



SCHOOL OF
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Retro Rewind

Unveiling the Power of Nostalgia in Fashion Retro Branding and Its
Influence on the Brand Perception of Young Consumers

by

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Abstract

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Keywords: *Nostalgia, identity, perception, Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), possessions, consumer behavior, consumption, brand loyalty, retro branding, marketing, authenticity*

Thesis Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore the perception of young consumers towards retro designs and nostalgia. The study seeks to devolve the understanding of how young consumers understand and interpret these brand designs and construct their identity and behavior.

Theoretical Perspective: Grounded in consumer culture theory, identity, and branding literature, the study examine how nostalgia influences young consumers' perceptions of brands and retro designs. Drawing on theoretical frameworks of authenticity, emotional branding, and consumer-brand relationships, the research explores the role of nostalgia in shaping identity formation, brand loyalty, and product quality perceptions.

Methodology: The study employs a qualitative research design, conducting two in-depth focus group discussions with young consumers aged 18-30. Sampling participants from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, the research explores their experiences, memories, and perceptions of retro branding in the fashion industry. Data collection is supplemented by thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of key themes and patterns.

Analysis: Through rigorous thematic analysis, the study examines participants' narratives and reflections on nostalgia, brand identity, image, and retro branding. Themes such as authenticity, personal nostalgia and brand connection, and consumer behavior are analyzed to discover underlying insights.

Main findings and Contributions: The research reveals a reflective relationship of nostalgia with various areas of perceptions, consumer behavior, and brand engagement. Participants demonstrate strong emotional connections to retro brands, influenced by personal memories, familial influences, and cultural backgrounds. Nostalgia emerges as a powerful driver of brand loyalty, shaping perceptions of product quality and authenticity within the fashion industry. This study contributes valuable insights to the understanding of consumer perception behavior in fashion markets. By revealing the complex dynamics of nostalgia and brand perception, the research report on marketing strategies, brand positioning, and product development initiatives toward young consumers. Additionally, the study supplements theoretical discourse on consumer-brand relationships, authenticity, and emotional branding within the context of retro branding.

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1 Introduction

In this section, an introduction to the study is provided through background, problematization, purpose, research question, delimitations, contributions, and an outline of the thesis.

1.1 Background

Don't you long for the days when life felt simpler, when every moment was filled with wonder and possibility? When the world seemed to move at a slower pace, and our most cherished memories were yet to be made? In today's fast-paced world, within the constant hustle and bustle of modern life, it's easy to find ourselves yearning for the past. We yearn to seek relief in the familiar comforts of bygone days, where the worries of tomorrow were distant echoes, and the present moment held all the promise of eternity. This instinctive desire to return to a time when things felt more certain and uncomplicated is at the heart of nostalgia a sentiment deeply rooted in human experience. Nostalgia transports us back to a time when the world felt gentler, when the weight of responsibility seemed lighter, and when every day was filled with the magic of possibility. It's a longing for the innocence of youth, for the simplicity of days gone by, and for the warmth of memories that have shaped who we are.

The phenomenon of nostalgia, characterized by a sentimental longing for the past, has long fascinated scholars across various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and marketing. Nostalgia is a complex and multifaceted emotion that often evokes fond memories of cherished experiences, places, and cultural artifacts from one's past (Sedikides et al., 2008). While nostalgia was initially viewed as a form of homesickness or longing for a bygone era, contemporary research has shed light on its psychological and behavioral implications, particularly in the context of consumer behavior and marketing.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in nostalgia within the field of marketing, as brands and marketers increasingly recognize its potential as a tool for engaging consumers and forging deep connections with their target audience (Holbrook, 1993). Nostalgia-driven marketing strategies adeptly harness elements from the past think retro designs, vintage aesthetics, and nostalgic references to evoke a wave of positive emotions and associations among consumers (Hartmann & Brunk, 2019). By tapping into consumers' nostalgic sentiments, brands aspire to craft authentic and resonant brand experiences that cultivate loyalty, foster engagement, and ignite emotional attachment (Hartmann & Brunk, 2019). Yet,

despite the allure of nostalgia as a potent marketing strategy, its true effectiveness and impact on consumer behavior remain a subject of ongoing debate. While some scholars argue passionately that nostalgia can significantly augment consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty by eliciting positive emotions and the emotional connection between consumers and brands (Hartmann & Brunk, 2019), others proceed with caution, warning of the potential dangers inherent in nostalgia marketing. These skeptics underscore the risk of romanticizing the past and inadvertently isolating consumers who do not share the same nostalgic sentiments, thus presenting a nuanced perspective on the potential pitfalls of nostalgia-driven marketing strategies.

1.2 Problematization

The fashion industry, characterized by its ever-changing trends and consumer preferences, continually seeks innovative strategies to engage with its target audience effectively (Stone & Farnan, 2018). In recent years, nostalgia has emerged as a prominent theme in branding and marketing, particularly within the context of retro branding. Brands often leverage nostalgic elements, evoking past styles, trends, and cultural references, to connect with consumers on an emotional level and differentiate themselves in a competitive marketplace (Hartmann & Brunk, 2019).

However, while nostalgia holds promise as a powerful tool for brand engagement, its influence on consumer perceptions remains complex and multifaceted (Schwarz & Clore, 2007). Despite the growing interest in nostalgia-driven marketing strategies, there is a notable gap in our understanding of how nostalgia specifically impacts the brand perception of young consumers, within the fashion market. As such, there is a need for empirical research to delve deeper into this phenomenon and elucidate the mechanisms through which nostalgia shapes consumer-brand relationships in the context of retro branding within the fashion industry. Furthermore, the evolving nature of consumer behavior and the dynamic landscape of the fashion industry present additional challenges and opportunities for brands seeking to capitalize on nostalgia. Current advancements in technology and shifts in cultural norms have reshaped consumer expectations and consumption patterns, requiring an integral understanding of how brands can effectively leverage nostalgia to resonate with contemporary audiences (Firat & Venkatesh, 1993).

To comprehend the mechanisms underlying nostalgia's impact on consumer-brand relationships, among young consumers, theoretical frameworks become essential. To address

this gap, theoretical frameworks offer insights into the complex interplay between nostalgia, identity, consumer behavior, authenticity, and brand image within the fashion industry. Central to this exploration are concepts such as identity formation processes and the collective construction of cultural memory. For instance, the fashion choices of young consumers often serve as a means of self-expression and identity negotiation, with nostalgia serving as a channel through which individuals reaffirm their personal narratives and cultural attachments (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Understanding how nostalgic elements resonate with consumers' self-concepts and aspirations can present the mechanisms through which brands cultivate emotional connections and foster brand loyalty (Escalas & Bettman, 2005).

Empirical research plays a crucial role in connecting the gap in our comprehension of how nostalgia influences consumer perceptions and attitudes toward brands. Through the utilization of qualitative methodologies such as focus groups, this study aims to delve into the diverse intricacies of consumer-brand interactions. This approach enables the exploration of emotional triggers and psychological mechanisms that underlie nostalgic responses, shedding light on their impact on brand perceptions (Firat & Venkatesh, 1993).

Moreover, by investigating the dynamic interaction between nostalgia, identity construction, and brand image perception, marketers can gain valuable insights into crafting authentic and resonant brand experiences that resonate with contemporary audiences. This integrated examination offers a nuanced understanding of how nostalgic elements contribute to the formation of consumer identities and their interpretation of brand messaging (Hartmann & Brunk, 2019)

1.3 Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of nostalgia on the brand perception of young consumers within the context of retro branding in the fashion industry. By examining the underlying mechanisms through which nostalgia shapes consumer-brand relationships, this research aims to contribute to our understanding of consumer behavior and branding strategies. The goal is to provide valuable insights for fashion marketers, potentially enabling them to develop more targeted and impactful branding strategies that resonate with their target audience and foster stronger brand loyalty and engagement.

1.4 Research Question

How does nostalgia influence young consumers' brand perception in the context of retro branding within the fashion industry?

1.5 Delimitations of the Thesis

It's important to acknowledge certain limitations and delimitations of this study. Firstly, the focus will primarily be on young consumers, and while insights gained may have broader applicability, they may not fully represent the perspectives of older demographics or consumers from other cultural backgrounds. Additionally, the study will specifically concentrate on the fashion industry and retro branding, potentially overlooking other industries or branding strategies. Furthermore, the research will be conducted within a specific time frame and geographical context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to different periods or regions.

1.6 Theoretical and Practical Contributions

The theoretical contributions of this study lie in advancing our understanding of the role of nostalgia in shaping consumer-brand relationships, particularly within the unique context of retro branding in the fashion industry. By revealing the underlying mechanisms through which nostalgia influences brand perception, this research will contribute to theoretical frameworks in consumer behavior and branding.

On a practical level, the insights gained from this study will potentially be helpful for fashion marketers, providing them with actionable knowledge to develop more targeted and impactful branding strategies. By leveraging nostalgia effectively, marketers can create authentic and resonant brand experiences that foster stronger connections with their target audience. Ultimately, the findings of this research have the potential to inform and enhance marketing practices within the fashion industry, ultimately contributing to the industry's overall competitiveness and sustainability.

1.7 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis follows a structured approach, beginning with a comprehensive review of current literature encompassing nostalgia, identity, marketing, and branding. This review establishes a robust theoretical foundation for the research framework. Subsequently, the methodology section outlines the research approach, design, and data collection methods employed to address

the central research question. The presentation of results follows, offering an in-depth analysis of the collected data. These findings are then critically examined in relation to the established theoretical framework and existing literature, providing valuable insights into the subject matter. Finally, the conclusion synthesizes the key findings, discusses their theoretical and practical implications, acknowledges any study limitations, and proposes recommendations for future research endeavors in similar domains. Throughout the thesis, accurate attention is given to citation and referencing, ensuring the credibility and integrity of the presented arguments and insights.

2 Literature Review

In this section, the research and theory upon which the study and its analysis are built on are presented.

2.1 Nostalgia

Nowadays nostalgia is a concept that is more present in the marketing environment (Lasaleta et al., 2014). Numerous studies have shown the impact of nostalgia in marketing. Research by Sedikides and Wildschut (2016) highlights how nostalgic experiences can positively influence consumer attitudes and behaviors. Their work suggests that nostalgia enhances perceived product value and increases willingness to pay. Additionally, Holak and Havlena (1998) explored the role of nostalgia in advertising, finding that nostalgic ads can evoke strong emotional responses and improve brand evaluations. We can find different definitions for nostalgia, Holbrook and Schindler (2003a) defined nostalgia as a preference or positive attitude toward objects places, or things that were more commonly popular or fashionable when one was younger in early adulthood, in adolescence, and in childhood. The emotion linked with the feelings of nostalgia is often described as a longing sentiment, affection, etc., for the past (Routledge et al., 2013).

We can mainly identify three types of nostalgia: personal, historical, and collective nostalgia. Personal nostalgia, also known as "real nostalgia," stems from direct, personal experiences, that intertwine with an individual's identity and relationships (Batcho, 2007). It emerges from personally remembered past events, often recalling positive moments from one's own lived history (Marchegiani & Phau, 2011). Personal nostalgia is noted for its ability to evoke vivid episodic memories (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987), particularly as people age and reflect on the "booming" and "flourishing" days of their youth. Therefore familiarity, home, love, and ordinary people are often associated with triggering personal nostalgia.

On the other side, historical nostalgia, also known as simulated nostalgia, differs from personal nostalgia in that it transports individuals to a time before their birth, creating a sentimental attachment to an indirectly experienced past (Baker & Kennedy, 1994). This form of nostalgia often arises through close personal connections, such as family and friends, who have firsthand experience of the time, event, or object in question (Baker & Kennedy, 1994). Sometimes, historical nostalgia revolves around events or eras predating one's birth, idealized through positive imagery and feelings (Havlena & Holak, 1991). Items like collector's items and

antiques can evoke feelings of simulated nostalgia. Unlike personal nostalgia, historical nostalgia lacks direct personal experience with the past event (Baker & Kennedy, 1994). However, the memories and emotions it evokes might not be as potent as those brought about by personal nostalgia (Batcho, 2007).

In addition to personal and historical forms of nostalgia, as identified by Baker & Kennedy (1994), a third category known as collective nostalgia is discussed. This type diverges from the individualistic nature of the former two, embodying a more communal sentiment described as "a sentimental or bittersweet yearning for the past which represents a culture, a generation, or a nation" (Baker & Kennedy, 1994, p. 171). Emotions associated with this category of nostalgia are more uniform across individuals who share a common cultural background or heritage.

Nostalgia has become an important aspect between marketers and advertisers. Nowadays we can see that nostalgia has become a popular theme among brands to capture moments from the past, using nostalgic consumption (Marchegiani & Phau, 2010). Furthermore, research reveals that ad-evoked nostalgia can positively affect consumers' attitudes toward a brand and increase purchase intention (Pascal et al., 2002).

Feelings related to nostalgia can improve marketing strategies, as Baker & Kennedy (1994) discovered; it is hard to make consumers feel nostalgic at the beginning. Their research reveals that to provoke nostalgia people need to feel attached to something. If there is no connection to the ad, then nostalgic feelings will not appear. According to Marchegiani & Phau (2010), there are mainly two kinds of nostalgia that might influence people in a different manner. Self-directed thought and a positive attitude toward the ad might outperform nostalgic ads historically (Muehling & Pascal, 2011). Nevertheless, the cognitive analysis shows that recalling marketing messages such as historical or personal will show similar results (Muehling & Pascal, 2011).

2.2 Perceptions in Marketing

Emotional branding is a concept embedded in marketing theory and psychology, which lays emphasis on the creation of firm emotional relationships and bonds between consumers and brands through strategic communication and brand experiences (Labrecque et al., 2013b). The concept was discovered or appeared in the late 1990s and brands are recognizing the importance of the emotional connection between customers and the brand and its result in increased consumer loyalty and driving purchase and repurchase behavior (Keller, 2009; Ersoy & Çalk,

2000), and higher satisfaction among customers (Bagozzi et al., 1999). One notable study that integrated emotions into market research was conducted by Bagozzi et al., (1999), who were defining emotions as emotions that can be understood as mental states of preparation that develop from evaluations of either external events or one's internal thoughts. In contrast to conventional branding approaches, where the branding is more focused on showcasing and highlighting a product or service's practical advantages or characteristics to attract customers, emotional branding focuses more on evoking emotions, memories, experiences, and the whole engagement with consumers' lives (Thompson et al., 2006).

Emotional branding is often defined as the process of building brand loyalty and preference by appealing to consumers' emotions, aspirations, and values (Kapferer, 2008). It involves infusing brands with personality traits and symbolic meanings that resonate with consumers on an emotional level (Aaker, 1997). Key components of emotional branding include brand storytelling, sensory branding, and experiential marketing, all of which aim to evoke specific emotions and create memorable brand experiences (Brakus et al., 2009). The connections between the customer and the brand construct a unique relationship that is built upon trust, fostering a complete emotional journey (Morrison and Crane, 2007). The objective is not just for customers to select a brand, but to encourage a relationship with the brand that encompasses every aspect of their lives, where the brands intertwine with their daily lives, values, experiences, and social connections (Thompson et al., 2006). Social scientists suggest that emotions create a lasting impression in the human brain, sustaining the identification and prediction of future emotional stimuli, responses, and reactions (Akgün et al., 2013). Building upon these definitions, emotional branding emerges as a distinctive and unparalleled branding approach, it fosters a sense of self-congruence by enabling consumers to see themselves reflected in the brand (Akgün et al., 2013).

Despite its potential benefits, emotional branding poses certain challenges and ethical considerations for marketers. For instance, there is a risk of consumers perceiving emotional branding tactics as manipulative or insincere, particularly if brands exploit sensitive emotions or cultural symbols for commercial gain (Fournier, 1998), and maintaining consistency and authenticity in emotional branding efforts can be challenging for brands operating in an era of rapidly changing consumer tastes and preferences (Schmitt, 1999).

In the realm of emotional branding, storytelling is a powerful tool for creating deep connections between brands and consumers. Brand storytelling entails the art of crafting stories that deeply connect with consumers emotionally, delving into their core values, personal real-life

experiences, and goals and ambitions (Holt, 2004). Through the weaving of compelling narratives, brands can transcend and have the potential to surpass mere product advantages and benefits, creating a sense of meaning and purpose that aligns with consumers' ideal selves (Escalas, 2004). This not only sparks consumers' imagination but also fosters a strong emotional attachment (Mossberg, 2008), aiming to appeal to and inspire them (Silverstein and Fiske, 2003). Storytelling is a powerful tool that deeply impacts audiences and brands by evoking a range of emotions (McAdams, 2001). Nostalgia, with its ability to transport individuals to dear memories, creates feelings of warmth and reminiscence, fostering a deep emotional connection building on Davis's (1979) conceptualization of nostalgia as a mechanism for temporal escapism, where individuals seek refuge in idealized memories of the past. Empathy, forged through storytelling, enables listeners to relate to characters and their experiences, fostering understanding and resonance. Dynamic storytelling techniques introduce narratives with excitement, keeping audiences attracted and emotionally invested in the story. Inspirational tales inspire hope and resilience, urging consumers to overcome obstacles and pursue their aspirations. Moreover, storytelling fosters a sense of belonging and unity among audiences by highlighting shared experiences and common struggles. This collective emotional bond strengthens social connections and interpersonal relationships, enriching the human experience with shared understanding and empathy. Storytelling prompts reflection, encouraging personal growth and self-awareness as individuals reflect on their own experiences and values (McAdams, 2001).

In essence, storytelling acts as a powerful instrument for establishing emotional connections, which in turn shape perceptions and cultivate continuing bonds between brands and consumers. These emotional responses are essential in influencing consumer perceptions and attitudes toward the brand, ultimately fostering brand loyalty and advocacy (Escalas & Stern, 2003).

Sensory branding exploits the power of sensory stimuli to evoke emotional responses and create memorable brand and unforgettable experiences (Hultén, 2017). By involving various senses like sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste, sensory branding immerses consumers in a holistic brand experience that resonates on a deeper emotional level. This approach recognizes that human perception and memory are strongly influenced by sensory inputs, and by strategically incorporating sensory elements into branding efforts, companies can create more immersive and impactful interactions with their audience and consumers (Krishna, 2012).

Visual elements are pivotal in sensory branding, as they mold brand perceptions and provoke specific emotions through color, design, and imagery. Colors, in particular, play a diverse role in influencing consumer emotions and perceptions. Each color is associated with distinct emotions; for instance, red often sparks excitement and passion, while blue fosters a sense of calmness and trust (Labrecque et al., 2013a). Moreover, colors have the ability to influence mood, with warm tones evoking feelings of happiness and cool tones inducing relaxation (Labrecque et al., 2013a). Beyond affecting consumers' moods, colors also convey brand personality and values. Bold hues signify energy and modernity, while softer tones suggest sophistication and elegance. Consumers often forge emotional bonds with brands based on their associated colors, reflecting the brand's identity and ethos (Labrecque et al., 2013a).

In addition to impacting consumer perceptions and behaviors, tactile sensations profoundly influence brand-consumer relationships and foster emotional connections. Interactions with tactile products evoke intimacy, trust, and satisfaction, nurturing stronger brand loyalty (Krishna, 2012). Research by Peck and Childers (2003) reveals that individuals with a heightened "need for touch" tend to develop deeper emotional attachments to touchable products. Tactile experiences enrich the brand experience, imbuing it with sensory depth. Whether it's the luxurious feel of a soft material, the satisfying click of well-designed packaging, or the comforting grip of a high-quality item, tactile sensations create enduring impressions on consumers (Spence, 2012). These sensations influence perceptions of brand quality, authenticity, and value. By thoughtfully integrating tactile elements into product design, packaging, and retail environments, brands can craft immersive sensory experiences that resonate with consumers on an emotional level, nurturing enduring brand connections.

Auditory elements, such as music and sound effects, are integral to sensory branding, shaping emotions and behaviors by eliciting strong emotional responses and influencing consumer choices (Krishna, 2012).

Cause branding, also known as cause-related marketing or cause marketing, is a strategic approach that empowers consumers to make purchases to foster positive social change, rather than solely for personal gain (Kim and Johnson, 2013). It involves aligning a company's brand with a specific social or environmental cause to benefit both the cause and the brand's image. By dedicating financial resources, time, or other forms of support, companies strive to make a positive impact on the chosen cause while enhancing their reputation and fostering customer loyalty (Kim and Johnson, 2013). Cause branding initiatives aim to establish emotional

connections with consumers by showcasing the brand's values and commitment to social responsibility. Through partnerships with charitable organizations or direct involvement in social causes, companies can engage consumers on a deeper level, nurturing enduring relationships founded on shared values and a sense of purpose. When brands address social or environmental issues, they can forge emotional connections and relationships with consumers, with moral emotions playing a crucial role as they resonate with consumers' values and their desire to support a larger cause (Haidt, 2003). This has the potential to enhance consumer perceptions of the brand and contribute to a positive long-term brand image (Kim & Sullivan, 2019).

Crafting effective cause branding strategies goes beyond merely selecting any social or environmental cause; it requires careful alignment with the brand's core values, identity, and target audience. Thorough research is essential for brands to understand their audience's interests, beliefs, and preferences, ensuring genuine resonance with the chosen cause. Additionally, brands must evaluate the potential impact of their cause branding efforts on overall brand equity and reputation. Poorly matched partnerships or poorly executed campaigns risk consumer backlash, as they may be perceived as inauthentic or exploitative (Kim & Sullivan, 2019).

2.3 Identity

Identity is the unique set of characteristics and experiences that define an individual, including their personality, values, and beliefs (Thompson et al., 2023). It encompasses the roles we play in society, our relationships, and our cultural affiliations. Identity evolves over time, shaped by personal growth, social interactions, and life events.

2.3.1 Identity Construction

It is hard to understand the process of identity due to its all roundness (Gleason, 1983). However, this ambiguousness is the focus of why identity is that important. The use of identity can be used in different kinds such as politics, personal crisis, consumption, and status in life. The concept gained popularity in the mid-twentieth as a concept of invigorating similarity and continuity (Erickson, 1968). Also, the symbolic interactionist theory introduced the aspect that people tend to perform identity in specific moments to generate an “impression” of who they are to others (Goffman, 2022). We can understand that there exist two disciplines: the sociological and the psychological. Psychology understands it as an inherent trait however sociology is studied in a more relational way. However, in the consumer culture theory, the

sociological and cultural theories are the closest theories, defining identity as an “identity work” and “identity projects”. (Goffman, 2022) Nowadays consumption is a way through which society and people negotiate and express their identities, expressing “who they are” or “where they belong”. This process is done in a “jointly” process, this definition was introduced by (Du Gay et al 2013). The fashionable clothes are used to define our identity as well as our social class (Crane, 2000). Also, social, and self-relevant emotion, nostalgia can help in the creation of an individual's identity and the creation of the self (Sierra & McQuitty, 2007). This process of how nostalgia contributes to the creation of identity is based on the memories and heritage of group members (Brown & Humphreys 2002).

Consumer culture theory uses the metaphor of “core self”, having roots in existential philosophy. Therefore, researches defined “life projects” as important concepts to understand consumers (McCracken, 1986). This approach led to other definitions such as “self” and “extended self” that can incorporate possessions and objects that we can consume (Belk, 1988). In other perspectives, identity involves a consumer who creates conceptions of the “self” who develops associations with others and has a criteria with who decides to engage from a variety of cultural alternatives. It is here where the concept of “authenticity” arises, this conception will focus on the meanings of “real” or “genuine” experiences that relate to the definition of the “self”. The nature of authenticity is difficult to answer (Beverland & Farelly 2010) due to the paradoxical aspect of mass media and staged marketing (Rose & Wood, 2005).

Another approach introduced by Firat and Venkatesh (1995), is a feature of postmodernity as a more dynamic and market-mediated identity construction. There is a transition from a traditional and archaic identity approach to a more aesthetic and neo-tribal community (Cova et al. 2007). In this dynamic, the products are seen by their symbolic meaning (Belk, 1988). Postmodernism is strongly characterized by fragmentation experience, where “self-identity” needs to be created due to the always changing experiences and fragmented experiences (Giddens, 1991). Brands can offer consistency in the always-changing environment and fragmentation. Brands provides consistency providing the same benefits over time from past experiences, which also involves behavior confidence. This confidence is produced due to advertising which improves consumer experience. Brands can evoke strong feelings of nostalgia, providing comfort feelings against insecurities. Therefore, consumers buy from brands that had experiences with their family or remember them from childhood. Holbrook and Schindler (2003b) presented that when we are in our adolescence, is it when we develop our preferences. Therefore, brands with which we developed strong relationships during our

childhood have more chances to develop a depth meaning than brands that we encounter in later stages.

Nowadays social media platforms change the logic of the construction of identities. The communication shifted from a way direction to a multi-direction way. The rules with smartphones changed how everyone became content produced, creating a process of co-construction between consumers and collectives (Cova et. al. 2007). This process is created in an instant and borderless way. These pictures we post online can create a “feel” in different ways such as beautiful, cool, secure, and defying who we are. Therefore, the “selfies” connect with our narrative autonomy, defying our agency (Frosh, 2015). This process of defying our identity is not created only by one picture but a process of multi-pictures and a constant posting process, creating a motion.

2.3.2 Possessions and the sense of the past

Possessions are a tool to store our memories and feelings, for example, a souvenir can make our experience from a past trip more tangible. As Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) discuss, we can find three different possessions: treasured, visual art, and photographs. The value that people provide to these possessions depends on the relation they call forth. On the other hand, Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) analyzed how informants explain their attachments to objects, revealing that older respondents are linked to past experiences in a particular way. The explanation is that our connection to memory evokes possession it increases as we store it from the past. Also, when we collect objects from the past, these objects defined as antiques can be seen as a “status” (Douglas and Isherwood 1996). Another reason for this behavior of collection of “aesthetic” products or artifacts such as hand-made or non-mainstream products has referred to the symbolism of status given to us. The meanings we find in these products normally are given or transferred by the person or entity who created the product. In the act of having these products, we appropriate the “self” part of each producer of these objects. Here is where the nostalgia appears in the fascination of past objects (Belk, 1998).

Furthermore, possessions have fulfillment in our lives, at the early stages of our birth we are not able to differentiate between ourselves and the environment (Erikson, 1994). The first feeling of identity comes when the children can recognize their independence (Furby and Wilke, 1982). Furby (1980), extended this meaning and explained that the first development of our self is when we first start controlling other objects, during the first year of birth of the child. There

are experiments that prove feelings like anger can occur when these possessions are shared or given to someone else (Horney, 2013).

Also, researchers adopt the orientation of poststructuralists, this is focused on the analysis of identity from an inner shelf. This orientation relates to the concepts of “stories” and “sets of arguments” that are around in society. Another denomination of these concepts is “discourses” and “myths” which tend to be built in a historical and social process. Consumers will then use mass media, and popular culture, to enact a specific identity (Thompson and Tambyah, 1999). Also, in this theory, consumer identity is not something that is finished and can be deconstructed. (Thompson and Tambyah 1999). The process of construction of identity will exist in different dimensions of the self that are discussed and will never “finish” (Cherrier and Murray 2007). The main resources to build these identities can be found around mass media such as TV, and radio (McCrackens, 1986). Understanding this process that postmodern consumers develop, companies create marketing communications that attach to consumers (Holt, 2004). An example of brands that relate to consumers are Budweiser, Harley Davidson, and Tesla. The goal of the brands is to become a tool for explaining their own history and help consumers resolve their tensions related to their identity process. The environment can be online as well as offline, making the technological part more “natural” in our everyday life such as the use of smartphones.

2.4 Consumer Behavior Relationship

Mainly our possessions are a part of our identity. Furthermore, the construction of our “extended self” is a critical factor in our consumer behavior rather than our buyer behavior. The concept that our possessions are part of ourselves was introduced by James (1890), saying that we are the total of our possessions. The “extended self” is seen in different external objects, personal possessions, and places. According to McClelland (1953), possession only becomes part of ourselves when we can create a control over them, therefore they become part of our body. Also, there is a feeling of loss of possessions of these objects (Goffman, 1961). This can be present in some spaces such as prisons, where they normally take out your possessions once you enter. Your body follows a process of “deprivation” of belonging and standardization of everyone who is in that place. This process of erasing an identity is called elimination of identity (Snyder & Fromkin 2012).

As Kapferer (1997) articulates, trust is the foundation upon which enduring relationships between brands and consumers are forged. Several factors contribute to the establishment of

brand trust. First and foremost is product quality and performance. Consumers expect brands to deliver on their product or service claims reliably. Moreover, consistent communication, both in terms of messaging and actions, plays a crucial role. As Aaker (1997) suggests, brands that effectively communicate their values and demonstrate authenticity are more likely to earn trust. Additionally, corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives significantly influence brand trust. Consumers increasingly scrutinize brands' ethical conduct and environmental administration. Brands that provide genuine commitment to social and environmental causes not only foster trust but also differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001).

Furthermore, brands can leverage social proof and endorsements to increase trust. Positive reviews and endorsements from satisfied customers serve as powerful validators of a brand's credibility and reliability (Duan et al., 2008). In a landscape characterized by volatility and uncertainty, brand trust emerges as a key point of sustained success. It is not merely a competitive advantage but a strategic imperative for brands aspiring to cultivate enduring relationships with consumers. By prioritizing transparency, integrity, and authenticity, brands can lay the foundation for unwavering trust, thereby engendering loyalty and advocacy that transcends transactional exchanges. As competition intensifies and consumer expectations evolve, brands must recognize that trust is not just earned but continually nurtured and safeguarded.

Garbarino and Johnson (1999), explore how these three factors influence customer behavior and loyalty in different types of customer relationships. The authors differentiate between transactional and relational customer groups, suggesting that for transactional customers, satisfaction is the primary driver of future interactions. In contrast, for customers with more relational bonds, trust and commitment play significant roles. By employing structural modeling, they demonstrate that the impact of satisfaction, trust, and commitment varies depending on the customer's relationship with the firm, emphasizing the importance of tailoring relationship management strategies to different customer segments to enhance loyalty and long-term engagement.

According to Fournier (1998), who developed a qualitative study on consumers and their relationships with brands, provides the theory that explains how brands become partners, from an initiator, maintenance, and destruction, of consumer-brand relationships. There are several types of consumer brand relationship forms depending on the depth, strength, and quality. One of the relationships we can highlight is “childhood friendship”; this happens when consuming

brands or products that remind you of a certain time or memories of important persons, such as parents, or grandparents, that consumed or used a specific product or a product from a specific brand. Another example is the marriage of convenience; A switch from a new brand, developing into a committed and satisfying relationship, because of the move into a new geographical situation.

Brand loyalty is the definition brand's ability to create connections that endure with its consumers. Currently, we live in a market with huge competition and changing consumer loyalties, and brand loyalty emerged as a critical aspect for companies. This discourse focuses on the essence of brand loyalty, and effective strategies for its development, drawing insights from different authors. At its core, brand loyalty signifies a consumer's commitment and preference for a particular brand. It creates repeated purchases, creating a deeper emotional attachment and affinity towards the brand (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973). Loyalty is not merely transactional but relational, rooted in trust, satisfaction, and perceived value (Oliver, 1999). There are different factors that contribute to the development of brand loyalty. Product quality, performance, as they form the foundation of trust and satisfaction (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). Also, consistent positive experiences strength consumers' allegiance to the brand, fostering a sense of reliability and dependability (Rust et al., 2004). Moreover, brand loyalty is connected to brand image and identity. Brands that resonate with consumers' values, aspirations, and lifestyles tend to construct stronger emotional connections, therefore build stronger loyalty connections (Keller, 1993). Effective brand communication and engagement therefore reinforce brand loyalty providing a sense of belonging and community among consumers (Fournier, 1998).

Building brand loyalty needs a proper strategic focused on customer-centric initiatives and relationship points. Brands can enhance loyalty by prioritizing customer experience and satisfaction, striving to exceed expectations at every touchpoint (Homburg et al., 2009). Personalization and customization initiatives can further strengthen connections with consumers by demonstrating personalization towards their individual preferences and needs (Gupta & Lehmann, 2008). The connection between brand loyalty and nostalgia within marketing is recognized by Holak and Havlena (1998) suggesting that nostalgia plays a crucial role in consumer behavior, influencing brand preferences and purchase decisions. Brands that effectively tap into nostalgic sentiments often benefit from increased consumer loyalty and willingness to pay premium prices (Thompson and Haytko, 1997). There are four main points

that compound brand Loyalty: customer satisfaction, internal branding, brand reputation, and brand Image (Mao, 2010).

Far beyond logos and slogans, a brand's image is an important factor in consumer perceptions and emotions. Belk explored these relationships; brand image is a key factor for a company to hold the brand's success. Belk's (1988) research shows that brand image as complex collection of impressions in consumers' minds. It's more than a logo; it's the accumulation of experiences, values, and emotions associated with a brand. This integral picture is built by brand identity; as well as the visual representation of the name of the brand and the logo, a specific brand personality, which enables a relationship with consumers; and brand associations, the mental links between a brand and specific attributes or values. For example, some brands generate connections such as Nike, and words like "athleticism" and "innovation" might come up to mind. This is not merely a marketing ploy; it's a strategic procedure. A positive brand image influences consumer choice, often overcoming price considerations. The brand image could also depend on consumers' perception of the concept of "country-of-origin", as described by Adina et al., (2015), where consumers recognize certain regions for their superior quality. In competitive markets, image can be the deciding factor. Positive brand experiences feed loyalty, creating a cycle of repeat purchases. In a crowded marketplace, a distinct brand image is a determinant for attracting and keeping consumers engaged. Belk's wisdom provides a roadmap for brand builders: every touchpoint advert, packaging, and customer interaction should echo the brand's essence and values. Brands that evoke emotions create deeper connections. Storytelling and experiential marketing can create a lasting impression. Marketers must stay updated to shifts in consumer sentiment and market dynamics, adjusting strategies accordingly. Richard Belk's 1988 insights echo through the decades, reminding us that a brand's image is its essence. It's not just about products; it's about weaving a narrative that resonates with consumers. By blending brand identity, personality, and associations, and embracing consistent messaging and emotional bonds, brands can acquire a long-lasting image in consumers' minds.

2.5 Chapter Summary

In the complex world of marketing, perception, identity, and consumer behavior emerge as key themes shaping brand-consumer relationships. Perception underscores the importance of how consumers interpret and internalize brand messages, emphasizing the need for brands to craft authentic narratives that resonate with their target audience's values and preferences. Identity construction through nostalgia highlights the complex relationship between personal and

societal influences on consumer behavior, with nostalgia serving as a key factor for the formation of individual and collective identities. Meanwhile, consumer behavior shows the complex dynamics driving brand loyalty and engagement, emphasizing the significance of trust, satisfaction, and perceived value in fostering enduring connections between brands and consumers. Together, these themes underscore the multifaceted nature of consumer-brand interactions, urging marketers to adopt a holistic approach that integrates perception management, identity alignment, and consumer-centric strategies to create meaningful and lasting brand-consumer relationships.

3 Methodology

In this section, the study delves into the methodology employed in this research, interpreting the tools and research strategy utilized to address the research question and aim. This segment not only outlines the structure of the thesis but also elucidates the methodological choices made, offering an overview of its organization while explaining the methods employed for data collection and analysis.

3.1 Philosophy of Science

The research philosophy encompasses the underlying assumptions and beliefs guiding knowledge development. Addressing these assumptions is crucial as they inherently shape the decisions made during the research process, thereby influencing the outcomes. The aim of examining the research philosophy is to comprehend and acknowledge the assumptions and constraints inherent in conducting the research (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). Easterby-Smith et al. (2021) identify four different types of ontologies, what is the fundamental nature of reality? realism, internal realism, relativism, and nominalism. After careful deliberation, we have opted for relativism as our research philosophy. Relativism acknowledges that reality is not fixed or objective but rather constructed and interpreted differently by individuals within their sociocultural contexts (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). This aligns with our aim to understand subjective experiences and interpretations within the context of the fashion industry. By embracing relativism, we recognize the diverse perspectives and interpretations of reality, thereby enriching our understanding of the phenomena.

Epistemology relates to the assumptions regarding the most effective methods of investigating the nature of the world (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). There are two different views of epistemology, social construction, and positivism. We have chosen the social constructionist perspective as it aligns with our research objectives and the nature of the phenomena we are exploring. Social constructionism emphasizes the role of social interactions, language, and culture in shaping knowledge and understanding (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). This perspective is particularly suitable for our study as we aim to explore the subjective experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of individuals within the context of the fashion industry. By adopting a social constructionist approach, we acknowledge the dynamic and fluid nature of reality, recognizing that knowledge is constructed through social interactions and cultural meanings (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). This enables us to delve deeper into the complex interplay between individuals, society, and culture.

3.2 Research Approach

This study examines the interplay between nostalgia and brand perception among young consumers within the dynamic landscape of the fashion industry. Combining elements of inductive and deductive reasoning, our research endeavors to unravel the nuances of how nostalgic branding influences the preferences and perceptions of the modern fashion consumer. By blending empirical data analysis with theoretical frameworks, the study seeks to shed light on the mechanisms through which nostalgia shapes consumer-brand relationships, offering valuable insights for fashion marketers aiming to cultivate deeper connections with their target audience.

The research approach for this study leans primarily towards inductive reasoning, supplemented by elements of deductive logic. Inductive reasoning, the cornerstone of our approach, entails deriving insights from specific observations to form broader generalizations and theories (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this study, the study commences by collecting and analyzing empirical data concerning the impact of nostalgia on the brand perception of young consumers within the fashion industry. Through focus groups, the study will gather qualitative data on consumers' responses to nostalgic branding elements. These observations will then be carefully analyzed to recognize patterns and themes. By allowing the research findings to emerge from the data itself, inductive reasoning empowers the study to uncover fresh insights and generate theories firmly grounded in empirical evidence (Bryman & Bell, 2011). For instance, through the thematic analysis of focus group discussions, the study may identify recurring themes related to the emotional resonance of nostalgic branding or its role in shaping brand loyalty among young consumers.

Although the primary thrust of our approach is inductive, deductive reasoning also plays a role in shaping our research process. The study will draw upon existing theories and literature on nostalgia, identity, consumer behavior, and branding to provide theoretical guidance and inform the formulation of research questions. These established theories will furnish a conceptual framework for interpreting the phenomena observed in the data (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The research approach strikes a balance between inductive and deductive reasoning. While inductive reasoning guides the exploration of specific observations to unveil broader insights, deductive reasoning offers theoretical grounding. This combination offers a comprehensive and thorough examination of how nostalgia influences the brand perception of young consumers within the fashion industry.

3.3 Research Design and Method

When considering the research methodology for a study and the collection of empirical data, two main approaches stand out: quantitative and qualitative research methods (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The qualitative approach offers a nuanced lens through which the study seeks to understand complex phenomena by delving into the subjective experiences, perspectives, and behaviors of individuals within their natural context. Unlike quantitative methods, which prioritize numerical data and statistical analysis, qualitative research aims to capture the richness, depth, and nuances of human experiences through thorough exploration and interpretation (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The focus of the study lies in exploring the subjective experiences and perceptions of young consumers regarding nostalgic branding in the fashion industry. Qualitative methods are particularly suited to this endeavor, offering the flexibility needed for exploratory research to uncover new insights and delve into emergent themes in a fluid and adaptable manner (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021).

Nostalgia, intertwined with brand perception, is a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by individual experiences, cultural contexts, and social interactions. Through qualitative methods, the study aims to navigate the complexity of these intertwined elements, enabling us to explore diverse perspectives, emotions, and motivations that underpin consumer behavior. By immersing ourselves in the natural context of participants' lives, qualitative methods allow the study to grasp the social, cultural, and environmental factors influencing their perceptions and behaviors (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). Through focus groups, it is intended to uncover how nostalgia manifests in various contexts and its implications for brand perceptions within the fashion industry. The adaptability of qualitative methods proves invaluable in our research journey. Unlike surveys, qualitative approaches empower us to adjust questions, delve deeper into emerging themes, and explore unexpected avenues of inquiry. This adaptability is essential for capturing the richness and complexity of participants' experiences. Ultimately, qualitative methods yield rich, detailed data that provide invaluable insights into the lived experiences and perspectives of participants. Through open-ended interviews or focus group discussions, the study aspires to capture the depth of participants' narratives, emotions, and interpretations (Bryman & Bell, 2011), thereby facilitating a holistic understanding of the phenomenon.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

3.4.1 Semi-Structured Focus-Groups

In our research, we have chosen focus groups as our data collection method for several reasons. Focus groups are not limited to one-on-one interactions; group interviews and focus groups offer valuable insights, each serving distinct purposes. While group interviews occur naturally within specific settings like project teams, focus groups are arranged by researchers, gathering individuals from diverse backgrounds to explore specific topics (Steyaert & Bouwen, 2004). We decided to use focus groups because they uniquely allow for deep, interactive conversations among participants. (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). This approach aligns with our research objective of exploring the influence of nostalgia on young consumers within the fashion industry. By bringing together individuals from various backgrounds and cultural contexts, we aim to create a dynamic environment conducive to exploring the multifaceted nature of nostalgia and its impact on consumer behavior. In this study we are going to conduct two focus groups, consisting of seven participants in the first focus group and eight participants in the second focus group, Blackburn and Stokes (2000) found that groups of more than eight participants were difficult to manage so we scaled it down to a reasonable number of participants. Focus groups offer an opportunity to capture the interplay between individual experiences, identity, collective memories, and brand perceptions. The exchange of ideas in the focus group discussions allows participants to build upon each other's ideas, challenge assumptions, and co-construct knowledge within the discussions (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). This not only improves the depth of our collected data but also provides insights into the underlying mechanisms driving consumer behavior and brand preferences.

Our focus groups will use a semi-structured approach that combines thematic prompts with open-ended questions. This method provides flexibility and ensures we cover key topics related to nostalgia and brand perception comprehensively. It encourages participants to freely share their experiences, perceptions, and emotions, fostering a range of diverse viewpoints (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). By asking open-ended questions, we aim to collect rich qualitative data that captures the subtleties of participants' experiences. The semi-structured format allows us to explore specific themes identified during our research while remaining open to new insights and perspectives. This adaptability is crucial for discovering unexpected connections and patterns (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). Moreover, creating a supportive and inclusive environment is essential for encouraging active participation and diverse contributions from all participants, which enhances the depth and breadth of our data collection.

3.4.2 Sampling

For this study, we have chosen to sample individuals between the ages of 18 and 30 years old. This age range was selected to specifically target young fashion consumers. By focusing on this demographic, we aim to capture insights from a generation that is often at the forefront of fashion trends and more frequently consumes fashion products than older demographics (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009), thereby providing valuable insights into the dynamics of brand perception and nostalgia within the fashion industry. Additionally, restricting the age range to 18-30 allows for a more homogenous sample in terms of life stage and cultural experiences, facilitating a deeper understanding of how nostalgia shapes brand perception among young adults within the fashion industry.

Convenience sampling was chosen as the method for participant selection in this study because it is best suited to the research objectives and practical needs. The examination of the influence of nostalgia on young consumers' (18-30) perceptions of retro branding in the fashion industry necessitates a sampling approach that allows efficient access to a target demographic while reflecting the dynamic nature of consumer behavior within this context.

Convenience sampling was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, it allows for easy access to participants who meet the criteria of being young consumers (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). This accessibility ensures a diverse range of respondents, reflecting various backgrounds and preferences within the target demographic. By capturing a variety of perspectives, the study aims to unveil the nuanced impact of nostalgia on brand perception among young consumers. Secondly, it offers advantages in terms of time and resource efficiency (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). Considering the empirical nature of the research and the focus on understanding subjective experiences, this method allows for quick organization and execution of the two focus group sessions. By selecting participants based on availability and proximity, the study optimizes data collection efforts without compromising the depth of insights obtained. The sampling method reflects the spontaneous and impulsive nature of consumer behavior and perception in the fashion industry. The fast-paced nature of this sector, characterized by evolving trends and consumer preferences, necessitates a sampling approach that mirrors real-world scenarios. Convenience sampling allows for the exploration of consumer responses to retro branding in a context that closely resembles their everyday encounters with fashion brands. The flexibility inherent in convenience sampling enhances the study's ability to capture diverse perspectives. Unlike more structured sampling methods, convenience sampling adapts

to the fluidity of participant recruitment, ensuring representation across various demographic segments (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021).

3.4.3 Sample Characteristics

The total sample is comprised of 15 respondents. The mean age of respondents is 24,13. The youngest participant was 19 years old, and the oldest participant was 30 years old. This is within the set age range of respondents of 18 to 30 years of age. Furthermore, 73 % are from Europe, 13 % from North America, 7 % from South America, and 7 % from Africa, a total collective of 11 diverse countries.

Table 1: Demographics of the Sample

Age	Mean	24,13	
	Min	19	
	Max	30	
Location	Europe	11	73,33 %
	North America	2	13,33 %
	South America	1	6,67 %
	Africa	1	6,67 %
Origin	Brazil	1	
	Canada	1	
	Denmark	1	
	Germany	1	
	Lithuania	1	
	Netherlands	1	
	Nigeria	1	
	Romania	1	
	Sweden	4	
	Switzerland	2	
USA	1		

3.4.4 Process of Data Collection

Participants within the age range of 18-30 were recruited through direct outreach by speaking with individuals in relevant settings such as university campuses, local events, and social gatherings.

Before the opening of each focus group session, participants were provided with detailed information about the study objectives, procedures, and their rights as participants. They were allowed to ask questions and clarify any concerns before providing informed consent to participate in the research. Additionally, participants were informed about the audio recording of the focus group discussions and were asked to provide consent for this purpose.

Each focus group session was conducted in a comfortable and neutral environment beneficial to open discussion. Seating arrangements were organized to facilitate eye contact and interaction among participants and let the individuals in the groups have good conditions for discussion with the other participants. The moderator led the session, providing the questions, pictures, and lead questions, while a note-taker recorded key points and observations.

The focus group discussion commenced with open-ended questions exploring participants' perceptions and experiences related to nostalgia in the context of fashion branding. Participants were encouraged to share personal anecdotes, memories, and reflections on how nostalgia influences their brand perceptions and purchasing decisions within the fashion industry, we established a question guide (see Appendix B). Following the initial discussion on nostalgia, participants were presented with a series of retro branding images from brands such as Adidas (see Appendix C), Levi's (see Appendix D), and Nike (see Appendix E). These images were selected to stimulate discussion and prompt participants to reflect on their reactions and interpretations of nostalgic branding elements. The focus group sessions featured structured questions alongside the presentation of retro branding images, ensuring participants had visual cues to reference if they forgot a specific question. This approach aimed to facilitate a seamless and immersive discussion, allowing participants to draw inspiration from the visual stimuli provided by the retro branding images while responding to the inquiry prompts. By integrating both verbal and visual elements, the sessions sought to enhance participant engagement and encourage rich, spontaneous responses to the research inquiries. To contextualize participants' perspectives, they were asked to share basic demographic information such as their age and location. This allowed for the exploration of potential variations in responses based on factors such as age and geographic location.

When the participants were done answering the structured questions and the discussions among the participants were done, the participants were thanked for their participation and given the opportunity to ask any final questions or share additional thoughts. They were also informed that they could contact the researchers for further inquiries or clarifications regarding the study,

and once again were asked to reaffirm their consent for their contributions to be included in the research.

3.5 Data Analysis

We are going to use a thematic analysis for analyzing the empirical data we acquired from the respondents, we think that by analyzing different themes, some different and similar topics will occur in the respondents' answers (Braun & Clarke, 2020). After getting the data from our respondents we followed the system of coding, reducing, and discussing previous knowledge.

The first step we did was to start coding the data we acquired. The process consisted into listening and reading the transcriptions to search for some repetitions and similarities as well as the differences in the arguments. Moreover, we investigated the interactions between the interviewees, expressions, pauses, and retro alimentation between them. The second step after the coding of the transcriptions was to reduce and keep the most important information to resolve the gap in knowledge we wanted to fulfill. For this process, we followed a system called “categorical reduction” which consists in removing categories that are not the most relevant. The last step is to find similarities between each empirical finding in a way that approves previous research knowledge, the process was finding similarities to provide examples and relevant experiences from our participants, as well as providing new knowledge in the field.

After the sorting, we constructed comments units according to the style model introduced by Emmerson (1995) which consists of five main steps: naming the theme; An analytical point where we shortly indicate what we want to highlight; An orientation where we introduce the empirical excerpt we will use; The empirical excerpt; An analytical comment based on previous research. Regarding our thematic analysis, we decided to create three big thematic analysis areas which are, 1. Authenticity and how participants share their feelings and concepts of the factors that share their authenticity perceptions within retro elements, 2. Personal nostalgia and brand connection and the last one is, 3. Consumer behavior which aims to understand the different elements that influence our behavior and relation with the clothing possessions creating a unique buyer behavior.

3.6 Quality of Research

Ensuring high-quality research is crucial for producing credible and trustworthy findings. In this section, we evaluate the validity, reliability, and overall robustness of our study's methodology.

Validity refers to the accuracy with which a study measures what it intends to measure (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). To enhance validity in our research on the influence of nostalgia on brand perception among young consumers in the fashion industry, we employed several strategies. One key approach was using focus groups, which allowed for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perceptions regarding nostalgic branding. These discussions encouraged participants to share their thoughts and feelings naturally, providing rich qualitative data.

By fostering open and honest dialogue, we ensured that participants communicated their genuine experiences and perspectives. This approach helped us gather comprehensive insights into how nostalgia influences brand perception among young consumers.

Throughout the focus group discussions, questions were asked in neutral language (Saunders et al., 2009), and participants were never forced or pressured to answer the questions, ensuring that participants felt free to express their genuine opinions without pushing or persuading. Importantly, participants were never compelled into providing responses if they had nothing to contribute with. This commitment to voluntary participation safeguarded the integrity of the data, fostering an environment where participants felt empowered to share their insights organically. By prioritizing the autonomy of participants and fostering an atmosphere of openness and respect, we aimed to minimize the risk of response bias and ensure the authenticity of the data collected (Saunders et al., 2009).

However, a potential limitation lies in the subjectivity inherent in qualitative research, where participants' responses may be influenced by social desirability bias or group dynamics, potentially compromising the validity of the findings. We addressed this concern by practicing reflexivity throughout the research process, critically reflecting on our biases, assumptions, and preconceptions. By acknowledging and addressing any potential sources of researcher bias, such as personal beliefs or prior experiences, we sought to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of our findings.

Addressing a potential limitation concerning the generalizability of our findings is crucial. External validity, also known as generalizability, refers to the extent to which research results can be applied to different populations or settings beyond the ones directly studied (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Although our focus groups provided in-depth qualitative data on young consumers' perceptions of fashion brands, it is important to recognize that these findings may not be universally applicable.

To mitigate concerns about external validity, we intentionally included a diverse group of participants from various demographic backgrounds and geographic locations, encompassing 11 different origins among a total of 15 participants. This approach helped capture a broad range of perspectives and experiences, enhancing the applicability of our findings to similar contexts. Furthermore, we conducted a comprehensive review of existing literature to situate our findings within the larger framework of research on nostalgia and brand perception. However, it's imperative to acknowledge the inherent limitations of qualitative research in achieving high levels of external validity. Future studies could consider employing mixed-methods approaches for enhanced efficiency (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021), or conducting cross-cultural comparisons to delve deeper into generalizability.

Reliability, as defined by Bryman & Bell (2011), pertains to the consistency and stability of research findings across various contexts and over time. Achieving absolute reliability in qualitative research poses challenges due to the subjective nature of data collection and interpretation. Nevertheless, our study took several measures to ensure reliability. Firstly, the utilization of focus groups facilitated data triangulation through group discussions, enabling researchers to compare participants' responses for convergence. Furthermore, employing a semi-structured questioning approach ensured a level of standardization across focus group sessions, promoting consistency in data collection procedures. Additionally, we endeavored to mitigate researcher bias by engaging in reflexivity and bracketing, whereby we critically reflected on our own perspectives and preconceptions to prevent undue influence on the research process. Throughout the study, maintaining reflexivity played a fundamental role in ensuring data interpretation consistency. This involved documenting and critically reflecting on our assumptions, biases, and decision-making processes. By acknowledging and addressing these factors, we aimed to minimize potential bias and enhance the reliability of our findings. Nonetheless, it is imperative to recognize that reliability in qualitative research is context-specific and subject to interpretation.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations and principles are foundational, emphasizing the protection of participants' rights, confidentiality, and the integrity of the research process (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Throughout our investigation into the influence of nostalgia on brand perception among young consumers in the fashion industry, we adhered thoroughly to ethical principles to prioritize participants' well-being and uphold the credibility of our study. As outlined by Easterby et al., (2021) and Bryman & Bell (2011), important ethical principles include avoiding harm, respecting dignity, obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy, maintaining confidentiality, and preserving anonymity.

Throughout our research and involvement with participants, ethical considerations were prioritized at every stage. We began by securing informed consent from participants and providing comprehensive information about the study's objectives, procedures, and participants' rights prior to each focus group session. Participants were provided opportunity to seek clarification and ask questions before consenting to take part in the research. Moreover, participants were explicitly informed about the audio recording of the focus group discussions and were required to provide explicit consent for this purpose, ensuring transparency regarding the data collection process and enabling participants to make informed decisions regarding their involvement. Post each focus group session, participants were once again approached for consent to utilize the recorded data for research purposes and offered the chance to address any questions or ethical concerns they might have had.

Regarding data handling and reporting, measures were implemented to safeguard participants' privacy and anonymity. Only participants' first names were used in the analysis and reporting of results, with no identifying information, such as surnames, or age, included. This approach aimed to maintain confidentiality and prevent the inadvertent disclosure of participants' identities. Additionally, the data remained inaccessible to external parties, with no sharing of data with third parties.

Moreover, we upheld the integrity of the data analysis process by exclusively analyzing relevant data. This strategy involved focusing solely on data directly pertinent to the research objectives, thereby ensuring the accuracy and relevance of our analysis and upholding the integrity of our research findings.

3.8 Limitations

Although our study aimed to offer valuable insights into the impact of nostalgia on brand perception among young consumers in the fashion industry, it's crucial to acknowledge several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings.

To begin with, the sample size and composition of participants could pose limitations regarding the representativeness of the results. Despite our efforts to recruit a diverse range of participants, the sample may not fully encapsulate the broader population of young consumers. Furthermore, the overrepresentation of participants from specific geographical regions or cultural backgrounds might introduce biases and constrain the generalizability of the findings to a wider audience. Secondly, the sampling method utilized, which relied on convenience sampling, may have introduced selection bias and non-probability sampling methods may not be the most accurate. Participants who volunteered to take part may possess different characteristics or viewpoints compared to those who declined or were not approached, potentially influencing the outcomes of the study. Although the focus group discussions provided valuable qualitative data, there are limitations associated with the data collection methods. For instance, the dependence on self-reporting might have led to social desirability bias, where participants provided responses, they deemed socially acceptable rather than their genuine opinions or experiences.

Our study's analysis was primarily focused on specific aspects of nostalgia and brand perception within the fashion industry. Consequently, certain variables or factors that could influence these dynamics might not have been fully explored or considered in our analysis.

While efforts were made to reinforce the reliability and validity of the research findings, natural subjectivity in qualitative research methods could introduce biases. Factors such as researcher interpretation, group dynamics during focus group discussions, and participants' prior experiences might have impacted the consistency and accuracy of the results (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Despite these limitations, our study provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between nostalgia and brand perception in the fashion industry. Future research endeavors could address these limitations by employing more rigorous sampling methods, incorporating diverse data collection techniques, and exploring a broader range of variables to further enhance understanding in this area.

3.9 Chapter Summary

In this methodology chapter, we begin by briefly explaining the underlying philosophies of science that informed our study. This study adopts a relativist ontological perspective, acknowledging that reality is not fixed or objective but is instead constructed and interpreted differently by individuals. We also employ a social constructivist epistemological approach, which emphasizes the role of social interactions, language, and culture in shaping knowledge and understanding. In the subsequent chapters, we outline the research approach, design, and methods, clarifying our research strategy. In the data collection method section, we describe how we used convenience sampling and semi-structured focus groups to gather empirical data, detailing the process involved. Next, we explain our data analysis method, focusing on the thematic analysis approach. Following this, we examine the quality of the research, discussing its validity and reliability. The ethical considerations section addresses how we managed ethical concerns such as informed consent and the integrity of the research process. Finally, we discuss the limitations we encountered during our research.

4 Empirical Findings

In this chapter, we present the empirical data gathered from the focus groups. As outlined in the methodology, insights from the participants were collected to understand how nostalgia influences young consumers' brand perception within the fashion industry. The empirical data presented here reflects a diverse range of consumer perceptions of retro branding. From these comments, we identified three themes to answer our research question.

4.1 Authenticity

Participants shared diverse perspectives on what makes a brand, and its products appear authentic, particularly when incorporating retro elements into their design and marketing strategies. The insights provided by the participants offer a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing perceptions of authenticity.

Johan expressed that for a brand to successfully incorporate retro elements, it should possess some historical heritage. He suggested that it would seem strange for a new brand without any history, DNA, or heritage to suddenly include old elements in its products, meaning that authenticity is closely tied to a brand's past. This sentiment was echoed by Carolina, who stated that incorporating elements unrelated to the brand's history can appear fake. Their views highlight the importance of a brand's historical narrative in establishing authenticity:

“I think for brands to be able to do such a thing they need to have some kind of like heritage. If a new brand started now without having a history and they started to incorporate old elements into the product it just would be weird” – Johan

“Just bringing something that has no relation with the brand, I think it looks a bit fake” – Carolina

Contrastingly, some participants were skeptical about the motivations behind brands' use of retro elements. Ivey described it as sometimes being merely a "money grab," indicating a suspicion of brands leveraging nostalgia purely for profit. Max used the term "piggyback on others' history" to highlight how some brands might exploit retro elements from others' heritage, suggesting an opportunistic rather than an authentic approach. These views reflect a critical stance towards brands that may appear to be using retro designs superficially or insincerely:

“I think sometimes it's like a money grab” – Ivey

“Piggyback on others history” – Max

On the other hand, John offered a different perspective by arguing that brands incorporating retro designs are not necessarily inauthentic but are following trends to appeal to specific market segments. He did not see this as a lack of genuineness but as a strategic move. Eloy supported this view by stating that brands are positioning themselves within the market, which he finds acceptable. This perspective suggests that authenticity can coexist with strategic market positioning and trend-following if the brand's intentions align with its identity and market goals:

“When brands incorporate retro design, I wouldn't say they are being inauthentic or not genuine. I will say they are trying to tackle into a particular niche and follow a particular trend so that they can gain from a particular segment of the market. So, I won't necessarily say that it is inauthentic, I will just say that they are following a particular trend in that time”

– John

“They are positioning themselves, which is okay” – Eloy

Stefan introduced a nuanced view by discussing new designers who might adopt retro styles from the outset. He questioned whether their approach could be considered authentic and concluded that if a new brand's identity is rooted in retro design from the start, it can still be seen as authentic. Ivey added that authenticity can be achieved if a brand rescues or revives elements from its past, indicating that a connection to historical roots, whether in the past or newly adopted, plays a significant role in perceived authenticity. These insights highlight that authenticity is not solely dependent on historical heritage but can also be established through consistent and intentional design choices:

“So, there might be like new designers, fashion designers, and maybe they have this view of their brand going directly into the retro fashion. So that's their style. What do you think of that? Is it authentic or not? Because in my opinion, it is because that's their whole idea. And they started with that, then they will continue with that. So even though it's a new brand, it can still be authentic if that is what they want to do” – Stefan

“If they rescue something from their past” – Ivey

Moreover, participants discussed how retro designs influence the perception of quality. Sam shared that retro designs evoke a perception of higher quality, even if the materials are modern and potentially less durable. This suggests that retro elements can transfer a sense of durability and trustworthiness. Max agreed with Sam, noting that retro products give the impression of

being made in respectable places like America or Germany, which are often associated with high quality. Carolina concluded that retro elements bring a sensation of quality and trustworthiness, emphasizing that these designs can enhance the perceived reliability of the products. These observations indicate that retro designs can positively affect consumer perceptions of product quality and authenticity:

“Retro stuff evokes sort of a like feeling that the products are going to be of, like, a higher quality...the materials just feel like they're more durable. Even though they're probably made using modern fabrics and technologies that are meant to break down a little bit quicker, but it makes it feel more quality” – Sam

“I agree with it...you feel like this is made in America or Germany” – Max

“Brings me the sensation of quality... something that we can trust” – Carolina

The participants' views on authenticity reveal a complex interplay of historical heritage, strategic market positioning, and perceived quality. While some believe that a brand's past is crucial for authenticity, others argue that consistent brand identity and intentional design choices can also establish authenticity. Additionally, retro designs seem to enhance the perceived quality and trustworthiness of products, contributing to their authenticity in the eyes of consumers.

4.2 Personal Nostalgia and Brand Connection

In exploring how nostalgia influences young consumers' brand perception within the fashion industry, participants frequently discussed the interplay between their personal and familial memories and their emotional connections to brands. This section, focusing on "Personal Nostalgia and Brand Connection," reveals how these nostalgic resonances shape their perceptions and purchasing decisions.

Participants shared numerous instances where nostalgia, deeply rooted in personal and familial experiences, influenced their perceptions of brands. Hampus, for example, mentioned inheriting clothes from his brother, which led to cherished memories connected to those items. This highlights the significant role that personal history and family connections play in fostering brand attachment. Similarly, Ivey recounted how her brothers, who were into skate culture, influenced her continued preference for brands like Vans and Converse, illustrating how familial influences can create lasting brand loyalties.

“My brother was very much into fashion... So, when I inherited some of his clothes, I'd have very specific memories connected to those specific clothes” – Hampus

“My brothers were a huge influence on me and were into skate culture. Really into Vans and Converse, which I'm still wearing” – Ivey

Emil provided another perspective by discussing how he bought a school bag that resembled his father's old one, indicating that nostalgic connections to family can drive contemporary purchasing decisions. Elena echoed this sentiment by describing how seeing pants that reminded her of her dad's wardrobe influenced her buying choices, further emphasizing the influence of familial nostalgia. Ivey shared how growing up with Patagonia, due to her dad's obsession with the brand, created a strong emotional connection, almost likening it to being "brainwashed." Similarly, Johan described how a Peak Performance jacket from his youth continues to influence his brand preferences today.

“I bought a school bag a couple of years ago, which resembles my father's old school bag that he had when he was in high school” – Emil

“Seeing all these pants reminded me also of my dad's wardrobe, and I was like, I'm going to buy pants that my dad would buy... of reminding me of my dad” – Elena

“Growing up my dad, who is obsessed with Patagonia... But having Patagonia growing up I feel so strongly towards Patagonia... almost like brainwashing” – Ivey

“I had a Peak Performance jacket when I was younger, I'm automatically like drawn to if I am purchasing a jacket now” – Johan

Recreating past experiences through nostalgic products was another common theme among participants. John described nostalgia as "teleporting" himself back to the "good old days," suggesting that retro branding can evoke a powerful emotional response that connects consumers to happier times. Eloy mentioned that retro branding allows him to feel like he is living in an era he never experienced, indicating the allure of nostalgia in creating a sense of connection to the past. Ivey noted that nostalgic products make her identify with the person she was when she first bought them, reinforcing the idea that these products help maintain a connection to one's past self.

“Teleporting myself to that time...go back to those old and good old days” – John

“It's like living in an era that you will never experience” – Eloy

“It makes me feel like I identify with the person that I was, when I first bought them” – Ivey

Media and cultural influences also played a significant role in shaping participants' nostalgic connections to brands. Max reminisced about watching MTV and ZTV and how the commercials and models from that time influence his current perceptions of fashion and brands. This suggests that media from the past plays a significant role in shaping nostalgic connections. Eloy discussed how the rise of smartphones and consistent marketing can overstimulate consumers but also bring back elements from the past that resonate nostalgically.

“I was watching like a lot of MTV or ZTV that we had in Sweden” – Max

“I think all these commercial we saw like, Okay, we had a typical type of models as well...

And I started like, a little bit on seeing on social media, but especially like this real commercial that. Yeah, this is kind of coming back a little bit like these types of models, and this type of like what clothes they're wearing, of course, but trying to implement that Paris Hilton” – Max

“Overstimulating everyone. Marketing stuff. And it's like, it's consistent with the rise of smartphones” – Eloy

The sense of community and shared experiences fostered by nostalgia was another key aspect. Stefan imagined himself skating in the 90s, indicating how nostalgia can create a sense of community and shared identity among consumers. Matthijs reflected on how his father's jackets influenced his preferences, showing how community and family can intertwine with personal memories to shape brand perceptions. Matthijs shared nostalgic connections through items like watches and sunglasses bought with family members, underscoring the role of personal milestones in brand attachment. Max also talked about the nostalgic value of Rip Curl from his backpacking days in Asia with his brother, showing how shared experiences can influence brand loyalty.

“I just imagined myself skating in the 90s” – Stefan

“For me, it would also be like a sense of community... You will always be influenced by people around” – Stefan

“Yeah, my father had a few jackets. I think that influenced it” – Matthijs

“I have with my watch. I bought it with my grandma” – Matthijs

“Rip Curl, I mean, that's not too nostalgic. But when me and my brother, we're backpacking in Asia I had bought and had that shirt” – Max

4.3 Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is the study of the processes and activities individuals engage in when searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs and desires.

As we can see in the quotes both Sam and John have a good connection with the brand Nike, the same feel it is something he will always like and be a cool thing to wear. Also, John has a great experience with Nike thanks to the good experience of the re-building construction work that happened in the school when he was in Nigeria, this positive act creates a good influence of Nike in John's mind.

“And then like, Nike was always like, the cool brand” – Sam

“I can't remember what experience, I think it is Nike in they had refunding refurbish, they helped with building part of my secondary school library... Nike really resonates with me is and when I was in school, it helps in fixing our library” – John

Ralph Lauren, Levi's, and Nike are iconic brands that have established cultural significance through their unique designs and marketing strategies. Ralph Lauren for Eloy's conception is admired for its ability to evoke 90s nostalgia and a cool summer vibe, blending classic American elegance with contemporary style. For John, Levi's is particularly known for its bootcut jeans, which appeal to consumers with its durable design that brings a sense of nostalgia. Lastly for Max, Nike is renowned for its innovative and functional products that create items like backpacks that are both aesthetically and practical, fostering a sense of reliability and modernity.

“Ralph Lauren. But yeah, I like this brand because it gives you this 90s look, and it also gives like this summer vibe” – Eloy

“I will say Levi's, because the bootcut I bought, because of the nostalgic feeling that they gave because of the design” – John

“I could still wear that today, I think only because I still think it's pretty like a genius design and it's great... like maybe sometimes a normal Nike backpack or the string backpack, I always get like a good feeling” – Max

Hampus has a sentimental attachment to Omega watches, largely due to a past memory of an older model that left a lasting impression. This emotional connection has created a bias, making him partial to Omega watches today. The brand's longstanding reputation for quality and timeless design likely reinforces his preference, as Omega is known for its blend of innovation and tradition, appealing to those with a taste for classic, high-quality timepieces. Ivey, on the other hand, has a deep-rooted affection for Patagonia, originated from nostalgic childhood memories of wearing their clothes. This loyalty contrasts with her against to purchase from The North Face, despite acknowledging its good quality. The emotional resonance of Patagonia's enduring products, now passed down to her niece, underscores the brand's appeal through durability and sentimental value. Both Patagonia and The North Face emphasize environmental responsibility, but Patagonia's focus on long-lasting, high-quality gear resonates more with Ivey.

“And I think I still have a kind of like a general bias just because I remember that watch. It was like a really like old like, oh my god watch and now like me partially like biased to like, to omega watches” – Hampus

“And so, it actually keeps me from buying North face even though it's great brand” – Ivey

“There are pictures of me as like a two-year-old wearing Patagonia baggy shorts. I was a cool kid. anymore. he kept all of them. And so, my niece is wearing a bunch of old Patagonia clothes” – Ivey

Nostalgia plays a significant role in fashion marketing, as seen in the reflections of consumers on their purchasing behaviors. John recalls how wearing certain trousers evokes memories of past trends worn by previous generations, illustrating the deep emotional connection people have with fashion that reminds them of their heritage. Similarly, Johan discusses how the sight of classic shoes like Samba and Tiger can trigger nostalgic feelings, prompting individuals to purchase these items to relive past experiences. This underscores the influence of nostalgia on buying decisions, as consumers often seek to recapture the comfort and familiarity of earlier times. Contrastingly, Max expresses indifference towards fast-fashion brands like Zara and H&M, perceiving them as too ordinary and lacking the unique nostalgic appeal that more classic brands provide. These insights reveal how nostalgia can be a powerful motivator in fashion, driving consumers to seek out items that resonate with their personal histories and emotions.

“So, I remember a lot of people even myself, got some trousers then so we just have that same feeling of them experiencing what our parents wore in past times” – John

“Samba and Tiger shoe, he remembered how he wore it, so in time past. So, I think oftentimes images like this can also evoke a kind of you can spoil one to making purchasing decisions.

Maybe I want to relieve this thing... Why not buy this shoe, try it again” – Johan

“Then I feel like if I buy something from Zara or H&M I feel like that is I don't really care and because that is so like, normal” – Max

Matthijs's attraction to products with a retro aesthetic exemplifies the powerful pull of nostalgia marketing. He mentions buying items like a Barbour jacket because their design evokes the style of the '60s and '70s, highlighting how the nostalgic appeal of past decades can significantly influence purchasing decisions. This aligns with the broader trend where brands leverage nostalgic elements to resonate emotionally with consumers. Similarly, Max reflects on how certain products from his past evoke strong memories, although he acknowledges that not all nostalgic items lead to a purchase. He bought new shoes reminiscent of those from his past due to the strong association and interest generated by nostalgic imagery, yet he remains selective about which nostalgic items he ultimately buys. Nostalgia marketing thrives on these emotional connections, drawing consumers back to comforting memories and influencing their buying behavior by invoking a sense of familiarity and belonging.

“I bought a “Barbour jacket” brand just by how the design is more appealing by their retro look of the 60s and 70s, being the nostalgic reason as the main one to buy the jacket” -

Matthijs

“Maybe they were like, five years older, or something. But I still resonate like, oh, everyone had one. When I think about, like, no, none of my friends had that tracksuit” – Max

“I just bought new shoes. They were, similarly, shown in the pictures. Guess those ones, it really made me interested in buying those things... I still wouldn't buy one. I think it's a lot of things that I think it's cool, but I would not purchase” – Max

These excerpts offer a compelling glimpse into the intricate interplay between personal narratives and consumer behavior. Elena's poignant recollection, anchored in familial nostalgia, underscores the profound impact of sentimental attachments on purchasing decisions. Her envisaging of pens reminiscent of her father's choices underscores a potent strategy for marketers: tapping into consumers' emotional reservoirs to forge deeper connections with products. Conversely, Hampus's deliberation regarding the Omega brand epitomizes the potency of brand association in consumer decision-making. His inclination towards Omega

underscores the brand's successful cultivation of aspirational qualities or perceived status, emblematic of the power of brand identity in shaping consumer preferences. These vignettes not only underscore the complexity of consumer motivations but also underscore the necessity for marketers to comprehend and leverage these intricate interplays between personal narratives and brand associations to resonate effectively with target audiences.

“Seeing all these pants reminded me also of my dad's wardrobe, and I was like, I'm going to buy pants that my dad would buy... of reminding me of my dad” – Elena

“But like if I'm going to get like, I'm going to get one it's kind of probably going to be an omega because that's like something I've associated with” – Hampus

These quotes encapsulate the nuanced dynamics of brand loyalty and emotional attachment in consumer behavior. Ivey's observation regarding her niece donning vintage Patagonia attire signifies a nostalgic affinity for the brand, emblematic of Patagonia's enduring appeal and cultural resonance. The utilization of "old" conveys a sense of timelessness, indicating Patagonia's enduring relevance across generations. In contrast, Hampus's articulation of emotional attachment towards Nike apparel underscores the profound impact of habituation and brand familiarity in shaping consumer preferences. His characterization of Nike as a "staple" exemplifies the brand's successful integration into his personal identity, elucidating the transformative power of brands in imbuing mundane objects with symbolic significance. These testimonials serve as poignant reminders of the multifaceted nature of consumer-brand relationships, wherein nostalgia, habituation, and personal identity intertwine to foster enduring connections between individuals and brands.

“And so, my niece is wearing a bunch of old Patagonia clothes” – Ivey

“Emotional attachment to like Nike clothes so Nike shoes. Where it's like okay, well this is what I've been wearing for a long time and it's kind of become like a staple” – Hampus

4.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we present the empirical data collected from the focus groups, aimed at answering our research question. From the data, we identified three key themes: authenticity, personal nostalgia and brand connection, and consumer behavior. While additional themes or insights from the focus group participants were noted, these three stood out as the most relevant to our study. The theme of authenticity explores how young consumers perceive the genuineness of retro-brands in the fashion industry. Personal nostalgia and brand connection

delve into the emotional ties and memories that consumers associate with these brands. Consumer behavior examines how these perceptions and connections influence purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. Together, these themes illustrate how retro branding in the fashion industry can shape young consumers' brand perceptions, revealing both commonalities and diverse viewpoints. The empirical findings will be further analyzed in the next chapter, where they will be connected to existing academic literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

5 Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter, we examine, discuss, and analyze the findings in-depth, linking them to relevant academic literature. The analysis is structured around the themes identified in our empirical data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the connections between our research and existing research and studies.

5.1 Authenticity

In our focus group discussion, participants engaged in a dialogue about the concept of authenticity within the context of nostalgia and retro branding in fashion. Authenticity, a term deeply embedded in contemporary consumer culture, signifies the genuine, honest, and transparent representation of a brand's identity, values, and products. Within the realm of retro branding, authenticity takes on a nuanced dimension, as brands seek to evoke nostalgic sentiments while simultaneously meeting modern consumer expectations.

Participants articulated a sense of skepticism and discernment when evaluating brands' attempts at retro branding. They questioned the sincerity of brands' motives, particularly when witnessing abrupt shifts in brand image and messaging towards nostalgic themes. This skepticism stemmed from a desire for genuine experiences and connections with brands, rather than superficial attempts to capitalize on nostalgia for commercial gain and, poorly executed campaigns risk consumer backlash, as they may be perceived as inauthentic or exploitative (Kim & Sullivan, 2019).

The dialogue from the focus groups, alongside the literature on emotional branding, illuminates the complexities and challenges inherent in cultivating authentic connections between brands and consumers. Johan's emphasis on heritage underscores the significance of authenticity in emotional branding, a concept explored by Beverland and Farelly (2010), where brands with genuine histories are better positioned to resonate with consumers on a deeper level. Ivey's caution about emotional branding being perceived as a "money grab" resonates with Fournier's (1998) warning about the risks of brands appearing manipulative or insincere in their emotional branding tactics, prioritizing profit over genuine connections. Carolina's observation about the importance of consistency and authenticity aligns with the challenges highlighted by Schmitt (1999), emphasizing the need for brands to maintain authenticity amidst rapidly changing consumer preferences. Max's concern about brands piggybacking on others' history echoes Rose and Wood's (2005) discussion on the paradoxical nature of authenticity in a media-

saturated world, where brands risk appearing inauthentic by exploiting the history of others for commercial gain.

Moreover, the literature on emotional branding and in this case retro branding, underscores the strategic imperative for brands to effectively communicate their values and demonstrate authenticity, as suggested by Aaker (1997). By prioritizing transparency, integrity, and authenticity, brands can lay the foundation for unwavering trust, fostering enduring relationships with consumers, as highlighted by Holt (2004). Additionally, the incorporation of tactile elements in product design, packaging, and retail environments, as discussed by Spence (2012), further enhances the emotional resonance of brands with consumers, creating immersive sensory experiences that deepen brand relationships.

Initially, participants in the focus groups expressed skepticism regarding brands' endeavors in retro branding, questioning the authenticity of their motives and their ability to genuinely connect with consumers. However, as the discussion progressed, a more nuanced perspective emerged. Participants highlighted the legitimacy of brands positioning themselves within retro fashion, suggesting that authenticity can be achieved if retro design aligns with a brand's inherent identity and style. John and Stefan suggest that incorporating retro design elements into brands is not necessarily inauthentic but can be a strategic move to appeal to specific market segments. This aligns with the literature on brand authenticity, which emphasizes that authenticity is not only determined by history but also by the brand's sincerity and alignment with its identity and values (Brown et al., 2002; Holt, 2004). Brands that consciously integrate retro design as part of their identity and style, as Stefan mentions, can be perceived as authentic if this aligns with their overall brand narrative and positioning.

Stefan and Eloy further note that brands positioning themselves with retro fashion are authentic if this aligns with their brand identity and style from the outset. This perspective resonates with literature on brand positioning, which highlights the importance of consistency and coherence in brand messaging and identity (Keller, 1993). Brands that strategically position themselves within a particular aesthetic or style, such as retro fashion, can build authenticity by staying true to their core values and design principles over time.

Ivey's mention of "rescuing something from their past" echoes the concept of brand heritage and nostalgia, which can be powerful drivers of consumer engagement and authenticity (Holt, 2004; Beverland & Farelly, 2010). Brands that leverage elements from their past, whether

through design, messaging, or product offerings, can evoke feelings of nostalgia and authenticity among consumers who have a connection to the brand's history.

During the discussions, participants delved into the realm of product quality within retro branding. They pondered over how these nostalgic offerings are perceived in terms of durability and overall quality. There's a consensus that retro-branded products often evoke a sense of robustness and enduring craftsmanship, harking back to a perceived golden era of manufacturing. This association with the quality standards of the past adds depth to consumers' authenticity assessments of these brands.

The sentiments expressed by participants in our focus groups resonate with existing literature on consumer perceptions of product quality within the context of retro branding. Sam's observation about retro products evoking a sense of higher quality, despite being manufactured with modern materials, aligns with research by Beverland and Farrelly (2010), who discuss how nostalgic branding can imbue products with a perceived sense of durability and craftsmanship. Similarly, Max's comment about feeling like retro products are made in countries known for quality manufacturing, such as America or Germany, reflects the concept of country-of-origin effects, where consumers associate certain regions with superior quality (Adina et al., 2015). Furthermore, Carolina's remark about retro branding bringing a sensation of trust echoes findings by Schmitt (1999), who emphasizes the role of emotional branding in fostering consumer trust and loyalty.

Overall, these participant insights highlight the intricate interplay between nostalgia, perceived quality, and consumer trust within the realm of retro branding. Moreover, Spence's (2012) discussion on sensory experiences in branding offers valuable insights into how retro branding can influence perceptions of product quality. By incorporating tactile elements in product design, packaging, and retail environments, brands create immersive sensory experiences that deepen emotional connections with consumers. These sensory experiences contribute to the perception of product quality by engaging multiple senses, thereby enhancing the overall brand experience and brand image.

5.2 Personal Nostalgia and Brand Connection

In exploring how nostalgia influences young consumers' brand perception in the fashion industry, it's clear that personal and family memories play a significant role in shaping their emotional connections and purchasing decisions. This section delves into the theme of

"Personal Nostalgia and Brand Connection," contextualizing our findings with existing literature.

Participants' narratives reveal the profound impact of nostalgic memories on their brand preferences. For instance, Hampus's memories of inheriting clothes from his brother highlight how cultural influences within families shape individual identity through nostalgia. This supports Sierra and McQuitty's (2007) claim that nostalgia helps form a personal identity by drawing on memories and heritage. Similarly, Ivey's ongoing preference for brands like Vans and Converse, influenced by her brother's involvement in skate culture, shows how familial influences can create lasting brand loyalties.

Belk's (1988) research on brand image and identity further corroborates these insights. Emil's choice to buy a school bag like his father's underscores the symbolic value of possessions in preserving family heritage. This aligns with Belk's idea that possessions serve as extensions of the self, maintaining connections with one's past. Likewise, Elena's desire to mimic or copy her father's fashion choices emphasizes the role of family memories in evoking comfort and familiarity, reinforcing Belk's view of brand image as an accumulation of experiences, values, and emotions associated with a brand. Familial nostalgia's impact on brand loyalty is evident in participants' accounts of their enduring connections to certain brands. Ivey's strong emotional attachment to Patagonia, influenced by her father's passion for the brand, illustrates how shared memories and values foster deep emotional connections and brand loyalty. This aligns with Kapferer's (2008) concept of trust as a foundational element in consumer-brand relationships, where family influences and past experiences are crucial. Similarly, Johan's preference for Peak Performance jackets, stemming from childhood experiences, shows how nostalgic family connections drive contemporary purchasing decisions. These findings highlight the significant role of personal history and family ties in fostering brand attachment, underscoring the importance of understanding the emotional dimensions of consumer behavior.

Participants' reflections also highlight nostalgia's temporal aspect, showing its power to transport individuals to past eras. John's sentiment of "teleporting" to the "good old days" captures nostalgia's transformative power in consumer experiences. This aligns with Davis's (1979) idea of nostalgia as temporal escapism, where individuals find refuge in idealized memories. Eloy's comment about longing for an era he never experienced emphasizes nostalgia's allure in creating connections to historical periods and cultural contexts, even without direct experience. These insights align with Sierra and McQuitty's (2007) discussion of nostalgia as a powerful emotional force that draws individuals to reminisce about the past.

Participants' preference for retro or vintage products reflects a yearning for simpler times, often invoked through nostalgic branding and marketing strategies. This phenomenon shows how consumer culture helps individuals connect with historical periods and cultural contexts, aiding their identity formation and emotional well-being. Furthermore, Ivey's reflections highlight the deep emotional connection people often feel towards consumer products, seeing them as extensions of their identity. This echoes Belk's (1988) concept of the "extended self," where possessions become integral to one's self-concept. Over time, as individuals interact with these products, they develop attachments that transcend their functional use, contributing to a sense of continuity with their past selves. This underscores the role of consumer goods in shaping and reaffirming personal identity narratives.

Media and cultural influences also significantly shape participants' nostalgic connections to brands. Max's memories of watching MTV and ZTV and how past commercials and models influence his current fashion perceptions suggest that media from the past deeply impacts nostalgic connections. This aligns with Cova et al.'s (2007) discussion on mass media's influence on consumer identity and brand preferences. Additionally, Eloy's observation about modern marketing's overstimulation and the rise of smartphones reflects Frosh's (2015) insights into social media's impact on identity formation and brand perception.

Nostalgia's role in fostering a sense of community and shared experiences is another key aspect revealed in participants' narratives. Stefan's imagination of skating in the 90s and Matthijs's reflection on his father's jackets show how nostalgia creates a sense of community and shared identity among consumers. This supports Belk's (1988) concept of the "extended self," where possessions and shared experiences are integral to one's self-concept and identity. Max's nostalgic value of Rip Curl from backpacking in Asia with his brother further illustrates how shared experiences influence brand loyalty. These findings highlight how community and family memories intertwine with personal milestones to shape brand perceptions.

5.3 Consumer Behavior

Brand loyalty is compounded by various elements. There are four main points customer satisfaction, internal branding, brand reputation, brand Image (Mao, 2010). We can identify in the answers from John and Sam both agree with the positive brand image that they have from the brand Nike, Sam perceives the brand as “cool” as well as John perceives the brand as an important “support” from their secondary school highlighting the impact from cause branding

(Kim and Johnson, 2013), both conceptions create a positive brand image and brand reputation in consumers mind (Belk's 1988)

We found which ones are the preferred brands, according to the design and retro-designs which provoke a great collection of impressions in consumers' minds such as Ralph Lauren for Eloy, which reveal a reason to buy a product just based on the 90s look and the brand itself (Belk's, 1988). There is similar reason in the rest of participants, John also has the same impression for Levi's and their trousers, he felt a great connection with the nostalgic feeling and impression. On the other side, also connected with brand image we found the answer of Max regarding the design of the Nike backpack, however Max is more attracted to the integral picture of the brand, how he defines that by "the string backpack", providing to that backpack a unique brand identity defined by their visual representation of the object (Belk, 1988).

Here we can identify how both Hampus and Ivey have a brand Loyalty to brands (Omega and Patagonia) due to their previous experiences, for Hampus, Omega can represent a premium or luxury watch brand with great performance which makes him to not desire other brands products, creating a high satisfaction between their desires (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). Furthermore, for Ivey, her brand loyalty towards Patagonia is more of an emotional factor due to the influence of their father who influenced her decision-making.

We can identify two different behaviors regarding purchase intention, where John is attracted to the mainstream products of the 60s and 70s such as trousers designs, having a positive position towards nostalgia (Sedikides & Wildschut, 2016), we find out that Max is not influenced at all in his intention to buy, and only by the design and product itself.

Regarding the nostalgic or retro designs, we found that Matthijs is attracted by the designs of the '60 & '70 designs, with products like Barbour jackets and he felt inclined to buy those products due to the Brand image provided for Barbour Jackets Belk's 1988. On the other side, we found that Max is not really inclined to buy products according to their "iconic" or retro-design and is only oriented by their taste in clothing. Also, between the criteria of Max, we can find quality and design are important factors in his purchase behavior.

Personal associations and memories, as evidenced by the two focus group quotes. In the first quote, Elena mentions how seeing certain items reminded them of their father's wardrobe, prompting them to purchase the same products that their father would buy. This indicates that nostalgic connections and familia influences can drive purchasing decisions, reflecting a desire

to maintain a sentimental link through possessions (Belk, 1988). Similarly, in the second quote, Hampus expresses a preference for Omega watches due to an established personal association. This suggests that brand loyalty can stem from deep-rooted associations and perceived value, demonstrating how personal history and brand perception can shape consumer choices. Both quotes highlight the importance of emotional and psychological factors in consumer behavior, emphasizing how past experiences and personal connections can significantly influence purchasing patterns.

Emotional attachments and practical considerations, as illustrated by the two quotes. Ivey's comment about their niece wearing old Patagonia clothes highlights a pattern of practical, sustainable consumer behavior, where the longevity and durability of the brand's products encourage repeated use and generational transfer. This not only underscores Patagonia's brand promise of quality and sustainability but also reflects how such values can foster loyalty and influence purchase intentions within families, creating a consumer-brand relationship, such as a "childhood friendship" defined by Fournier (1998). On the other hand, the second quote about an emotional attachment to Nike clothing and shoes emphasizes the role of personal history and brand identity in shaping consumer behavior. The interviewee's long-term use of Nike products has ingrained the brand into their daily life, making it a staple choice. This demonstrates how emotional connections, built over time through consistent brand experience, significantly drive brand loyalty and influence ongoing purchase intentions (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973). Together, these quotes highlight how both practical considerations and emotional attachments play crucial roles in shaping consumer behavior and purchase decisions.

5.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we matched our findings with the previous theories in the literature review. Analyzing the previous literature, we understood how consumers interact with different perceptions of nostalgic moments in their lives and memories towards retro-design and clothing items. We encounter three main ideologies from where consumers create their perception towards nostalgia in the fashion retro branding. Authenticity is crucial in contemporary consumer culture, involves genuine representation of a brand's identity and values, and products. Literature on emotional branding reveals the complexities of forming authentic connections, highlighting the importance of heritage, consistency, and integrity. Participants recognized that brands could achieve authenticity in retro branding if it aligns with their core identity and values. On the other hand, the inherit of clothes from family members shape consumers identities, creating a specific self-identity according to different brands according

from their backgrounds. Moreover, young consumers are influenced the creation of their brand loyalty depending on the emotional connection their family members had before. This connection with specific items and brand shape the consumers self-identity, creating strong relationships with specific items that were in the family from one generation to other generation. There is an important factor in the creation of each individual and is the consumption of mass media shows and entertainment from television and smartphones.

Lastly the consumer behavior of consumers is influenced by different factors, however consumers create a Brand image towards brands, and this can positively influence their behavior towards the brand. This brand image can be created due to different factors such us positive experiences in the past, collection of impressions in consumers' minds, here is where we find out that nostalgia plays a key role in constructing positive impressions in the minds of consumers and their association to retro fashion designs.

6 Conclusion

In this final chapter, the study findings are summarized, showcasing the importance in relation to the research question at the beginning of the study. Moreover, this chapter presents the limitations of this study, and future directions for future research areas are suggested.

6.1 Key Findings and Objectives

Our research has been focusing on young consumers, and how nostalgia shapes their perception in the fashion industry. To answer our research questions, we have read through consumer culture theory, value of brands and understanding consumption theory connection to nostalgia and consumer behavior. Finally, the objective of this research was to answer this research question:

How does nostalgia influence young consumers' brand perception in the context of retro branding within the fashion industry?

The empirical findings of this study conclude that young consumers have different perceptions of retro designs in the fashion industry depending on their background, and how they grow up, which shapes their identity, but there are similarities in their behaviors and patterns. The nostalgic elements in different brands influence consumers shaping their identity and using different communication and feelings in consumers' minds.

Firstly, the study shows that young consumers create and build their identity according to possessions that inherit from their family members through time, or they acquire through their lives at specific moments. These possessions have attached a sentimental value for young consumers and have the role of constructing their identity being influenced by nostalgia. The combination of family experiences and nostalgia influence, media entertainment, and personal taste creates a specific loyalty to brands and designs, depending on the background of the young consumers.

Furthermore, this research showcases that nostalgic possessions and retro designs provoke a feeling of higher quality in clothing products, rather than current products or modern ones, in which quality can be perceived as weaker. Also, nostalgic products evoke past moments or memories that recall "better days" than the current times now, making the consumers remember positive memories from their childhood, belonging to a community in a sports club or skate community, is what nostalgia trigger in consumer minds.

Lastly, this study oversees a general behavior towards young consumers, where similar patterns and consumer behaviors arise. There are brands which created a positive experience in the memories of the young consumers that keeps the brand strong in consumers mind in the future and make them loyal over the years. Also, there is a cultural identity between brands that create a unique brand image between consumers that make them to buy retro designs from them.

Overall, this study highlights the importance of nostalgia and retro designs being a key role in influencing young consumers in construction of their identities. These elements shape a specific identity depending on their background and the possessions they perceive those emotions. Moreover, this research showcases the different buying behaviors towards specific brands according with their retro designs.

6.2 Theoretical Contributions

In this study, we contributed to previous academic literature related to consumer culture research. Firstly, our study contributes to the research of sociology (Sedikides et al., 2008) and associations (Hartmann & Brunk, 2019). We contribute to these literature streams by expanding on Firat & Venkatesh (1993) studies as our findings show how consumers perceive brands and their design in different understanding depending on who they are or came from.

In addition, our goal was to contribute to the existing literature of nostalgia and identity formation. Our findings add to Escalas & Bettman (2005) perspectives, where they present that fashion marketing serves as a tool for identity negotiation and self-expression of our identity among young consumers. It shows how nostalgia can confirm our personal narratives and cultural backgrounds, offering insights into how young consumers include memories in their current identities shaping brand loyalty. Furthermore, within the mechanisms of nostalgia in marketing, there were triggering emotional responses as well as of creating brand loyalty among young consumers (Pascal et al., 2002). The study combined the theories of emotional branding which represented an important intersection between marketing theory and psychology, focusing on the creation of emotional connections between brands and young consumers. The key components of emotional branding were the stories behind every brand that connected with the narratives of each young consumer Holt (2004). The senses that created those brands with unique memorable experiences evoke positive memories (Hulten, 2017).

We contributed to the literature on consumer culture theory on identity construction within the field of nostalgia, we firstly defined how consumers create their identity project by “who they are” using fashionable clothes (Crane, 2000). After this, we understood how nostalgia provoke

strong feelings and this influence consumers to define an “agency” and buy from specific brands that their relatives got a positive experience Holbrook and Schindler (2003b).

In conclusion, this study contributes to the literature streams of Identity, consumer behavior and Nostalgia in Marketing.

6.3 Practical Implications

In addition to the theoretical insights discussed above, this study also provides practical insights and implications for marketers and managers seeking to deepen their understanding of factors to contemplate when employing nostalgic marketing and integrating retro-branded strategies. As discussed earlier, we found that three themes answer our research question of how nostalgia influences young consumers' brand perception in the context of retro branding within the fashion industry. Considering these insights, marketers and marketing practitioners should take the following factors into account.

Maintaining authenticity is critical for successful retro-branding. Brands should ensure their nostalgic elements are aligned with their core identity and values. Consumers are more likely to have a positive response if they perceive the brand as genuine. Consistency and integrity in both messaging and design are essential. Additionally, providing transparent storytelling about the brand's history and the importance of its retro aspects can enhance perceived authenticity, making the brand's narrative more relatable and trustworthy.

Personal and familial memories play a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and loyalty toward a brand. Nostalgic marketing campaigns that evoke sentimental memories can strengthen connections with the brand. By crafting marketing content that resonates with consumers' personal histories, such as iconic products or retro-themed advertisements, brands can appeal to consumers' desire to relive cherished moments. Encouraging consumers to share their nostalgic experiences on social media can create a sense of community and reinforce the brand's presence in their personal narratives.

Consumers' purchasing decisions and behavior are influenced by both emotional attachments and practical considerations. Retro-branded products often convey a sense of higher quality and durability, enhancing their perceived value. Market research should focus on identifying the specific nostalgic elements that resonate with the target audience, including decades, styles, or cultural references. Tailoring nostalgic marketing strategies to reflect local cultural influences and consumer behaviors can make the brand's messaging more relevant and impactful.

By incorporating these insights, marketers and managers can effectively leverage nostalgic marketing and retro-branding strategies to build stronger connections with their audience, ultimately enhancing brand perception, brand loyalty, and perceived value.

6.4 Limitations of Study

The research aimed to uncover insights into how nostalgia influences the brand perception of young consumers within the retro branding landscape of the fashion industry. However, various limitations came to light during the study.

In qualitative and interpretive research, particularly when based on focus groups, a notable constraint lies in the reliance on participants' narratives and researchers' interpretations. Given the subjective nature of individuals' perceptions of nostalgia, influenced by factors like upbringing and cultural context, the study's scope was confined to the viewpoints expressed within the focus groups.

Moreover, limitations appeared from the sample size and composition, affecting the representativeness of the findings. Despite attempts to diversify the participant pool, the sample may not fully represent the broader population of young consumers due to constraints in time and resources. This could lead to overrepresentation from specific regions or cultural backgrounds, potentially biasing the results and limiting their applicability. Expanding the study to encompass a broader range of consumers from various countries could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of nostalgia's impact.

Furthermore, the use of convenience sampling may introduce a selection bias. This method, which involves selecting readily available and willing participants rather than using random selection, can skew the sample towards certain demographics while neglecting others. Consequently, the findings may not accurately reflect the overall population of young consumers, as they may be influenced by the characteristics of those most easily recruited.

Lastly, focusing solely on the 18-30 age group may overlook unique experiences, traits, preferences, and perceptions that distinguish them from other demographics. As a result, while the study shed light on brand perception within this specific age range, its findings may not necessarily extend to other age groups or consumer demographics.

6.5 Future Research

Although our study did not limit itself to a specific country or participants from a particular background, future research could explore opportunities for further refinement. One approach

could involve narrowing the focus to a specific geographical area to delve deeper into regional nuances, offering valuable insights into local cultural influences and consumer behaviors. Conversely, broadening the scope to include a more diverse pool of participants from various countries could provide a broader understanding of nostalgia's impact on young consumers' brand perception within the global context of retro branding in the fashion industry. By increasing the number of participants and including individuals from different regions, future studies could enrich their findings by capturing a wider range of perspectives and experiences, thereby enabling the identification of common trends and unique variations across cultures.

To offer an alternative methodological approach, researchers may consider employing a mixed-methods research design that combines qualitative focus groups or interviews with quantitative surveys. This integrated approach would create a more comprehensive understanding of nostalgia's influence on young consumers' brand perception, as it would allow researchers to triangulate qualitative insights with quantitative data, providing deeper insights into participants' perceptions and behaviors. By addressing the limitations associated with relying solely on qualitative data and interpretations, this approach would enhance the robustness of the research findings. Moreover, to enhance the generalizability of the findings, researchers could adopt a more rigorous sampling strategy, such as probability sampling methods. This would ensure that the sample represents a broader population of young consumers, thereby reducing biases introduced by convenience sampling and enhancing the applicability of the findings to a wider audience.

While our study has given us some insights into how young consumers perceive nostalgia in retro fashion branding, there's still a whole world to explore when it comes to understanding why people buy what they buy. Diving into the minds of consumers, understanding why some feel a magnetic pull towards retro-branded products while others walk right past. What memories, emotions, or distinctive attributes resonate with them, prompting both emotional and financial investment? By digging deeper into these questions connected to purchase decisions and buying habits, future research can paint a clearer picture of consumer behavior in the retro branding scene. What makes someone click "add to cart" on that throwback jacket or vintage-inspired sneakers? And what marketing strategies make them do it faster? Answering these questions not only helps businesses tailor their strategies but also deepens our understanding of how nostalgia shapes our shopping experiences and brand loyalties.

6.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we outlined the research objectives and provided a summary of the key findings. We then detailed the theoretical contributions and practical implications of our study. Finally, we addressed the study's limitations and offered recommendations and suggestions for future research.

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Appendix A

Table 1: Demographics of the sample

Age	Mean	24,13	
	Min	19	
	Max	30	
<hr/>			
Location	Europe	11	73,33 %
	North America	2	13,33 %
	South America	1	6,67 %
	Africa	1	6,67 %
<hr/>			
Origin	Brazil	1	
	Canada	1	
	Denmark	1	
	Germany	1	
	Lithuania	1	
	Netherlands	1	
	Nigeria	1	
	Romania	1	
	Sweden	4	
	Switzerland	2	
	USA	1	

Appendix B

Table 2: Semi-Structured Focus-Groups Questions

-
1. Can you describe any specific experiences or memories from the past that have influenced your connection to certain fashion brands or products?
 2. Can you describe a time when nostalgia influenced your decision to purchase a fashion item? What emotions or memories were associated with that experience?
 3. Can you describe a fashion brand or product that holds nostalgic significance for you? What elements of the brand or product evoke feelings of nostalgia?
 4. Can you describe a favorite fashion item from your past that holds sentimental value for you?
 5. Can you describe any instances where you've noticed fashion brands incorporating nostalgic elements into their products or advertising? How did these nostalgic references impact your perception of the brand?
(Showing retro-branded images from Adidas, Levi's, and Nike)
 6. What thoughts, emotions, or feelings come to mind when you view these retro branding images?
 7. Can you describe any memories or experiences that these images evoke for you?
 8. After viewing the retro branded images, are you interested in buying clothing products that provide a nostalgic feeling for you?
 9. Could you please share your age and where you are from?
-

Appendix C

Retro Branded Images Adidas: Figure 1-5

Figure 1: Blue Adidas Tracksuit



Vanity Teen. (n.d.). Adidas Originals Strikes Back with the Vibrant Retro Adicolor '70s Collection: A Nostalgic Twist to Modern Fashion [Photograph 4 of 11]. Retrieved from <https://www.vanityteen.com/adidas-originals-strikes-back-with-the-vibrant-retro-adicolor-70s-collection-a-nostalgic-twist-to-modern-fashion/> [Accessed 29 April 2024]

Figure 2: Wales Bonner X Adidas Collab Blue Shoes



Hypebeast. (2022). Adidas Originals and Wales Bonner Unveil FW21 Footwear Collaboration [Photograph 1 of 13]. Retrieved from <https://hypebeast.com/2022/2/adidas-originals-wales-bonner-fw21-footwear-collaboration-japan-release-info> [Accessed 29 April 2024]

Figure 3: Wales Bonner X Adidas Collab White Shoes



Highsnobiety. (n. d.). Adidas Pony Tonal Samba Cream White/Mystery Brown [Photograph 3 of 6]. Retrieved from <https://www.highsnobiety.com/en-se/shop/product/adidas-pony-tonal-samba-cream-whitemystery-brown/> [Accessed 29 April 2024]

Figure 4: Wales Bonner X Adidas Collab Blue Long Sleeve Jersey



Hypebeast. (2023). Adidas Wales Bonner Fall/Winter 2023 Collection: Release Info [Photograph 1 of 17]. Retrieved from <https://hypebeast.com/uk/2023/11/adidas-wales-bonner-fall-winter-2023-collection-release-info> [Accessed 29 April 2024]

Figure 5: Tracksuite and Shoes

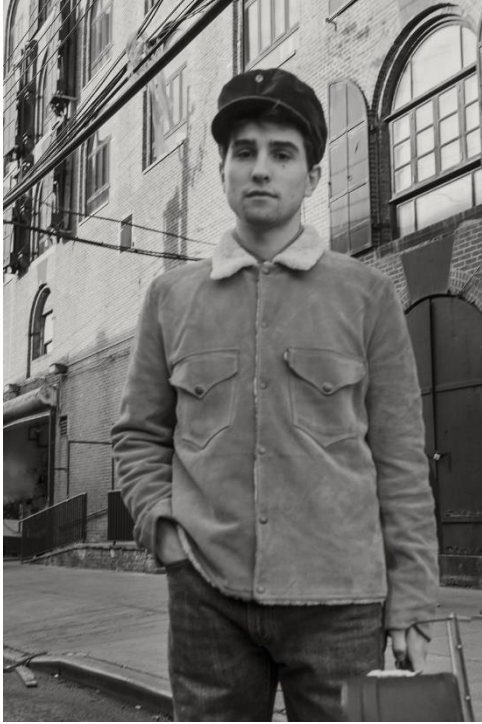


Adidas. (2023). "We Gave the World a Samba: A Legendary Shoe with a Rich History" [Photograph 4 of 5]. Retrieved from <https://www.adidas.com.au/blog/1060276-we-gave-the-world-a-samba-a-legendary-shoe-with-a-rich-history> [Accessed 29 April 2024]

Appendix D

Retro Branded Images Levi's: Figure 6-10

Figure 6: Levi's Vintage Collection



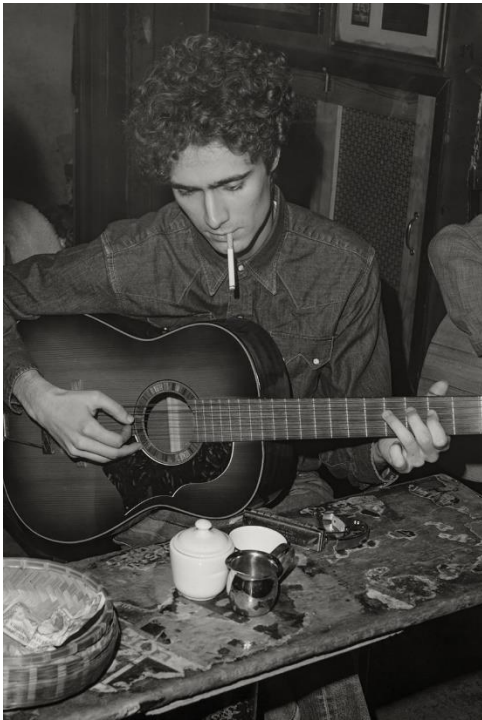
Hypebeast. (2019). Levi's® Vintage Clothing FW19 Look Book [Photograph 1 of 24]. Retrieved from <https://hypebeast.com/2019/6/levis-vintage-clothing-fall-winter-2019-collection-lookbook> [Accessed 30 April 2024]

Figure 7: Levi's Vintage Collection



Hypebeast. (2019). Levi's® Vintage Clothing FW19 Look Book [Photograph 2 of 24]. Retrieved from <https://hypebeast.com/2019/6/levis-vintage-clothing-fall-winter-2019-collection-lookbook> [Accessed 30 April 2024]

Figure 8: Levi's Vintage Collection



Hypebeast. (2019). Levi's® Vintage Clothing FW19 Look Book [Photograph 4 of 24]. Retrieved from <https://hypebeast.com/2019/6/levis-vintage-clothing-fall-winter-2019-collection-lookbook> [Accessed 30 April 2024]

Figure 9: Levi's Vintage Collection



Hypebeast. (2019). Levi's® Vintage Clothing FW19 Look Book [Photograph 7 of 24]. Retrieved from <https://hypebeast.com/2019/6/levis-vintage-clothing-fall-winter-2019-collection-lookbook> [Accessed 30 April 2024]

Figure 10: Levi's Vintage Collection



Hypebeast. (2019). Levi's® Vintage Clothing FW19 Look Book [Photograph 22 of 24]. Retrieved from <https://hypebeast.com/2019/6/levis-vintage-clothing-fall-winter-2019-collection-lookbook> [Accessed 30 April 2024]

Appendix E

Retro Branded Images Nike: Figure 11-15

Figure 11: Nike Vintage Running Collection



Communication Arts. (n. d.). "Nike Vintage Running Collection" [Photograph 2 of 2]. Retrieved from <https://www.commarts.com/project/25516/nike-vintage-running-collection> [Accessed 29 April 2024]

Figure 12: Nike Throwback Men's Tracksuit Basketball Jacket



Business Insider. (2018, September). "Nike's Throwback Collection Features Retro Apparel and Sneakers" [Photograph 5 of 13]. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com/nike-throwback-collection-apparel-sneakers-2018-9> [Accessed 29 April 2024]

Figure 13: Nike Circa 72 Collection



Nike. (2022). "Never Done: Challenging Convention Circa '72" [Photograph 1 of 5]. Retrieved from <https://www.nike.com/se/en/a/never-done-challenging-convention-circa-72> [Accessed 29 April 2024]

Figure 14: Nike Circa 72 Collection



Nike. (2022). "Never Done: Challenging Convention Circa '72" [Photograph 3 of 5]. Retrieved from <https://www.nike.com/se/en/a/never-done-challenging-convention-circa-72> [Accessed 29 April 2024]

Figure 15: Nike Blazer Mid '77 Vintage



End Clothing. (2020). "The Perfect Retro: Nike Blazer Mid '77 Vintage" [Photograph 11 of 11]. Retrieved from <https://www.endclothing.com/us/features/perfect-retro-nike-blazer-mid-77-vintage> [Accessed 29 April 2024]