

Retro-Marketing and Brand Attitude in the Digital Age: Insights from the Moroccan Agro-Food Sector.

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Abstract

In response to increasing advertising clutter in digital environments, retro-marketing offers brands a means of reconnecting with consumers through nostalgia, familiarity, and cultural memory. This study explores how retro-marketing practices shape attitudes toward brands in the Moroccan agro-food sector in the digital age. Adopting an interpretative qualitative approach, the research combines semi-structured interviews with thirteen marketing and communication professionals with the observation of approximately forty social-media posts and more than six hundred user comments related to nostalgic brand communication. The data were examined through thematic analysis. The findings show that retro-marketing operates beyond the aesthetic revival of the past by activating both affective and cognitive responses associated with nostalgia, familiarity, attachment, and perceived authenticity. Digital platforms further reinforce these dynamics through participation, sharing, and the circulation of collective memories. The study concludes that the effectiveness of retro-marketing in the Moroccan agro-food context depends on its ability to establish cultural coherence and emotional credibility, allowing brands to differentiate themselves while sustaining continuity between their heritage and contemporary digital communication.

Keywords: Retro-marketing; Brand attitude; Nostalgia; Digital communication; Moroccan agro-food sector.

Introduction

In today's hyper-digitalized environment, consumers are constantly immersed in a continuous flow of advertising messages across multiple platforms. This phenomenon, often referred to as *advertising clutter* (Ha, 1996; Elliott & Speck, 1998), has significantly reduced attention spans and increased resistance toward traditional brand communication. Within such a saturated and algorithmically structured media landscape, differentiation has become a central challenge for brands seeking not only visibility but also emotional relevance.

Against this background, *retro-marketing* has emerged as a strategic means to re-establish affective bonds with consumers. Defined by Brown (1999) as the use of past symbols, narratives, and aesthetics to evoke nostalgia, retro-marketing enables brands to revive familiarity, continuity, and authenticity — values often eroded by digital acceleration. Through the lens of nostalgia, the past is not merely revived but reinterpreted, offering consumers a form of emotional stability amid change (Holbrook & Schindler, 2003; Kessous & Roux, 2008).

In recent years, the rise of social media has intensified this dynamic. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok have become powerful vectors for nostalgic expression, where both brands and users actively engage in the co-construction of memory (Jacobsen & Beer, 2021; Youn, 2017). Algorithmic recommendation systems and participatory affordances encourage the circulation of retro content, transforming individual recollection into a collective emotional experience. In this sense, the digital space does not simply reproduce nostalgia — it *performs* it, creating interactive rituals of remembering and belonging.

The Moroccan agro-food sector provides an especially fertile ground for observing these mechanisms. Rooted in everyday life and family culture, food brands such as *Aïcha*, *Henry's*, or *La Cigogne* carry deep affective and symbolic resonance. Their recent retro campaigns have revitalized emotional connections across generations, blending heritage, authenticity, and digital engagement (Souaf, 2024; Benchekroun, 2018). Within this context, retro-marketing appears as both a *cultural discourse* and a *strategic response* to market saturation.

This research therefore seeks to explore **how retro-marketing practices influence attitudes toward the brand within the Moroccan agro-food sector in the digital age**. Adopting an interpretative qualitative approach, the study combines expert interviews and social media content observation to uncover how nostalgic cues activate cognitive and affective responses that shape brand meaning. By doing so, it contributes to understanding retro-marketing as a postmodern strategy that reconciles technological modernity with emotional continuity and cultural authenticity.

1. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

1.1. Retro-Marketing as a Strategic Response to Market Saturation

In contemporary markets marked by intense competition and overexposure, brands face increasing difficulty in distinguishing themselves and maintaining emotional relevance. Retro-marketing has emerged as one strategic response, defined as the intentional reactivation of cultural, aesthetic, and emotional references from the past to create symbolic resonance in the present (Brown, 1999; Brown, Kozinets & Sherry, 2003). Rather than a nostalgic imitation of bygone styles, it represents a *semiotic reconstruction* through which brands reinterpret heritage elements to generate continuity and authenticity. Brown (2001) and Kessous and Roux (2008) describe this phenomenon as a spectrum ranging from *Repro*, which means faithful revival, to *Néo-Rétro*, which blends memory and innovation. Through such practices, retro-marketing operates as a cultural strategy that translates temporal distance into emotional proximity.

At the theoretical level, the effectiveness of these strategies can be understood through the lens of identity and continuity. Davis (1979) conceptualized nostalgia as a mechanism that maintains a coherent sense of self over time, while Tajfel and Turner (1979) emphasized the social dimension of identity construction based on group belonging and shared symbols. Retro-marketing practices thus act as symbolic anchors that reinforce both personal and collective senses of continuity. They enable individuals and communities to recognize themselves in cultural narratives that traverse time, reaffirming stability within contexts of rapid technological and social change (Belk, 1990; Kleine, Kleine & Allen, 1995).

From a strategic perspective, this temporal reactivation responds to the saturation of contemporary markets, where differentiation increasingly depends on emotional authenticity rather than innovation alone. In postmodern consumption contexts, where meaning has become fragmented, retro-marketing offers a form of symbolic cohesion and sincerity (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Cova, 1996). By mobilizing memory and affect, it transforms the past into a competitive resource, what Beverland (2005) terms *authenticity through continuity*, allowing brands to reassert their distinctiveness amid homogenized communication landscapes.

In the current digital environment, where social media has multiplied the flow of advertising messages, this search for emotional depth gains renewed significance. The ubiquity of algorithmically mediated content amplifies saturation and heightens the need for resonance and familiarity. Within this context, retro-marketing appears not as a backward glance but as a forward-looking strategy for emotional differentiation in an era of communicational excess.

1.2. Advertising Clutter and the Turn toward Emotional Branding

The evolution of marketing communication in the digital era has generated an unprecedented proliferation of advertising messages. This phenomenon, known as advertising clutter, refers to the excessive volume of persuasive stimuli competing for limited consumer attention (Ha, 1996; Elliott & Speck, 1998). The growing density of content across television, online platforms, and especially social media has led to a perceptual saturation that undermines advertising effectiveness. Empirical studies show that clutter reduces message recall and induces irritation, avoidance, and cognitive fatigue (Speck & Elliott, 1997; Cho & Cheon, 2004). The digitalization of media has further intensified this effect, as algorithmic recommendation systems continuously expose consumers to targeted promotional content (Pashkevich et al., 2012). Consequently, traditional rational or informational appeals have lost persuasive power in a context where consumers are not only exposed but *overexposed* to brand communication. Faced with this communicational congestion, brands have progressively shifted toward emotional differentiation as a means of restoring relevance and engagement. Rather than competing on informational clarity or product features, successful brands now seek to evoke affective connections grounded in values, memories, and experiences (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006; Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012). This transition, often described as the rise of *emotional branding*, reflects a strategic reorientation from persuasion to resonance. Emotions serve as cognitive shortcuts, facilitating attention and memorization while generating a sense of authenticity that purely functional claims cannot achieve. Within this logic, affective engagement becomes a defense mechanism against advertising fatigue, allowing consumers to reestablish meaning in a saturated environment.

It is within this emotional paradigm that retro-marketing finds its strategic legitimacy. By mobilizing nostalgia, familiarity, and shared cultural codes, retro appeals operate as an antidote to advertising clutter, restoring emotional depth where attention has been eroded. In this sense, retro-marketing represents not a regression but an evolution of branding logic, one that substitutes emotional coherence for informational density. The next section explores how nostalgia functions as the central psychological mechanism through which retro-marketing reactivates consumer attachment and symbolic meaning in the digital era.

1.3. Nostalgia and Meaning in Consumer–Brand Relations

Nostalgia has emerged as a key emotional lever in contemporary marketing, functioning as a bridge between personal memory and collective identity. In consumer research, it is defined as an affective–cognitive emotion evoked by recollections of the past, associated with warmth,

longing, and emotional security (Holbrook & Schindler, 1991; Holak & Havlena, 1998). Two main forms are generally distinguished: *personal nostalgia*, rooted in autobiographical memories, and *historical nostalgia*, linked to a collectively idealized past (Batcho, 1998; Brown, 1999). Both play a central role in shaping how consumers interpret brand narratives anchored in temporal symbols.

From a psychological perspective, nostalgia satisfies deep affective and existential needs. Davis (1979) and Sedikides et al. (2008) show that nostalgic reflection reinforces identity coherence, emotional stability, and social belonging. By restoring continuity between past and present, it functions as a symbolic defense against uncertainty and fragmentation (Wildschut et al., 2006). In marketing contexts, this continuity translates into the perception of authenticity and reliability, values that consumers actively seek in overstimulated environments.

When integrated into brand communication, nostalgia transforms market exchange into a memory-based relationship. Kessous and Roux (2008) highlight how nostalgic appeals strengthen perceived authenticity and attachment (Fournier, 2008), while Pascal, Sprott, and Muehling (2002) demonstrate their influence on positive affect and attitude toward advertising. Similarly, Merchant and Rose (2013) note that nostalgia enhances emotional proximity, favoring enduring brand–consumer ties. In postmodern markets characterized by information overload, nostalgia thus operates as an emotional capital and a semiotic resource, reconnecting consumers with meaningful cultural references (Goulding, 2002; Baker & Kennedy, 1994). Far from being a mere sentimental regression, it constitutes a strategic process of affective persuasion through which retro-marketing reactivates brand meaning and consumer attachment in digitalized societies.

1.4. Cognitive and Affective Dimensions of Attitude Formation

Attitude constitutes a central construct in consumer behavior, defined as an enduring evaluative disposition toward an object, based on cognitive beliefs and affective reactions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Within marketing, attitudes are conceived as the product of both reasoning and emotional dual process that shapes how consumers respond to advertising and brands (Lutz, 1985). This bidimensional nature reflects two complementary systems of evaluation: cognition, concerned with beliefs and expectations, and affect, associated with emotional and symbolic resonance.

From a cognitive standpoint, attitude formation relies on rational assessment and belief structures. According to the Expectancy–Value Theory (Fishbein, 1967) and the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975), consumers develop attitudes by evaluating the

probability that a brand possesses desirable attributes. Such evaluations are influenced by experience, perceived quality, and consistency with personal values (Bagozzi, 1981). In contrast, the affective dimension emphasizes the primacy of emotional processes. Zajonc (1980) argued that affective responses can occur independently of cognition, while Batra and Ray (1986) and Holbrook and Batra (1987) demonstrated that feelings of warmth, pleasure, or attachment mediate the acceptance of advertising and the formation of favorable brand attitudes.

The integration of both dimensions is central to persuasion theories such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and the Heuristic–Systematic Model (Chaiken, 1980), which distinguish between analytical and emotional processing routes. In practice, most advertising messages activate both, combining rational appeals with affective cues. Nostalgic communication in particular exemplifies this interaction: it operates cognitively by reactivating shared memories and affectively by eliciting emotions of comfort and belonging (Holbrook & Schindler, 1991; Pascal, Sprott & Muehling, 2002). Through this dual activation, nostalgia contributes to attitude formation by aligning belief-based evaluation with emotional congruence, paving the way for the distinction between attitudes toward the ad (Aad) and toward the brand (Ab).

1.5. From Attitude toward the Ad to Attitude toward the Brand

Within contemporary communication environments, attitude toward the ad (Aad) and attitude toward the brand (Ab) represent two central constructs in explaining advertising effectiveness. The first reflects the consumer's evaluative response to a persuasive message, while the second expresses the overall evaluation of the brand itself (Lutz, 1985; MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1986). Classical research demonstrates that these two attitudes are conceptually distinct yet closely related: favorable affect toward an ad can transfer to the brand it promotes. This relationship is formalized in the Dual Mediation Hypothesis (DMH) (MacKenzie et al., 1986), which posits both a direct cognitive path—where advertising shapes brand beliefs—and an indirect affective path, where Aad exerts a mediating influence on Ab through emotional transfer (Mitchell & Olson, 1981).

The Affect Transfer Hypothesis (ATH) (Mitchell & Olson, 1981) further explains that positive feelings elicited by an ad, such as warmth or pleasure, enhance the perceived attractiveness of the brand. Emotional reactions play a key mediating role: they guide attention, facilitate memory, and shape interpretation (Batra & Ray, 1986; Holbrook & Batra, 1987). Shimp (1981) and Miniard, Bhatla and Rose (1990) confirm that a positive Aad also reinforces cognitive

consistency, leading consumers to reinterpret brand information in line with their emotional response.

In digital contexts, particularly on social media platforms, this mechanism becomes amplified. Users interact with branded content—liking, sharing, or commenting—which reinforces emotional engagement and accelerates affect transfer. For nostalgic or retro-inspired campaigns, such participation intensifies both familiarity and symbolic attachment, strengthening Ab through cultural resonance (Pascal, Sprott & Muehling, 2002; Kessous & Roux, 2008). Consequently, in social media advertising, the Aad–Ab relationship operates not only as a process of persuasion but also as an *interactive co-construction* of meaning, positioning retro-marketing as a catalyst for affective brand connections in the digital age.

1.6. Digital Mediation, Social Influence, and Algorithmic Amplification

The rise of social media has profoundly reshaped the logic of marketing communication, shifting from linear persuasion to interactive, participatory, and data-driven mediation (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). In this environment, consumers are no longer passive recipients of messages but active co-constructors of meaning. Through affordances such as commenting, sharing, and remixing (Hutchby, 2001), digital platforms enable users to participate in the narrative of brands, transforming each act of engagement into a micro-interaction of cultural production. For retro-marketing, this means that nostalgic cues are not only disseminated but also reinterpreted and amplified by communities.

Social influence plays a decisive role in this dynamic. As Cialdini and Goldstein (2004) observe, individuals align their evaluations with perceived social norms and peer validation. Online, such mechanisms are heightened by visibility metrics : likes, shares, and reposts, which operate as markers of collective approval. Zhou (2025) notes that this participatory nostalgia fosters a “networked sense of belonging,” where shared memories become a resource for identity negotiation. Retro imagery, old jingles, and vintage aesthetics thus gain renewed legitimacy through communal endorsement and emotional contagion (Berger, 2014).

The algorithmic structure of platforms further intensifies these processes. Algorithms privilege content that elicits engagement, particularly emotional and familiar stimuli (Bucher, 2018; Gillespie, 2014). Jacobsen and Beer (2021) describe this phenomenon as “quantified nostalgia,” where algorithmic recommendation transforms memory into a measurable form of affective capital. As Zhou (2025) observes, nostalgia cycles have accelerated: “memory reminders” and “throwback” features compress temporal distance, making even recent experiences objects of reminiscence. In this sense, platforms institutionalize nostalgia as an engagement strategy.

Paradoxically, algorithmic personalization can mitigate advertising clutter by aligning content with individual preferences (Youn, 2017). For brands, this reconfiguration strengthens the effectiveness of nostalgic messages while maintaining perceived authenticity. Consequently, digital mediation operates as both a filter and an amplifier, enhancing the emotional salience of retro-marketing and reinforcing its power as a postmodern strategy of differentiation in socially connected environments.

1.7. The Moroccan Agro-Food Sector as a Cultural Field of Retro Expression

The Moroccan agro-food sector constitutes a privileged terrain for the expression of retro-marketing strategies, owing to its strong symbolic anchoring in cultural memory and everyday life. Food, in the Moroccan context, is not merely a product but a repository of identity, ritual, and intergenerational continuity (Bencheikroun, 2018; Souaf, 2024). Brands such as *Aïcha*, *La Cigogne*, or *Henry's* have become affective signifiers that evoke domestic familiarity, family meals, and the affective security of the past. This emotional resonance situates the sector as a fertile ground for nostalgic marketing, where consumption is intertwined with reminiscence and belonging.

Retro-marketing, within this field, operates as a strategy of authenticity and differentiation. In an environment marked by globalization and increasing standardization of messages, Moroccan brands mobilize cultural heritage to reaffirm their local identity and symbolic capital (Ferrandi, 2013; Kessous & Roux, 2008). The revival of traditional visuals, jingles, and storytelling techniques reinforces perceived sincerity and strengthens attachment to national brands (Bouchra & Amina, 2019). As Berrada, Sahbani, and Benamar (2017) highlight, emotionally grounded communication enhances affective loyalty and fosters a sense of continuity between brand and consumer.

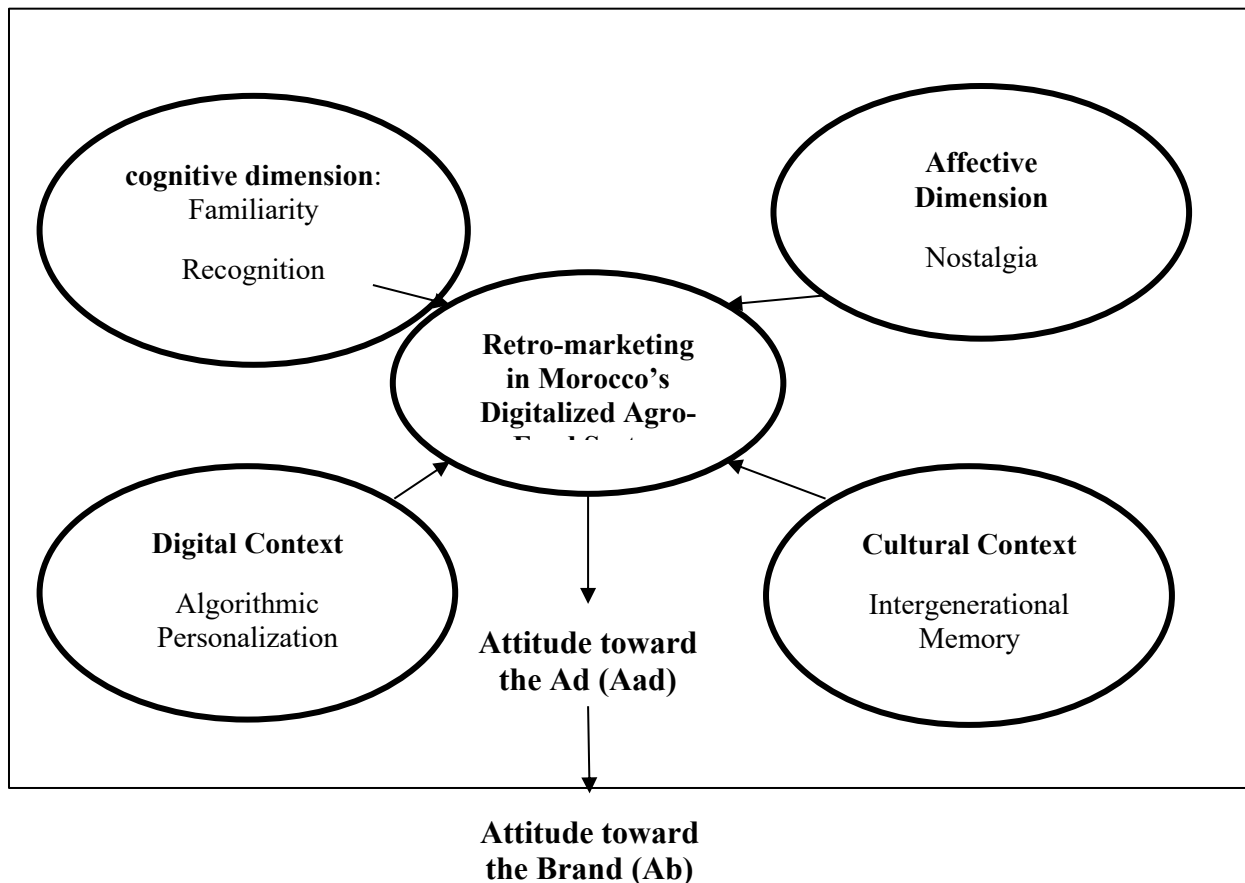
The digitalization of communication has further amplified these mechanisms. Platforms such as Facebook and Instagram enable brands to disseminate nostalgic content, while users actively participate in its reinterpretation through comments and shares (Alaoui, Bennani & Asbai, 2021). These interactions create digital “memory loops,” where collective recollection merges with brand discourse, reinforcing both authenticity and engagement. Thus, the Moroccan agro-food sector emerges as a living archive of identity—a cultural field where retro-marketing translates heritage into emotional differentiation and transforms tradition into a dynamic resource of meaning within the digital age.

1.8. Conceptual Framework

This study adopts a conceptual framework that reflects how consumers interpret retro-marketing cues through both emotional and cognitive lenses. Rather than proposing causal links, the framework illustrates how nostalgic brand elements—such as vintage visuals, slogans, or packaging—activate emotional responses (e.g., nostalgia, attachment, perceived authenticity) and cognitive evaluations (e.g., credibility, message congruence).

These interpretive responses contribute to how individuals experience and evaluate the advertisement (Aad), which may shape their broader orientation toward the brand (Ab). The relationship is not viewed as deterministic, but as interpretatively emergent—where emotional resonance and perceived sincerity play a meaningful role in constructing brand significance.

Figure 1. Conceptual Schema: Emotional and Cognitive Responses to Retro-Marketing and Brand Attitude Formation



Source: Author

The diagram illustrates how nostalgic brand elements trigger emotional and cognitive interpretations, shaping consumer attitudes toward the advertisement (Aad) and, by extension, the brand (Ab). These dynamics are embedded within broader digital and cultural contexts, reflecting a non-linear, interpretative model of brand meaning formation.

This dynamic unfolds within two key contextual layers: the digital media environment, where content visibility is shaped by algorithms and user engagement, and the Moroccan agro-food sector, where retro cues reawaken collective memory, intergenerational familiarity, and cultural identity.

Grounded in this conceptual synthesis, the following section outlines the interpretative methodology adopted to explore how these dynamics are perceived and enacted within Morocco's agro-food communication landscape.

1. Methodology

The study is grounded in an interpretivist epistemological positioning, consistent with its objective of understanding the meanings attributed to retro-marketing practices within a specific cultural and digital context. An inductive mode of reasoning was adopted to allow interpretations to emerge progressively from the empirical material rather than testing predetermined causal relationships. This positioning is therefore aligned with the exploratory nature of the research and with its focus on the experiences, interpretations, and meanings expressed by the actors involved.

This research adopts an interpretative qualitative orientation aimed at understanding how retro-marketing practices acquire meaning within the Moroccan agro-food sector. Rather than seeking to measure causal effects, the study explores how nostalgia-based communication strategies are experienced, interpreted, and articulated by different actors. The interpretative stance recognizes that brand meaning emerges through interaction between communicative intent, cultural memory, and individual perception (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The overall approach is inductive and exploratory, allowing theoretical insights to develop progressively from the field.

The study follows a dual qualitative design combining two complementary sources of data. The first inquiry is based on semi-structured interviews conducted with thirteen marketing and communication professionals involved in brand management or creative strategy. This phase sought to uncover how practitioners conceptualize and implement retro-marketing, the symbolic resources they mobilize, and how they perceive its resonance among consumers. Each

interview lasted between 45 and 70 minutes and was conducted in French or Moroccan Arabic, then transcribed and anonymized for analysis.

The second inquiry consists of a content observation of nostalgic brand communication circulating on Moroccan social media platforms, particularly TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. A corpus of around forty posts from agro-food brands such as Henry's, Aïcha, La Cigogne, and Ideal Flan was analyzed, together with more than six hundred user comments. This phase focused on how consumers emotionally and cognitively engage with retro content, and how digital environments amplify shared nostalgia.

Both datasets were examined through a thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. NVivo 14 software was used to assist the coding and organization of emergent categories. Coding proceeded iteratively, moving from open coding to axial clustering and thematic synthesis. The process was guided by constant comparison between field material and theoretical reflection, ensuring analytic coherence and transparency.

To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, the study relied on data triangulation between expert and consumer perspectives. Reflexivity was maintained throughout the analysis, acknowledging the researcher's interpretative role in constructing meaning. While limited to the Moroccan context, the findings offer insights that may be transferable to other culturally embedded markets where nostalgia operates as a vector of authenticity and emotional attachment.

2. Findings and Discussion

2.1. Insights from Social Media Observation

The content analysis of Moroccan agro-food brand campaigns—particularly *Henry's*, *La Cigogne*, and *Aïcha*—revealed a strong nostalgic narrative mobilized through digital affordances. On platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, retro cues (old jingles, vintage packaging, historic logos) are not merely reproduced but re-contextualized within contemporary aesthetics. This visual and auditory reactivation of collective memory generates a symbolic bridge between “*what was*” and “*what still matters*.” Users actively participate in this process by commenting, sharing, and tagging others, turning brand spaces into arenas of reminiscence rather than unilateral advertising.

Theme	Illustrative quote (translated)	Interpretive note
<i>Recontextualized memory</i>	“Ah, those were the days—same taste, same feeling!”	Brands evoke continuity and emotional safety.
<i>Participatory reminiscence</i>	“We grew up with this... my kids love it too!”	Comments transform nostalgia into inter-generational dialogue.
<i>Algorithmic nostalgia</i>	“Facebook reminded me of this ad today—so many memories!”	Platforms co-produce nostalgic recall through automated reminders.
<i>Authenticity and trust</i>	“They didn’t change like the others—real brand.”	Retro cues reinforce sincerity amid perceived digital superficiality.

These findings highlight how *digital architectures amplify nostalgia*. The constant algorithmic re-circulation of “throwback” material sustains a sense of collective belonging that counterbalances advertising clutter (Ha, 1996; Elliott & Speck, 1998). In such spaces, affective expression (“😊”, “Those were beautiful times”) becomes a language of recognition. The nostalgic tone thus operates as an *emotional filter*: users who resonate with heritage engage more, while others simply scroll past—illustrating an organic, interest-based segmentation enabled by platform logics.

Overall, nostalgic communication on Moroccan social media appears less as a marketing intrusion than as a shared cultural ritual, where memory, identity, and brand discourse intertwine within algorithmic environments.

2.2. Interpretations from Expert Interviews

The interviews conducted with thirteen marketing and communication professionals revealed a convergent vision of retro-marketing as both a *strategic and emotional mechanism* for reconnecting with consumers in a saturated media landscape. Participants consistently portrayed nostalgia as a strategic resource of differentiation yet emphasized its deeper *cultural and symbolic resonance* beyond mere commercial appeal.

Several experts underscored the *strategic revalorization of the past* as a means of humanizing brands in the era of algorithmic communication. As one manager expressed, “*In a digital world obsessed with novelty, reactivating the familiar gives brands a soul.*” This statement captures a central perception: retro-marketing reintroduces warmth, trust, and continuity in an environment often criticized for its superficiality.

Emotion emerged as the *core driver* of these strategies. Experts agreed that nostalgic communication engages both memory and affection — what one creative director called “*the*

emotional capital of generations.” Rather than targeting age groups, campaigns appeal to *shared cultural memories* and *cross-generational emotions*. Several participants linked this emotional universality to the Moroccan socio-cultural context, where family rituals and culinary traditions form the foundation of collective identity.

Digital platforms were also viewed as amplifiers of affect. Experts noted that the participatory nature of social media facilitates user co-creation: “*People don’t just watch the ad — they comment with their stories, they complete it,*” explained one content strategist. This participative nostalgia transforms passive audiences into *memory communities* that co-construct the brand’s heritage narrative.

However, experts cautioned against the *instrumentalization of nostalgia*. Overuse or insincere adaptation risks eroding authenticity — “*If everything becomes retro, nothing feels authentic anymore,*” remarked a brand consultant. Hence, successful retro-marketing depends on cultural coherence and emotional credibility, rather than aesthetic imitation.

In summary, professionals perceive nostalgia not as a backward-looking gesture, but as a forward-looking strategy — one that uses memory to project emotional continuity, social belonging, and symbolic differentiation in a hyper-digitalized marketplace.

2.3. Theoretical Integration and Implications

The combined insights from both empirical explorations — social media observation and professional interviews — converge toward a shared understanding of retro-marketing as a *symbolic strategy of emotional differentiation*. The findings illustrate that retro cues activate both **cognitive** (familiarity, perceived authenticity) and **affective** (nostalgia, attachment) dimensions, which together shape the interpretative construction of attitude toward the brand. In digital contexts, this process is further mediated by **platform affordances** — algorithmic memory prompts, participatory co-creation, and collective sharing — that transform nostalgia into a *dynamic and performative experience*.

Within the Moroccan agro-food field, retro-marketing emerges as a culturally situated discourse, intertwining heritage and affect. By articulating memory through contemporary media, brands sustain continuity while renewing proximity. These insights underscore the relevance of retro-marketing as a postmodern communicational form — one that reconciles technological modernity with emotional authenticity.

Conclusion

This research set out to explore how retro-marketing practices shape consumer attitudes toward brands within Morocco's agro-food sector, particularly in the context of digital communication. Through a qualitative interpretative approach combining expert interviews and social media observation, the study sheds light on the symbolic, emotional, and participatory dimensions of nostalgia in contemporary branding.

Findings reveal that retro-marketing operates not merely as an aesthetic revival of the past but as a *strategic language of continuity*. By reactivating shared memories, brands cultivate emotional proximity, perceived authenticity, and cultural belonging — values increasingly rare in an algorithm-driven environment. Within Moroccan culture, where food and family traditions hold deep emotional resonance, nostalgic cues act as vehicles of identity transmission and intergenerational connection.

Digital media have amplified these processes. Social platforms provide spaces where memory becomes interactive — users comment, reinterpret, and circulate nostalgic content, transforming retro campaigns into *collective rituals of remembrance*. For practitioners, this implies that authenticity cannot be manufactured; it must emerge from culturally coherent narratives that respect the brand's history and consumer sensibility. Successful nostalgic communication thus depends less on design imitation than on symbolic sincerity.

Theoretically, this study contributes to understanding retro-marketing as a postmodern form of brand communication — one that negotiates between emotion, technology, and cultural meaning. It also invites reflection on the evolution of attitude formation in digital ecosystems, where affective and cognitive responses are increasingly shaped through participatory media environments.

Future research may extend these findings by exploring cross-sectoral or cross-generational dynamics of nostalgic engagement, as well as the long-term impact of digital memory cycles on brand loyalty. Ultimately, retro-marketing appears not as a return to the past, but as a reconfiguration of memory within the connective logics of the present.

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