

STUDY OF THE APPLICATION OF 90'S NOSTALGIC APPEAL IN VISUAL ELEMENTS OF MARKETING MEDIA: NINTENDO

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Received March. 12, 2024; Revised May. 12, 2024; Accepted June. 02, 2024.

Abstract: During the digitalization era, business growth throughout the world is increasingly rapid, meaning that not all companies can survive due to the demands of entrepreneurs to adapt and implement marketing strategies that are much more effective and innovative. One approach to marketing strategy that is starting to emerge is to use nostalgic appeals to attract consumer attention. 'Nintendo' is one of the companies that has survived and developed creative ideas by using nostalgic elements effectively in its marketing. This research aims to examine the application of nostalgic appeal in visual elements in 'Nintendo' marketing media. This research uses research methods in the form of observation and analysis of selected Nintendo marketing media content that uses nostalgic elements, focus group discussions (FGD) with respondents to determine the effect of using nostalgic elements on attraction and buying interest and literature study. From the results of this research, it is known that 'Nintendo's' strategy of using its '90s nostalgic elements in its marketing has succeeded in getting a positive response from consumers. The visual elements analyzed include tonal colors, design elements, images and icons, and typography. Through these nostalgic visual elements, consumer loyalty to the company increases and triggers strong purchasing interest in regular consumers and new market segments. This shows that the use of nostalgic elements in the company's visual marketing media has succeeded in having its appeal and can be used as an effort to renew marketing strategies in rapid business competition.

Keywords: nostalgia; visual elements; marketing; nintendo

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Introduction

Business growth around the world is accelerating, as evidenced by the rise of new foreign and local brand names or companies that are starting to emerge. Some companies or brands engaged in creative fields such as design or marketing always rely on the use of digital media and current trends because they are considered capable of increasing consumer engagement and company productivity (Waskito & Setiadi, 2019). However, not all of these companies can survive amid the current digitalization era which requires entrepreneurs to adapt and carry out marketing strategies that are far more effective and innovative (Irawan et al., 2021). Even business competition in the marketing industry has begun to be fierce amid emerging consumer trends. Many companies began to compete to find effective strategies for building deep emotional bonds and consumer attention with their company, brand, or product (Irawan et al., 2021). Researchers found that one of the approaches in marketing strategies that began to emerge was to use the appeal of nostalgia because nostalgia is considered a phenomenon that can evoke sentimental feelings and memories from the past (Wulf et al., 2020). Many companies are starting to realize that nostalgia can be used as a powerful marketing tool to associate the company's brand with positive emotions that will arise in consumers. The concept of nostalgia itself has been around for a long time, but with the development of time and technology, marketing with the concept of nostalgia on the visual side is starting to become very important (Findeis & Eckert, 2022). Nostalgia is utilized in the use of images, colors, and other visual elements that refer to a specific year or time from the past. It's important to understand that visual elements in marketing can have

the power to express a certain message or evoke certain feelings in consumers (Kantola, 2018). Some examples include the use of images that can bring back fond memories, which can stimulate positive emotions and thus motivate the buying process from consumers to the company (Black, 2022). Other studies have identified various outcomes of nostalgic appeals and found that emotions associated with nostalgia can reduce consumers' desire to save money (Lasaleta et al., 2014). One company that has successfully implemented an effective marketing strategy using nostalgic appeals is 'Nintendo'. The gaming company successfully used visual elements and content that referenced their classic characters such as Mario and Zelda to attract consumers through the retro market (Eloranta, 2022). 'Nintendo' seeks to create marketing that evokes fans' childhood memories through their classic products. The effect of this nostalgic appeal can be seen in the success of their latest products, such as the Nintendo Switch, which was released in 2017. The nostalgic appeal developed by 'Nintendo' increases consumer loyalty to the company and triggers strong purchase interest in repeat consumers and new market shares (Adil Mahmood Alkhafagi, 2023). Seeing the success of 'Nintendo' in the nostalgia-based visual marketing process, of course, has many benefits if research from the study of its marketing visualization elements (Cuff, 2017). In addition, it can also find out consumer responses to each nostalgic visual element in the promotional media used by 'Nintendo'.

This study referenced the latest research on the visual elements of nostalgia marketing by providing a clear summary of its critical path, as well as a thorough analysis of the visual content, using the case of White Rabbit Creamy Candy by Ziting Zhuang as an example. In today's

market, old brands face the risk of becoming outdated, since nostalgia implies that the past has “aged”. Therefore, brands must establish a strong emotional connection with their customers to avoid being withdrawn from the market. However, if a brand focuses solely on pursuing the latest trends, it might risk losing the emotional value and brand characteristics that make it unique, and ultimately lose the innocence of “nostalgia”. Therefore, nostalgia marketing should be considered as one of the ways to retain an emotional connection with customers and maintain the brand’s identity. (Zhuang, 2023).

In the world of gaming, Nintendo is a brand that has always managed to stay ahead of the curve. With the rise of emotional consumption, consumers are increasingly looking for products that resonate with them on an emotional level. Nintendo has successfully tapped into this trend by creating games and consoles that evoke feelings of nostalgia and emotional attachment in its users. One of how Nintendo has managed to create a strong emotional connection with its users is through the use of visual elements in its marketing. The company has always been known for its innovative and visually appealing products, but it has also managed to create a strong brand identity that resonates with its users.

Much like White Rabbit Creamy Candy, Nintendo has also adhered to a philosophy of providing genuine goods and fair trade. This has helped to create a positive image of the brand, which has only served to strengthen its position in the market. One of the most iconic visual elements of Nintendo’s marketing is its use of classic characters such as Mario and Zelda. These beloved characters have been around for decades, and their inclusion in new games and consoles only serves to evoke feelings of nostalgia and emotional attachment in

users. Therefore, this study is expected to find deeper insights into how nostalgic appeals are influential in visual marketing and why nostalgia has a strong impact on encouraging consumers to interact with a brand or company. Through a better understanding of this phenomenon, it is certainly expected that other companies can design more effective and significant marketing strategies according to the preferences of today’s consumers.

Methodology

Table 1. Research Gap

Brand /Work	Purpose	Output
White Rabbit Creamy Candy	Transform its brand to better connect with younger generations involves expanding its reach beyond the food and beverage industry.	Marketing Media & Brand Collaboration
Coca Cola Remastered Commercial	Show how the brand has been a part of a culture in the past and shows how relevant it is to the present.	Commercial Video
Mattel (Barbie)	To earn the most recognizable and influential toy brands worldwide	Blockbuster Movie
The Re-Issue Project by Calvin Klein	To help the brand re-introduce classic '80s and '90s denim pieces such as high-waist jeans and boyfriend jeans	Poster and Campaign Ad

Based on the research gap table, it would be best to approach the method of visual analysis for Nintendo by conducting a thorough observation and analysis of the selected marketing media content that uses nostalgic elements. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative with a visual content analysis approach by differentiating samples into four different groups of analysis (Rahma et al., 2017). Visual content analysis is an analytical approach to a systematic description of the form and writing, or visual elements presented on several promotional media (John & De'Villiers, 2020). This analysis is carried out by analyzing the visual content of nostalgia-based marketing from online promotional media used by 'Nintendo' such as promotional materials, advertisements, and campaigns on various media platforms. The contents or visual elements of the marketing or promotional media were then used as research samples. The selected samples from 'Nintendo' marketing media that have a nostalgic concept will be analyzed using general theories regarding nostalgic elements and design styles, then associated with marketing. Then, the results of the analysis will be associated with consumer responses to the selected promotional media created by 'Nintendo' through interviews and short surveys with consumers to measure the emotional effects and nostalgic elements that appear. The data collection techniques were conducted by observation, focus group discussion (FGD), and literature study.

Result

1. Visual Analysis of 'Nintendo' NES Classic Edition Mini Product Release Campaign.

In the late 1980s, the Nintendo Enter-

tainment System (NES) reached its peak buyer demand and Nintendo was able to build consumer loyalty. Then due to Nintendo's inability at the time to meet the growing consumer demand, the NES and its games became so rare and valuable that the NES had to be replaced (Cuff, 2017). Therefore, in 2016, Nintendo re-released a similar NES that had been remodeled to keep up with the times in the form of the NES Classic Edition Mini. This visual analysis is used to dissect the visual elements used in Nintendo's NES Classic Edition Mini product marketing campaign. The NES Classic Edition Mini release campaign is considered an innovation in nostalgia marketing as it taps into the collective memories of gamers and utilizes the iconic symbol of the classic Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) console. A key aspect of this analysis involves identifying and categorizing the color schemes used in the campaign's advertising visuals, specifically assessing the use and relationship of colors and shapes reminiscent of the classic game console. The following describes the visual analysis of Nintendo's NES Classic Edition Mini product release campaign images.



Figure 1. Media Promosi Kampanye NES Classic Edition Nintendo 2016
(Source: www.psxhax.com)

Table 2. Visual Analysis of Nintendo's NES Classic Edition Campaign Promotional Media

Visual Analysis	
Color Tonal	Design Elements
Using the colors of the original NES console era as inspiration such as red, gray, black, and beige. While the background uses predominantly black and blue colors.	These design elements are also complemented by an 8-bit pixel design style and Nintendo's signature stylized logo. Then there's an image of the new NES Classic Edition mini and slim console displayed using a gradient background resembling the original NES console era packaging.
Images and Icons	Typography
The use of imagery in this campaign features a few games on the original NES console by emphasizing the product title in bold. In addition, the use of Mario and Kirby character icons on promotional media can symbolize the visual style of the original NES console video game that still uses pixel-based video games with low bits.	The typography uses a bold and blocky font that is reminiscent of game titles from the 80- 90s. The font style is used to trigger the audience towards the retro fonts used during the original NES console era.

In the table above, the color tonalities displayed are retro classics by highlighting the color identity of Nintendo consoles of the 80s such as gray, black, or red. Based on existing research, the colors that can trigger nostalgia vary greatly between individuals and cultures because they depend on different subjective experiences and memories (Witzel et al., 2021). In this promotional media case, the colors displayed resemble Nintendo's popular classic console products that already existed in the '80s and '90s, so they can trigger memories or memories of these products when seeing similar color combinations. The design elements and imagery or icons on the poster are designed in the pixel design style that was very familiar in the 80s, in addition to the use of iconic Nintendo characters such as Mario and Kirby and visual replication of the original NES console shape can invite consumers to remember the experience of using the classic console through the new production of the mini version. Therefore, through this promotional media campaign, Nintendo not only capitalizes on the sentimental nostalgia value of the original NES console but also attracts a new generation's interest and appreciation of the classic gaming experience.

2. Visual Analysis of Super Mario Bros. 35 'Nintendo'

This visual analysis is used to dissect the visual elements used in the marketing campaign for the release of Super Mario Bros. 35, which was released in conjunction with the 35th Anniversary of Super Mario Bros. from Nintendo. The game, which was released in 2020 and is an online multiplayer game, successfully blends the classic aesthetics of the original Super Mario Bros. with a touch of modern design style (Chen, 2022). A key aspect of

this analysis involves identifying and categorizing color schemes used in advertising visuals or promotional media, specifically assessing the use and relationship of colors and shapes used. For some fans, the Super Mario Bros. 35 and 35th Anniversary Super Mario Bros. from 'Nintendo' is a treasure trove of nostalgia because it is considered to have interesting visual elements that harken back to the beginning of the Super Mario Bros. franchise. The following is a description of the visual analysis of the release image of Super Mario Bros. 35 on the 35th Anniversary of Super Mario Bros. from 'Nintendo'.



Figure 2. Super Mario Bros. Promotional Media 35
(Source: www.sea.ign.com)

Table 3. Visual Analysis of Super Mario Bros.
Promotional Media 35

Visual Analysis	
Color Tonal	Design Elements
It uses red, blue, purple, and yellow colors that dominate and reflect the iconic colors of Mario's and Mushroom Kingdom's outfits.	The design elements in this promotional media combine a retro design style aesthetic that features pixel elements from the original Super Mario Bros. game with a contemporary online game interface. gradation background resembles the

Images and Icons	Typography
The use of imagery and icons utilizes the original Super Mario Bros. visuals of environment, character, and item design from the 1985s while featuring familiar pixel-based gameplay.	original NES console-era packaging The use of typography and fonts in the Super Mario Bros. 35 logo are bold and blocky letters that reinforce the visuals of the 8-bit pixel era. The number 35 in the logo is made with a glow effect to emphasize the game that was released along with the 35 th anniversary of Super Mario Bros.

In the analysis table of Super Mario Bros. 35, the color tones used are vibrant and saturated with strong colors such as red, green, blue, purple, and predominantly yellow. The type of design elements used is a retro pixel 8-bit design style that first appeared in the 1990s in line with the release of the first Super Mario Bros. game franchise. This promotional media not only displays nostalgic visuals but also gives the audience an overview of the product to be obtained, which is an adaptation of the previous Super Mario Bros. game. 'Nintendo' managed to take its audience back to the 8-bit era while offering a contemporary and immersive experience of their classic games to potential players.

3. Visual Analysis of Game Boy Advance SP Campaign: Classic NES Edition

This visual analysis is used to dissect the visual elements used in the marketing campaign for the release of the Game Boy Advance SP: Classic NES Edition in 2006. The campaign was about the release of the Game Boy Advance SP as a special edition handheld console. The product was adapted from the iconic Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) and its timeless heritage with a touch of modern design style (Zhang, 2022). The main aspect of this analysis involves identifying and categorizing the color schemes used in advertising visuals or promotional media, specifically assessing the use and relationship of colors and shapes used. The following describes the visual analysis of the Game Boy Advance SP release image: Classic NES Edition.



Figure 3. Game Boy Advance SP Promotional Media: Classic NES Edition
 (Source: www.retroplace.com)

Table 4. Visual Analysis of Game Boy Advance SP Promotional Media: Classic NES Edition

Visual Analysis	
Color Tonal	Design Elements
It uses red, black, and gray. These are the classic NES colors from the 1980s.	The console has a shape and visuals that resemble the original NES, equipped with a cross-shaped direction pad and red A/B buttons.

	In addition, there is a small box-shaped screen that is familiar to the original NES Game Boy. The poster itself has familiar elements from Mario games with a pixelated art style.
Images and Icons	Typography
The use of imagery in this campaign features products and footage of some gameplay on the product. In addition, the use of mushroom character icons from Mario games on promotional media can symbolize the visual style of the original NES console video game which still uses pixel-based video games with low bits.	The use of typography using bold letters reminiscent of retro game titles is used in promotional materials and advertisements that reinforce the connection to the 8-bit pixel era.

In the table above, the color tones displayed have a classic retro feel by highlighting the color identity of the Nintendo console in the 80s such as gray, black, or red as well as a combination of blue, green, and brick red in the background. In this promotional media, the colors displayed on the console resemble popular classic NES products that already existed in the 80s, so that they can trigger memories or memories of these products when seeing similar color combinations. While the design elements and imagery or icons on the poster are designed in the pixel design style that was very familiar in the 80s, in addition to the use of Nintendo's iconic characters from Mario games and

visual replication of the Game Boy console shape can invite consumers to remember the experience of using the classic console through the new production of the special edition.

4. Visual Analysis of Nintendo Switch Online Poster

This visual analysis is used to dissect the visual elements used in the marketing campaign for the release of the Nintendo Switch Online series, which was released in 2021 and continues to be updated until 2023. The campaign aims to advertise the Switch Online membership where consumers will be able to experience every game ever present on Nintendo's classic NES, SNES, and Game Boy consoles through the Nintendo Switch console. A key aspect of this analysis involves identifying and categorizing color schemes used in advertising visuals or promotional media, specifically assessing the use and relationship of colors and shapes used. The following describes the visual analysis of the Nintendo Switch Online release image.



Figure 4. Nintendo Switch Online Promotion Media
(Source: www.nintendo.com)

Table 5. Visual Analysis of Nintendo Switch Online Promotional Media

Visual Analysis	
Color Tonal	Design Elements
Light and dark gray, blue, purple, green, yellow, white, black, and red dominate the background.	The design elements in this promotional media combine visuals that display each console with a red background, in addition, there are white text elements under the console image and images of each type of game obtained on each plan. For example, on the Game Boy, there are posters of Kirby Tilt 'n' Tumble and Metroid II Return of Samus, while on the SNES there are posters of The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past and Super Mario World.
Images and Icons	Typography
The use of imagery and icons utilizes the original poster	The use of typography and fonts on this poster

released by Nintendo. Use of NES, SNES, and Game Boy consoles on the poster.	resembles pixelated fonts. The NES poster uses the logo and font used on NES products with a more blocky font. While the SNES poster uses the original SNES font with thinner and elongated font characteristics, this font is also made italic. Then the Game Boy poster uses the original Game Boy font which is thick and firm and displays italic
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In the Nintendo Switch Online analysis table, the tonal colors used are vibrant and saturated with dominant strong colors such as red, which are complemented by other colors such as green, blue, purple, gray, black, and yellow. The type of design elements used are images and text from Nintendo products, brands, and game posters that have been released. This promotional media not only displays nostalgic visuals of the consoles and game posters but also gives the audience an overview of the products that will be obtained in the form of portable replayable games that can be played online from each classic console.

Discussion

In this study, a focus group discussion was conducted with 5 respondents who fit the criteria of 'Nintendo' consumer segmentation, namely men and women aged 18-25 years from the young adult age

group, active video game users, and have used 'Nintendo' consoles or games. The selection of respondents is based on purposive sampling to represent 'Nintendo' consumers. Consumer response to 'Nintendo' marketing media visuals with nostalgic elements is determined by the visual elements and design style used. The use of nostalgic elements in marketing visuals has a positive impact on consumer interest and purchasing power for 'Nintendo's products. Some results regarding consumer perceptions and responses to 'Nintendo' marketing visuals will be described below.

1. Respondents have a positive response in expressing an emotional connection with the nostalgic visual elements used by 'Nintendo' marketing from the use of classic 'Nintendo' colors, pixel design style, and iconic characters have successfully evoked memories of similar gaming experiences as a child from the year 90's.
2. Respondents liked the way 'Nintendo' blended modern design elements with nostalgic visuals well especially in the advertisements and the NES Classic Edition Mini product as a whole as it can also trigger a nostalgic gaming experience with a modern play interface.
3. From several types of online promotional media presentations, such as social media and campaign posters, respondents revealed that 'Nintendo' managed to create a visual blend with the timeless classic 'Nintendo' style.
4. Some respondents stated that the consideration of buying limited edition or new products that have a nostalgic appearance is more attractive than buying a console that has been completely modernized.
5. Respondents agreed that incor-

porating nostalgic elements from a visual and emotional perspective can make these limited edition products a collectible item that has high sentimental value.

6. Some respondents want 'Nintendo' to continue to utilize nostalgia in their marketing and continue to innovate to incorporate classic, iconic 'Nintendo' elements into modern gaming experiences.

Conclusion

The results of this study show that the application of 90's nostalgia in marketing media visualization can increase purchase intention and generate more engagement to a larger and stronger consumer base. 'Nintendo' is one of the companies that managed to appeal to consumers' emotions and turn it into a powerful way to connect with consumers by using nostalgic elements in their marketing visuals. As for the visualization elements that can increase product appeal and positive emotional reactions to consumers; (1) Using classic color tones that are in line with the era or year used as nostalgic elements such as red, grayish, and others; (2) The use of design elements that are in line with the popular design styles of the year used as nostalgic elements are very influential on consumer sentiment and sensitivity, for example in the 1980-1990s was the 8 or 16-bit pixel design style; (3) Using icons or symbols that are famous or describe the era strongly such as certain characters or objects; (4) The use of bold and blocky typography can give a strong impression in attracting consumer attention to the product, especially if the selection and use are in harmony with the design elements of the era used. 'Nintendo' is proven to use nostalgic elements in the visual elements of its marketing media attractively and effectively so that it can make consum-

ers emotionally attached and increase purchase intention towards 'Nintendo's products.

Meanwhile, respondents' positive responses to the use of nostalgic elements in the visual elements of 'Nintendo' marketing include; (1) The use of classic colors, pixel design styles, and iconic characters from the '90s has successfully evoked memories of similar gaming experiences as a child and is preferred by respondents; (2) The combination of modern design elements with 90's nostalgic visuals is considered to trigger a nostalgic gaming experience with a modern playing interface; (3) Likes Nintendo's timeless nostalgic visual elements; (4) Considers buying limited edition or new products that have a nostalgic appearance because they are considered more attractive; (5) Likes nostalgic products because they are considered collectibles that have sentimental value; (6) Likes the utilization of nostalgic elements in marketing and hopes to continue to innovate in triggering the nostalgic feeling.

The above conclusions prove that there is a significant relationship between the utilization of nostalgic elements and the positive emotions of consumers on its use in the visual elements of 'Nintendo' marketing media. This shows that utilizing nostalgic elements of certain groups or eras in the marketing strategy of a product or company can create visual interest and emotional attachment in consumers to improve product image and sales. The company has used unique and innovative concepts such as augmented reality and mixed reality in its advertising campaigns to create a one-of-a-kind experience for its users.

Overall, it is clear that further research is needed to fully understand the impact of nostalgia on consumer behavior

and how companies can use it to create effective marketing campaigns. By conducting research on different cohorts like the 70's or 80's and exploring the evolution of nostalgic visual elements. How it can help companies gain a better understanding of how to effectively target their audiences and create meaningful connections with consumers.

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