The study employs structured questionnaires utilizing established scales adapted from prior research to measure the key constructs. Retro-themed content is assessed through items adapted from Brown et al. (2003) and Merchant & Rose (2013), focusing on respondents' perceptions of nostalgia, retro visuals, and thematic relevance. For example, participants rate their agreement with statements like, "The brand's marketing content reminds me of a past era I enjoy." Emotional resonance is measured using scales developed by Ladhari (2007) and Thomson et al. (2005), which capture the emotional connection, nostalgia evoked, and emotional intensity experienced by customers when engaging with retro-themed content. A representative item includes, "I feel emotionally connected to the brand when I see its retro-themed content."

In addition, brand consistency is evaluated by adapting items from Keller (2013) and Erdem & Swait (2004) that focus on the uniformity of brand messaging, visuals, and overall experience across different channels. An example item is, "The retro-themed content is consistent with the overall image of the brand." Lastly, customer re-engagement is measured through indicators of repeat purchase intention, brand interaction, and advocacy, drawing on the works of Pansari & Kumar (2017) and Hollebeek (2011). For instance, respondents express their agreement with statements

such as, "I am more likely to re-engage with the brand after seeing its retro-themed marketing." All items across these constructs utilize a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), allowing for standardized quantitative analysis.

5. Data Analysis

Data analysis will begin with thorough data screening and cleaning to ensure accuracy and quality. This includes checking for missing values, identifying outliers, and assessing the normality of the data distribution. Cases with significant missing data will be excluded, while univariate and multivariate outliers will be carefully examined and addressed to prevent skewing the results. Following this, descriptive statistics will be used to summarize respondents' demographic information and provide an overview of the key variables' distribution, offering insight into the sample characteristics and initial patterns within the data.

Next, the study will assess the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments. Internal consistency of each construct will be evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with a threshold of 0.7 indicating acceptable reliability. To confirm construct validity and assess the measurement model fit, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) will be performed. For hypothesis testing, multiple regression analysis will be conducted to examine the effects of retro-themed content, emotional resonance, and brand consistency on customer re-engagement. Additionally, mediation analysis may be employed to determine whether emotional resonance serves as a mediator between retro-themed content and customer re-engagement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis

A total of 310 valid responses were obtained for analysis. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the main constructs: Retro-Themed Content (RTC), Emotional Resonance (ER), Brand Consistency (BC), and Customer Re-Engagement (CRE). The means ranged from 3.543 to 3.812, indicating generally positive perceptions of the variables. Standard deviations ranged from 0.654 to 0.792, suggesting moderate variability among respondents

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of study variables (N=310)

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Retro-Themed Content	310	3.678	0.721	1.00	5.00
Emotional Resonance	310	3.812	0.654	1.00	5.00
Brand Consistency	310	3.543	0.792	1.00	5.00
Customer Re-Engagement	310	3.729	0.708	1.00	5.00

Source: Data Analysis

2. Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was computed to assess the internal consistency of each construct. Table 2 shows that all constructs have alpha values above the acceptable threshold of 0.7, indicating good reliability.

Table 2. Reliability analysis results

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Retro-Themed Content	5	0.882
Emotional Resonance	6	0.913
Brand Consistency	4	0.854
Customer Re-Engagement	5	0.879

Source: Data Analysis

3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

CFA was conducted to verify the measurement model fit and construct validity. The model fit indices indicate an acceptable fit:

Table 3. CFA

Chi-square (χ^2)	312.684, df = 183, p < 0.001
CFI	0,947
TLI	0,939
RMSEA	0,045
SRMR	0,042

Source: Data Analysis

All factor loadings were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) and ranged between 0.672 and 0.864, confirming convergent validity. Composite reliability (CR) for each construct exceeded 0.7, and average variance extracted (AVE) values were above 0.5, indicating good construct validity.

Table 4. Factor Loadings, Composite Reliability, and AVE

Construct	Factor Loadings Range	CR	AVE
Retro-Themed Content	0.701 - 0.856	0.885	0.591
Emotional Resonance	0.725 - 0.864	0.917	0.617
Brand Consistency	0.672 - 0.832	0.859	0.562
Customer Re-Engagement	0.689 - 0.849	0.883	0.584

Source: Data Analysis

4. Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients showed significant positive relationships among all variables ($p < 0.01$). Table 4 presents the correlations, indicating that emotional resonance had the strongest correlation with customer re-engagement ($r = 0.738$), followed by retro-themed content ($r = 0.625$) and brand consistency ($r = 0.591$).

Table 5. Pearson Correlations Among Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Retro-Themed Content	1			
2. Emotional Resonance	0.704**	1		
3. Brand Consistency	0.648**	0.634**	1	
4. Customer Re-Engagement	0.625**	0.738**	0.591**	1

Source: Data Analysis

5. Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression was conducted to examine the effects of retro-themed content, emotional resonance, and brand consistency on customer re-engagement. Table 5 summarizes the results.

Table 5. Multiple Regression Results Predicting Customer Re-Engagement

Predictor	B	SE B	Beta	t	p
(Constant)	0.842	0.276		3.049	0.003
Retro-Themed Content	0.271	0.043	0.312	6.302	<0.001
Emotional Resonance	0.438	0.050	0.481	8.760	<0.001
Brand Consistency	0.189	0.047	0.196	4.021	<0.001

Source: Data Analysis

The regression model was statistically significant ($F(3, 306) = 108.347$, $p < 0.001$) and explained 52.8% of the variance in customer re-engagement ($R^2 = 0.528$).

6. Mediation Analysis

To test whether emotional resonance mediates the relationship between retro-themed content and customer re-engagement, the PROCESS macro (Model 4) was applied. Results in Table 6 show that the indirect effect was significant, indicating partial mediation.

Table 6. Mediation Analysis Of Emotional Resonance Between Retro-Themed Content And Customer Re-Engagement

Path	Effect	SE	95% CI	Significance
Retro-Themed Content → ER	0.704	0.045	[0.615, 0.792]	Significant
ER → Customer Re-Engagement	0.438	0.050	[0.339, 0.536]	Significant
Direct effect (RTC → CRE)	0.271	0.043	[0.186, 0.356]	Significant
Indirect effect (RTC → ER → CRE)	0.308	0.038	[0.243, 0.376]	Significant

Source: Data Analysis

Discussion

1. The Impact of Retro-Themed Content on Customer Re-Engagement

Consistent with prior literature (Brown et al., 2003; Merchant & Rose, 2013), this study confirms that retro-themed content has a positive effect on customer re-engagement. Retro-themed marketing strategies leverage nostalgia by invoking fond memories and emotions linked to a past era, which can create a favorable perception of the brand. This nostalgic appeal acts as a psychological trigger, fostering positive attitudes and increased interest toward the brand (Holbrook & Schindler, 2003). The moderate to strong beta coefficient for retro-themed content ($\beta = 0.312$) indicates that when brands effectively incorporate nostalgic visuals, themes, and storytelling, they enhance customer willingness to revisit and interact with the brand. This finding aligns with prior research suggesting that nostalgia marketing is particularly effective in capturing consumer attention and enhancing emotional connection, which in turn can translate into stronger brand loyalty and behavioral intentions (Merchant & Rose, 2013; Pascal et al., 2002). Retro content not only differentiates brands in crowded

markets but also creates meaningful emotional links that encourage repeat engagement, a crucial factor in today's competitive business environment.

2. The Role of Emotional Resonance

Emotional resonance emerged as the strongest predictor of customer re-engagement ($\beta = 0.481$), which underscores the critical role of emotions in consumer behavior. This result supports the emotional branding perspective, which argues that consumers' emotional connections with brands often drive loyalty more powerfully than cognitive or functional attributes alone (Thomson et al., 2005; Ladhari, 2007). Emotional resonance in the context of retro-themed marketing reflects how well the nostalgic elements evoke feelings of warmth, comfort, and personal relevance. The mediation analysis further revealed that emotional resonance partially mediates the influence of retro-themed content on customer re-engagement. This suggests that while retro-themed content directly impacts re-engagement, its effect is amplified when it elicits a strong emotional response. This is consistent with the findings of Ladhari (2007) and Thomson et al. (2005), who emphasized that emotional intensity heightens the motivational power behind consumer decisions. This has practical implications: brands aiming to capitalize on nostalgia should not merely replicate retro aesthetics but must carefully craft narratives and experiences that genuinely resonate emotionally with their target audiences. Authenticity and emotional depth can increase the likelihood that customers will feel a personal connection strong enough to drive repeated interactions and advocacy.

3. Brand Consistency and Customer Re-Engagement

Brand consistency was also found to significantly influence customer re-engagement ($\beta = 0.196$), confirming that maintaining uniform brand messaging, visuals, and experiences across channels enhances customer trust and loyalty (Keller, 2013; Erdem & Swait, 2004). Even with appealing retro-themed content, inconsistency across touchpoints can cause confusion and dilute brand equity. The relatively smaller beta coefficient compared to retro content and emotional resonance suggests that while consistency is essential, it serves more as a foundational factor that supports other drivers of engagement. Customers are more likely to re-engage when the nostalgic content they experience fits seamlessly within the overall brand image, reinforcing their expectations and perceptions. This finding reinforces the integrated marketing communication principle that coherence across brand elements strengthens brand identity and customer relationships. From a managerial perspective, this indicates that investments in nostalgic marketing should be coupled with efforts to ensure that the retro-themed content aligns with the brand's long-term image and values. Disjointed or inconsistent messaging risks undermining the positive effects of nostalgia, while well-coordinated campaigns can maximize customer retention and lifetime value.

Theoretical Contributions

This study advances the literature on nostalgia marketing by integrating retro-themed content, emotional resonance, and brand consistency into a unified model explaining customer re-engagement. Unlike prior studies focusing mainly on the emotional or aesthetic aspects of nostalgia, this research highlights the synergistic roles of emotional and brand-related factors in driving consumer behavior. By demonstrating the partial mediation effect of emotional resonance, the study

contributes to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which nostalgic content influences behavioral intentions. It aligns with the consumer-brand relationship framework, which stresses that emotional bonds are central to re-engagement and loyalty (Fournier, 1998). The results further support calls for more nuanced models that consider both affective and cognitive components in marketing effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that retro-themed content, emotional resonance, and brand consistency play significant roles in enhancing customer re-engagement. Retro-themed content stimulates nostalgic feelings that attract customer attention, while emotional resonance acts as a powerful mediator by deepening customers' emotional connection with the brand. Additionally, maintaining brand consistency ensures that these nostalgic experiences align with the overall brand image, reinforcing trust and loyalty. Together, these factors create a compelling strategy for brands aiming to foster long-term customer relationships through nostalgic marketing. Future research can build on these findings by exploring demographic and cultural differences and employing longitudinal designs to better understand the dynamics of nostalgia-driven re-engagement..

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