



Faculty of Legal Sciences

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**THE ADAPTATION OF NOSTALGIA
MARKETING AT “MATTHEW'S BAGEL
STORE & BAKERY” IN CUENCA FOR
AMERICAN RESIDENTS AND IMPORT
OPPORTUNITIES**

Project prior to obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in
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To my parents, for teaching me that dreams are built
with effort, for always being there, at every moment,
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The adaptation of nostalgia marketing at “Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery” in Cuenca for American residents and import opportunities

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the case of Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery, located in Cuenca, Ecuador, focusing on the use of nostalgia marketing to connect with the American expatriate community. Based on Marketing 4.0 and consumer emotion theory, it evaluated how positive memories of the home country influence purchasing decisions. The research employed a mixed-method approach: in-depth interviews with the owner and surveys of 66 American customers. The results show that the combination of authentic products and themed ambiance creates a strong emotional connection with customers, although this does not always translate into frequent consumption. The quality and authenticity of the products are highly valued, but high prices and limited digital promotion hinder business growth. Diversification options through imports were also explored, although interest was insufficient to justify large volumes. It is concluded that the company should strengthen its digital strategy and consider expanding to new markets, while preserving the authenticity of its value proposition as a key differentiating element.

Key words

- Authentic, Marketing, Migration, Nostalgia, Quality

La adaptación del marketing de nostalgia de “Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery” en cuenca para residentes americanos y oportunidades de importación

RESUMEN

Este estudio analiza el caso de Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery, ubicado en Cuenca, Ecuador, enfocado en el uso del marketing de nostalgia para conectar con la comunidad de expatriados estadounidenses. Basado en el marketing 4.0 y la teoría de las emociones del consumidor, se evaluó cómo los recuerdos positivos del país de origen influyen en las decisiones de compra. La investigación utilizó una metodología mixta: entrevistas en profundidad con la propietaria y encuestas a 66 clientes norteamericanos. Los resultados muestran que la combinación de productos auténticos y ambientación temática genera una fuerte conexión emocional con los clientes, aunque no siempre se refleja en una alta frecuencia de consumo. La calidad y autenticidad de los productos son altamente valoradas, pero los precios elevados y la poca promoción digital limitan el crecimiento del negocio. También se exploraron opciones de diversificación mediante importaciones, aunque el interés no fue suficiente para justificar grandes volúmenes. Se concluye que la empresa debe fortalecer su estrategia digital y considerar una expansión a nuevos mercados, preservando la autenticidad de su propuesta como elemento diferenciador clave.

Palabras clave

- Auténticos, Calidad, Marketing, Migración, Nostalgia

The Adaptation of nostalgia marketing at “Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery” in Cuenca for American residents and import opportunities

1. Introduction

Nostalgia has been used as a marketing tool to revive the past and influence people's decisions, as well as to shape the relationship between consumers and brands (Jun et al., 2022, cited in O'Reilly et al., 2024). Nostalgia marketing has gained significant relevance, with many brands using it to target a specific market segment, reconnect with past customers, or even attract new ones. Nostalgia indirectly encourages people to purchase a product by evoking pleasant memories (Adil Mahmood Alkhafagi, 2023). Moreover, it aims to create an emotional bond with the consumer, fostering loyalty between the brand and the customer. By establishing these connections, brands ensure that their customers continue choosing them in the future and even promote them to friends or family.

An example of how nostalgia is used in marketing is the case of "Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery" in Cuenca. Due to the strong presence of American residents in Cuenca, who make up approximately 16.2% of the immigrant population, several restaurants have been established to provide to their culture and preferences, creating a sense of connection to their homeland. In the case of “Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery”, this coffee shop primarily targets the American community, which accounts for 70% of its total customers (Rodriguez, 2025). Matthew's offers traditional American products, specifically from New York, such as bagels and classic New York-style sandwiches, as well as imported products like Cabot brand cheeses and Starbucks caffeinated beverages. In this way, the coffee shop has become a meeting place for American expatriates living in Cuenca. This adaptation strategy not only addresses a culinary need but also appeals to the nostalgia of American residents, who relive memories of their home country through these products.

In an increasingly competitive business world, companies that adapt to the specific needs of their target audience are highly valued and well received. Additionally, human mobility brings various challenges to destination countries, particularly the challenge businesses face in adapting their products and services to a new population group. These new groups have distinct needs and demands, and catering to them has been a key success factor for many businesses, including “Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery” in Cuenca. For this reason, it is interesting to analyze the strategies this business has implemented to become "a little piece of New York" in Cuenca, as expressed by its customers, who are predominantly American residents.

Cuenca, being a city with a significant foreign population, hosts the second-largest group of expatriates from the United States (Quillupangui, 2023). This group consists of approximately 10,000 people, most of whom are retirees (Beltrán, 2023). Due to their different consumption habits compared to local habits, various restaurants, bars, and cafés have emerged to offer options personalized to their tastes and needs. This includes establishments serving traditional American cuisine as well as bakeries that provide a sense of familiarity and make them feel at home. Furthermore, this trend has contributed to the introduction of new products into the local market, reflecting globalization and cultural adaptation through the presence of American brands and products in Ecuador.

1.1 Objectives

1.1.1 General objective

To analyze the adaptation strategy of “Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery” in Cuenca to meet the needs of foreign residents, identifying import opportunities for products that could diversify its product offering.

1.1.2 Specific objectives

1. To describe the fundamentals, components, and strategies of nostalgia marketing adaptation.
2. To learn the history and characteristics of the type of business of "Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery”.
3. To analyze the nostalgia marketing adaptation strategies of "Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery.”
4. To identify import opportunities to enrich the offering of "Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery.” The information will be obtained through surveys of 50 American customers, and the data will be analyzed through descriptive analysis.

1.2 Theoretical framework

Marketing is a discipline reflected in our daily lives, especially in the purchasing decisions we make. From choosing a product at the supermarket to engaging with a brand on social media, marketing influences our needs, desires, and behaviors. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), marketing is not just about selling; it is about identifying and satisfying people's needs in a profitable way with the goal of improving their quality of life (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In this way, marketing is present at every stage of the purchasing process, from identifying a problem to post-purchase satisfaction.

From this perspective, according to the American Marketing Association (AMA), "Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, partners, and society at large" (AMA, 2025). Marketing aims to understand and anticipate consumers' needs, as it is important to remember that people prefer to buy by choice rather than feeling pressured to make a purchase. For this reason, marketing must be communicated as effectively as possible, using market research and data analysis to create value propositions that not only satisfy customers but also benefit society.

Additionally, it is crucial to consider how marketing has evolved throughout history. It has continuously adapted to new societal needs, with one of the most significant changes being technological advancements. First, there was Marketing 1.0, driven by products and focused on mass production (Suárez, 2018). Later, Marketing 2.0 emerged, centered on customers and loyalty, leading to more personalized experiences (Kotler et al., 2016). Following this trend, Marketing 3.0 appeared, emphasizing human values and emotions (Suárez, 2018). Lastly, the most recent evolution, Marketing 4.0, integrates both digital and human aspects to identify trends using technology and social media (Kotler et al., 2016).

In this framework, as marketing has evolved through different stages, from mass production to the integration of digital and human elements, the marketing mix has remained an effective tool for businesses to identify strategies to reach their target market. This is represented by the "4 Ps": product (goods and services), price (the amount consumers are willing to pay), place (activities that ensure product availability for consumers), and promotion (persuading customers to buy) (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017). Thus, the marketing mix facilitates the creation of effective strategies.

On the other hand, the importance of marketing lies in its ability to meet consumer needs and desires. Through marketing, businesses have built strong and lasting relationships with their customers, driven by innovation and competitiveness. Moreover, marketing contributes to financial success and its subsequent effects (Kotler & Keller, 2016). This is reflected in increased customer loyalty and strengthened brand value, helping companies retain customers while attracting new ones. As a result, businesses can reduce costs and increase long-term profitability. A clear example of this is streaming platforms like Netflix and Spotify, which use user behavior data to provide personalized recommendations. This not only enhances customer experience but also retains users, increasing their engagement with the platforms, which in turn raises their commercial value. In this way, marketing facilitates the introduction of new products and services to the market, satisfies existing demands, and creates new opportunities for both consumers and businesses. It even improves customer accessibility to various goods and services. Therefore, marketing is not only a tool for business success but also a driving force for social and economic progress.

Marketing is divided into different types, each with a specific focus and objective. These include digital and social media marketing, direct marketing, social marketing, global marketing, influencer marketing, and experiential marketing (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The latter is closely related to nostalgia marketing, as it evokes emotions and connections with consumers. The word "nostalgia" derives from the Greek "nóstos," meaning return, and "algía," referring to pain and suffering (Real Academia Española, 2024). This concept refers to a longing for the past, which can generate a strong emotional response from individuals.

It is important to note that nostalgia marketing is not a recent phenomenon. It is based on the perception that the past represents security, simplicity, and authenticity (Núñez, 2025). While this type of marketing references the past to evoke emotions, its appearance is not tied to a specific period but rather to how brands have leveraged these emotions over time. Nostalgia provides consumers with a sense of comfort and reassurance in today's fast-paced world; additionally, it helps create stronger brand connections by triggering the desire to relive meaningful past moments.

In the modern world, which is fast-moving and fleeting, people have found comfort in reminiscing about the past and recreating familiar situations. For this reason, millennials have become the main target of nostalgia marketing, as reliving cherished memories generates a pleasant feeling (Friedman, 2016). For this generation, nostalgia is more than just remembering simpler times; it is also a way to reaffirm their identity and values in an ever-changing social landscape. This phenomenon is evident in various trends that have resurfaced in

today's society, such as 90s fashion with cargo pants, the resurgence of vinyl records, and remakes of classic TV shows and movies from that era.

Additionally, Ramos (2020) points out that nostalgia marketing focuses on evoking positive emotions in consumers, avoiding the rational layer that often creates obstacles during the purchasing process (Ramos, 2020). In this way, nostalgia inspires consumers to spend money because it connects them to happy memories. Furthermore, it makes them more receptive to brand messaging, fostering a deep and lasting connection that leads to brand loyalty and a willingness to pay more for products that evoke these emotions.

Emotions have always influenced purchasing decisions, but nostalgia marketing varies depending on the target generation. For example, baby boomers are drawn to marketing that evokes iconic products from the 60s and 70s, while millennials prefer references from the 90s and 2000s. Because of its ability to stir strong emotions in consumers, nostalgia marketing has become a powerful strategy for creating rewarding consumer experiences and strengthening emotional bonds with different brands.

Nostalgia marketing employs various strategies to foster emotional attachment to a brand. Some examples include relaunching classic products, such as the retro-style Evercade VS, a modern gaming console featuring 80s and 90s games (Hill, 2024), and incorporating retro music and aesthetics in advertisements for TV shows and movies. A notable example is Netflix's series *Stranger Things*, which draws inspiration from the 1980s and features iconic songs, clothing, and gadgets from that era (Respers, 2022). Many brands have leveraged nostalgia marketing to appeal to both younger and older audiences, aiming to evoke feelings and memories from past decades through their products or content.

However, as Sørensen et al. (2021) note, nostalgia marketing must be applied strategically. Otherwise, consumers may perceive the brand's image as inauthentic when it excessively relies on the past, potentially harming the emotional connection between the brand and the consumer (Sørensen et al., 2021). Additionally, nostalgia marketing can face other challenges, such as disconnecting from younger generations who do not relate to past references and therefore lose interest in the promoted products or services. It also runs the risk of inactivity, losing competitiveness against brands that are constantly innovating and evolving.

Within nostalgia marketing, nostalgia products play a crucial role, especially for people who have moved to different cities or countries, as these products represent familiarity and connection to their places of origin. Among the most significant nostalgia products are food, beverages, and handicrafts (CEPAL, 2003). These products allow individuals to maintain an emotional and cultural connection with their past and serve as a key tool for businesses looking to attract specific consumer groups, such as migrants seeking products that make them feel closer to home.

For this reason, it is important to highlight the role nostalgia marketing plays within migrant communities. Migration has become a key factor in creating a nostalgia market, as it offers a connection to one's homeland and allows migrants to access products and experiences intrinsic to their culture (Acle Mena & Bautista Castelán, 2024). A clear example of this is reflected in the Latino migrant market in the United States. According to the United States Census Bureau (2024), in 2023, the Hispanic community reached 65.2 million, representing 19.5% of the total population. This Latino community, characterized by its strong attachment to its culture and traditions, drives the consumption of products that evoke the flavors, scents, and emotions of their native land.

Chili peppers, beans, and corn are among the most important foods in the Mexican diet and are closely tied to migrant communities. Among Mexicans living in the United States, chili peppers are the most sought-after food, as they have always been a staple of their daily diet, reflecting their deep connection to cultural roots (Ramón & Burguete, 2011). Thanks to migration and the nostalgia market, a business opportunity has emerged that preserves these customs while satisfying the needs and desires of migrants.

Nostalgia marketing offers highly valuable strategies in a world of constant growth and commercial competitiveness. Focusing the offering on a specific group of consumers by aiming to provide not merely products but a complete sensory and emotional experience seems to be the right choice when it comes to standing out. Appealing to memories of past experiences related to childhood, adolescence, or one's place of origin evokes feelings of security and familiarity among consumers, resulting in an experience they seek to relive.

Like any strategy, nostalgia marketing must be thoroughly analyzed and carefully implemented to ensure it is applied appropriately, respectfully, and ethically toward consumers.

2. Literature review

Considering the fundamental role that nostalgia marketing plays in the migrant market, it is important to mention that expatriates, despite trying to adapt to a cosmopolitan society, maintain certain habits that allow them to stay connected to their origins (Thompson & Tambyah, 1999). This is reflected in their eating habits and in their search for experiences that remind them of home. For this reason, many foreigners look for restaurants that serve food from their home country, with themes that make them feel in tune with their roots. Additionally, they often need to import products that they frequently consumed or used before relocating.

One Mexican brand that has stood out in this context is "Tajín," a chili, lime, and salt seasoning that began exporting in the 1990s, focusing on Latin communities. Today, Tajín is a leading brand both in Mexico and the United States (Tajín, 2021). The marketing applied to this product has effectively leveraged visual and cultural elements to connect with consumers. The label on its packaging includes the colors of the Mexican flag and phrases in both Spanish and English, creating a direct link to Mexican identity. Additionally, on its website, Tajín shares traditional Mexican recipes, such as churros with Tajín. This example reflects how Tajín's entrepreneurs identified a potential market based on nostalgia and successfully positioned their product in a different country. Furthermore, through nostalgia marketing—using the packaging label and traditional Mexican recipes on their website—the company has sought to evoke memories and traditions for Mexican migrants.

Similarly, a study conducted by Gissi & Olmos (2023) titled *"Migration, Intercultural Experiences, and Roots: Venezuelans and Colombians Residing in Santiago de Chile (2017-2022)"* highlights how nostalgia caused by migration can be alleviated by creating connections that remind individuals of their home. In an interview with a Venezuelan migrant residing in Chile, she expressed: "[...] I only miss the weather because I don't miss the food at all; they have already brought it here and established it" (Gissi & Olmos, 2023). This demonstrates how nostalgia for home can be reduced or even eliminated when cultural elements, such as food, are available in the place of residence. Thus, nostalgia marketing can be used by businesses to meet specific consumer needs.

Several Latin American small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have adopted this concept and brought it to other countries. One such example is "Goya Foods," whose founder, Spanish entrepreneur Prudencio Unanue, identified an underserved sector in the U.S. market—the demand for Latin American food products for migrants. As a result, he began importing food from Latin America to serve these communities, tailoring various advertising campaigns to each immigrant community. Today, "Goya Foods" manufactures and distributes more than 85 varieties of products aimed at Hispanic communities in the United States, ranging from beans to plantains, expanding its influence in the North American market and beyond (BBC News Mundo, 2019). Not only did Goya Foods meet the demands of Latin American immigrants in the U.S., but it also expanded its market to consumers interested in international cuisine, becoming a success story that leveraged nostalgia to thrive.

Another successful example of using nostalgia to establish a presence in foreign markets is "Café Medrano." Its founders, Julio Emilio and José Domingo Medrano, cultivated coffee in Honduras until, in 2017, second-generation entrepreneur Raúl Medrano introduced the coffee to Washington, United States, confident that there was a market among Latinos (and potentially Americans) willing to purchase the product. This business initially operated as a "suitcase trade," meaning they transported limited quantities at first. However, due to high demand, Café Medrano is now available for purchase on Amazon.com (Visión 360, 2023). In this way, a traditional product achieved international success by appealing to nostalgia and the authenticity of its origins. This case illustrates how micro and small businesses can establish emotional connections with customers and expand into new markets.

Additionally, another successful case is the return of "Nestlé Jungly" chocolate in Spain. This chocolate was popular in the 1990s and 2000s but was discontinued in 2016 due to low demand. Its removal sparked outrage among many fans, who demanded its return through social media. Following a campaign supported by influencers, Nestlé relaunched the chocolate in 2021. The return of the product, with new flavor variants, was a massive success and continues to be available today (El Confidencial, 2022). Thanks to the emotional appeal of nostalgia, Nestlé managed to reconnect with loyal consumers while attracting new generations with innovative flavors. By reviving an original product, the company satisfied nostalgic consumers and attracted new customers while maintaining authenticity and innovation.

On the other hand, nostalgia is not only based on genuine memories but also on traditions created by brands to establish emotional connections with consumers. An example is Mulino Bianco, which turned *frollini* (Italian biscuits) into a key element of the Italian breakfast, using nostalgia marketing to connect consumers with an idealized past (Pirani, 2024). This study demonstrates how brands can develop narratives that

emotionally resonate with consumers, even if those traditions never truly existed, which could be applied to migrant communities in new contexts.

However, there are also cases where nostalgia marketing has not been successful. One such example is the 2014 campaign launched by the U.S. electronics store RadioShack. This campaign targeted Generation X, featuring iconic 1980s characters such as musician Weird Al Yankovic to attract customers. However, this nostalgia-driven campaign backfired, as the advertising highlighted how obsolete the brand had become. RadioShack lacked exclusive products to differentiate itself from major retailers like Amazon and Walmart, and due to its declining state, it could not offer competitive prices (La Monica, 2014). In this case, nostalgia marketing was not enough to attract customers and had a negative effect on the brand. Failing to adapt to new trends, lacking innovation, and not seeking new potential buyers worked against the company, as consumers were looking for modern and technologically advanced products, making RadioShack outdated and unappealing.

Similarly, the relaunch of Crystal Pepsi in 2017 serves as another example. Crystal Pepsi was popular in the 1990s because its transparent appearance made it seem healthier. However, it disappeared after just a few years. Due to strong consumer demand, it was relaunched in 2017, but given that society had shifted its preference toward seltzer water and lightly flavored beverages, Crystal Pepsi remained limited to nostalgic consumers (López, 2017). This case illustrates the limitations of nostalgia marketing and how it does not always guarantee success.

The mentioned cases highlight the validity of using marketing that appeals to nostalgia, as well as the need to analyze external factors that may influence the success or failure of a campaign or advertisement that targets this type of sentiment. Factors such as the present environment, consumption habits, and the new needs and concerns of current generations must be considered in order to adapt strategies and create a true connection with customers. Otherwise, this type of marketing could result in negative outcomes for the company implementing it.

In this regard, for companies to maintain their relevance and success in the market, they must not only stay attuned to global trends but also establish a bond with the culture and environment in which they operate. Additionally, in a highly digitized world, social media plays a crucial role in adapting quickly to the new market (Farhan et al., 2024). This is how digital media becomes an important element to reach consumers and can be considered necessary tools when applying nostalgia marketing strategies. By using digital platforms, brands can create content that evokes memories and interact immediately with their consumers, generating a meaningful experience. An example of this is the content created by bloggers focused on long-established restaurants, where they not only share their experiences but also tell stories and details that awaken memories and emotions from the past (Puspita & Hendrayati, 2020). In this way, they manage to connect emotionally with consumers, promoting nostalgic consumption.

This strategy becomes relevant in the Ecuadorian context, where according to data from the INEC (2023), 25% of foreigners entering the country for residency purposes are North Americans. Additionally, Americans represent 29.8% of the total number of foreign entries into the country, regardless of the reason for entry (INEC, 2024). The presence of American citizens, especially in Cuenca, is reflected through projects carried out by the local government aimed at encouraging the integration not only of the North American population but also of all expatriates in general. This can be seen at the International Cultural Center in Cuenca, which promotes the enrichment and exchange of knowledge in the economic area (Ochoa, 2024). Likewise, the emergence of businesses that cater to the tastes and needs of foreign populations, primarily North Americans, has been encouraged.

Within this context, businesses have been promoted that respond to the needs and preferences of foreign populations, especially North Americans. One example of this in the city of Cuenca is “Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery.” This café is located on Ordóñez Lasso Avenue, an area also known as “Gingolandia,” and is frequented by many retired residents, particularly those of American origin. Its owner, Jeniffer Rodriguez, explains that in 2016, she decided to bring this family business from the United States to offer the authentic flavors of New York in the café and bakery sector, specifically bagels (Rodriguez, 2025). This business can be considered an example of an international affiliate, a concept explained by Iudina & Tsovma (2020), who define an affiliate as an acquired company, either 100% or with a significant share, that exercises control and makes decisions in order to expand its operations in another country (Iudina & Tsovma, 2020). Keeping this concept in mind, it is important to understand that the business is focused on the population of retired North Americans, which is reflected in its menu, which is in English, and where a variety of typical New York sandwiches are also offered. Additionally, imported cheeses from the United States, specifically from the “Cabot” brand, are available to provide an authentic taste in their meals.

3. Methods

To achieve the first objective, a qualitative literature review was conducted to explore theoretical concepts and studies supporting the influence of marketing strategies, particularly nostalgia marketing and cultural adaptation in new markets. The information search was carried out using academic sources such as Scopus, Scielo, Dialnet, and Google Scholar, selecting articles related to nostalgia in consumption, cultural factors in consumer behavior, brand marketing with history, and more.

Additionally, books by renowned marketing authors, such as Philip Kotler, were consulted. Through his various works, Kotler provides essential foundations on consumer behavior, market segmentation, types of marketing, emotional marketing, and other key topics, offering necessary insights into how businesses connect with their customers.

The second objective was achieved through two in-depth semi-structured interviews with *Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery* owner, Jeniffer Rodriguez. The semi-structured interview allowed for obtaining relevant information on the topic through pre-established questions. Moreover, due to the flexibility and adaptability of this method, it was possible to address emerging topics during the conversation (Mashuri et al., 2022).

The first interview was structured around five key points:

1. History and vision
2. Consumption and nostalgia in the American community
3. Product Offerings
4. Marketing Strategies
5. Challenges and Expansion Opportunities

The second interview aimed to delve deeper into aspects that emerged during the first conversation, focusing on the café's origins, its establishment process in Cuenca, and the characteristics of the expatriate market in the city. This approach provided an in-depth understanding of the business, highlighting authenticity and differentiation as key factors for its success.

The third objective was achieved through a SWOT analysis. This analysis was considered more effective than others, such as PESTEL, as it allowed for an evaluation of both internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats). This approach provided a comprehensive perspective of the company, enabling informed decision-making for future improvements (Ponce Talancón & Santo Tomás, 2007). Unlike PESTEL analysis, which assesses the external environment in which the business operates, including political, economic, social, technological, ecological, and legal factors (Amador-Mercado, 2022), the SWOT analysis focused on identifying the business's advantages, competitive differentiation, and areas for improvement.

By analyzing strengths and weaknesses, it was possible to determine the competitive edge of the business and areas that may need enhancement. Meanwhile, identifying opportunities and threats helped recognize external factors that could be leveraged to the company's advantage, as well as those that could negatively impact the business, such as competition. Competitors were classified into direct competitors (other businesses offering bagels and targeting expatriates) and indirect competitors (traditional bakeries). This information was gathered from secondary sources, including restaurant review websites that provide menu and pricing details.

Through this analysis, strategies were developed to enhance opportunities and minimize business risks by improving value propositions, product differentiation, and targeted advertising. The goal was not only to increase the business's competitiveness in the market but also to contribute to its sustainability, long-term growth, and positioning as a well-recognized and trusted brand.

Finally, to achieve the fourth objective, surveys were conducted with 50 American customers of "Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery", given that the café has an estimated clientele of around 100 American customers. The survey was administered via Google Forms, allowing for efficient data collection and analysis. A sample of 50% of the American customer base was selected to ensure representativeness, as this percentage was deemed sufficient to reflect customer perceptions and behaviors while ensuring diversity of responses within the niche.

The survey aimed to assess the effectiveness of nostalgia marketing strategies in fostering customer loyalty among American patrons and to identify import opportunities that could enhance the business's product offerings. According to Sierra (1994), surveys consist of a set of pre-prepared questions on a sociological

research topic, which a sample or population responds to (Sierra, 1994). In this case, the questionnaire was structured into six sections:

1. Frequency of consumption
2. Purchase preferences and product perception
3. Emotional context and nostalgia value
4. Communication strategies and marketing reach
5. Import opportunities and product demand
6. Overall satisfaction and business recommendation

To ensure that the survey was completed by American customers, it was distributed through various channels, including a message clarifying who could fill it out and ensuring its anonymity. These channels included GringoPost, Facebook groups for American expatriates living in the city, and a QR code at the café for customers to complete the survey during their visits. The collected data was analyzed descriptively, allowing for the identification of the effectiveness of nostalgia marketing strategies in attracting the American community and recognizing opportunities to optimize the business.

4. Results

4.1 History and analysis of Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery

Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery arrived in Cuenca in 2016 as a family-owned branch of a well-known café originally from New York, United States, with over 90 years of history and 14 franchises established across the U.S. As its owner, Jeniffer Rodríguez, explains, the business initially sold cheeses and cold cuts imported from the United States at the Supermaxi in Las Américas under the name "Bene Plácito." However, once customers learned it was from New York, they began asking for bagels, which led her to start making them by order. Slowly, its popularity grew until she finally decided to open the café, focusing on bagels and other traditional U.S. foods. Since its inception, Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery has aimed to extend the culinary traditions of New York and the U.S., bringing not only authentic products to Cuenca but also a business model based on quality and the recognition of a specific culture.

It is important to highlight that this café model differs greatly between the U.S. and Ecuador. In the U.S., there are around 100 employees working in both the kitchen and customer service, while the numbers in Ecuador are much smaller. Similarly, there is a significant difference in working hours: in the U.S., they worked seven days a week, whereas in Ecuador, it is usually Monday through Saturday. On the other hand, the café emerged in response to the lack of Jewish-American products, especially baked goods, for the expatriate community in the city. As Jeniffer Rodríguez recalls, before she opened her bagel-focused business, there was only one American man making them as a hobby, not out of necessity or as a job. However, due to various complications, quality issues, and growing demand for the product, she decided to fill this market gap. By identifying a little-served market opportunity, she capitalized on meeting the emotional and cultural needs of the American expatriates.

It is worth noting the connection between Jews, bagels, and New York City. In the late 19th century, there was a large wave of Ashkenazi Jewish immigration (Jews from Central Europe) to the United States, particularly to New York (Goldstein 2015, as cited in Kaufmann, 2022). They brought with them various culinary traditions, including bagels, which became popular in the New York community with the opening of many delis, eventually reaching thousands across the country (Levine, 2015, as cited in Kaufmann, 2022). While Ecuador is predominantly Catholic, and the Jewish community represents less than 1% (INEC, 2012), the presence of American expatriates becomes significant, where some, despite not being Jewish, find flavors of home in these products.

Given this context, Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery decided to focus on the expatriate community in Cuenca, with Americans representing 70% of their customers, along with Canadians and Europeans (Rodríguez, 2025). This segmentation can be both a strength and a challenge. By focusing on the expatriate niche, the café directly addresses their emotional and cultural needs, which can improve authenticity and quality, building loyalty among consumers. However, this segmentation could also present a long-term challenge if the market is not diversified, as local consumers could represent an opportunity for the coffee shop. While they are not the primary target, there could be potential in this market, as long as authenticity is maintained while adapting to local tastes. Additionally, it is important to consider the risk that a decreasing expatriate population in the city could have on the business, so building a more diverse consumer base could help maintain stability in adverse scenarios.

Continuing with product authenticity, “Matthew’s Bagel Store & Bakery” is characterized by using high-quality imported ingredients and preparation techniques similar to those used in the United States, making the final product very different from local bakeries. In addition to bagels, other successful products include chicken pie, corned beef, and a variety of desserts such as cheesecakes. Thanks to the importation of ingredients, the traditional New York deli flavor has been recreated in Cuenca, securing customer loyalty. However, this also results in higher product costs compared to other places.

On the one hand, the coffee shop’s primary communication channel is social media, where they share offers, available products, operating hours, and exclusive products for special dates. Their advertising is primarily in English, as they focus on their expatriate niche, particularly Americans. This allows for direct, effective, and personalized communication with customers, reinforcing a sense of community among expatriates and making them feel comfortable and well-served.

Additionally, the business maintains a close relationship with the U.S. Embassy in Ecuador, which has helped them establish themselves as a point of reference for the American community in Cuenca. This connection also strengthens their bilingual content strategy, enabling them to attract not only expatriates but also tourists visiting the country, especially the city. Thus, bilingual content is key to expanding their reach and attracting a more diverse audience, especially those who feel comfortable speaking English.

On the other hand, one of the biggest challenges “Matthew’s Bagel Store & Bakery” faces is educating the local market about the value of their products, emphasizing quality and authenticity over cost, as the Cuenca market often prioritizes price over quality, making it difficult to reach this segment. To maintain product quality, it is essential to keep using imported ingredients, which makes it hard to reduce costs. However, they do not rule out the possibility of expanding to other markets like Quito and Guayaquil, where there is a greater diversity of consumers, higher purchasing power, higher population density, and potential growth for a business model like this. They also plan to diversify the menu while maintaining the essence of their main products, aiming to strengthen their position as a reference for quality and authenticity for the foreign community, while also expanding their reach to the local community.

Table 1
SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
Unique value proposition with authentic American products	Dependence on a specific target
Customer loyalty	High production costs
Targeted marketing with English advertising and active social media presence	Potential price barrier for local Cuencanos customers
Products that evoke nostalgia and tradition for expatriates	Lack of presence on social media
Multicultural positioning towards foreign communities	Lack of product packaging personalization
Online orders and home delivery	
Open Monday through Saturday	
Opportunities	Threats
Expansion to new markets such as Quito and Guayaquil, which are larger and more diverse	Local competition
Market diversification while maintaining product authenticity	Import barriers for ingredients may affect profitability
Expanding the product offering with new products or traditional American flavors to attract customers	Demographic changes
Using more personalized marketing strategies based on cultural and emotional experiences	Resistance from local consumers to the unique and different concept of the coffee shop
Leveraging the connection with the U.S. embassy to expand their reach and reputation internationally	

Considering the strengths, the unique value proposition represents a competitive advantage over Cuenca's traditional offerings, as they are the only ones specializing in bagels and traditional American products such as chicken pies and desserts, made with imported ingredients and specific techniques, positioning them as a premium and exclusive option. Regarding customer loyalty, the American community represents approximately 70% of their customer base, which not only generates recurring revenue but also turns these customers into informal brand ambassadors, promoting the business organically within their community. For this reason, it is important to maintain that loyalty through themed events and direct communication to ensure their relationship with the coffee shop.

The next point is the segmented marketing with advertising in English and active social media. Through this, they have managed to reach the expatriate community, who prefer content in their native language,

facilitating communication and reinforcing their focus on the foreign community. Similarly, they use communication platforms frequently visited by this community, such as Facebook groups exclusively for expatriates, or websites like "GringoPost." Additionally, products that evoke nostalgia and tradition for foreigners are mentioned, such as bagels, mac and cheese, cheesecakes, etc., which satisfy the emotional and cultural needs of this group, leading them to reminisce about their home, potentially positioning themselves as a gastronomic refuge for expatriates.

Likewise, multicultural positioning toward foreign communities such as Americans, Canadians, and Europeans living in Cuenca strengthens their appeal and allows them to cater to different foreign segments, which could be improved through events that celebrate international holidays, reinforcing their image. They also offer home deliveries and online orders via platforms like Uber Eats, providing convenience and accessibility to customers, ensuring their competitiveness and relevance in today's market. Finally, Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery offers service from Monday to Saturday, which represents a competitive advantage over competitors who only operate from Monday to Friday, allowing them to capture higher demand and meet customer needs.

Regarding opportunities, geographic expansion to cities like Quito and Guayaquil means access to larger and more diverse markets, where both foreign and national communities have higher purchasing power, which would allow them to maintain product quality at the same prices while using imported ingredients. This is followed by market diversification, which aims to reach the local segment and acquire new customers while maintaining product quality and authenticity. A good way to reach the local community is through social media and collaborations with influencers to make the coffee shop more widely known. Likewise, expanding the product range by adding new products and traditional American flavors aims to attract new customers, whether native Americans looking to recall the tastes of their home or locals wishing to explore different flavors. Furthermore, it is essential to use more personalized marketing strategies, celebrating U.S. holidays and even local celebrations to attract attention through posts, offers, or events at the coffee shop, allowing them to reach a larger audience. Lastly, effectively utilizing their connection with the U.S. Embassy facilitates the importation of necessary ingredients for their products. The embassy places around two orders per month, which are sent through Servientrega or delivered personally by the owner. This could allow Matthew's to expand its reach and reputation internationally, for example, by offering catering for special events organized by the embassy or participating in fairs, allowing direct exposure of the brand to potential consumers. This could lead to agreements where the embassy promotes their products and showcases American culinary culture. Additionally, they could create special discounts or promotional packages for embassy employees and their families, encouraging their loyalty and recommendations.

On the other hand, weaknesses include high dependence on a specific niche: expatriates. This can limit their reach to a broader audience and create uncertainty regarding the long-term stability of the business if this population decreases in the city or if preferences change. Similarly, high production costs represent a weakness and could even create a barrier for Cuencan customers. For expatriate consumers, the costs align with the prices they are accustomed to, and they also appreciate the quality of the products. However, for local Cuencan consumers, who often prioritize cost over quality, it is very difficult to understand all the processes behind the product, from materials to production and benefits. It is important that, if Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery wants to expand to new consumers, they provide context for the product they will receive; otherwise, people may think they are just receiving a conventional food item. Another weakness is the lack of presence on social media, which limits their ability to connect with new customers and retain current ones. Social media is a useful tool to promote products and create a community around the brand, helping increase the shop's visibility and interacting with followers. Likewise, the lack of packaging personalization, both for home deliveries and in-store purchases (bagels, breads, cakes, etc.), limits the consumer experience, emotional connection with customers, and brand visibility, as customers are not taking home additional information about the shop, which could serve as an additional marketing tool.

Finally, regarding threats, local competition is considered, as there are bakeries or even supermarkets that offer similar products at lower prices. However, the quality, flavors, and authenticity are not the same as what Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery offers. It is also important to consider import barriers, as changes in policies and restrictions within the country are variables, and it is uncertain what will happen in the future. These changes could increase the costs associated with importing ingredients, directly affecting product prices, profitability, and even the quality and consistency of products. Additionally, demographic changes could significantly impact the business, as a decrease in the expatriate population could significantly affect sales, requiring them to attract local consumers or even adapt their products to satisfy local tastes and needs. Finally, there is apparent resistance from local consumers to the unique and different concept of the café, for which it is essential that this group understands the value of the product. This can be done through marketing that highlights the products offered, their ingredients, origin, food benefits, and testimonials from both local and

foreign customers, using social media platforms. For expatriates, who mostly use Facebook or communicate through "GringoPost," or for locals via social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

4.2 Analysis of the survey results

Nostalgia is a subjective experience, where each person experiences it differently. While it cannot be said that it is experienced only after long periods of having lost something, it can be said that pre-nostalgia is experienced immediately when people realize the changes they will undergo in the near future (Mindich et al., 2016). Keeping this in mind, it is important to analyze whether the length of residence in Cuenca for expatriates influences their search for products related to nostalgia. The survey results show that 43.9% of respondents have lived in Cuenca for more than 6 years, while 24.2% have lived there for between 4 and 6 years, and another 24.2% between 1 and 3 years. Only 7.6% have lived in the city for less than 1 year. This suggests that most of "Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery" customers have spent a considerable amount of time in the city, which would imply that they seek products that remind them of their home. However, the relationship between nostalgia and consumption is conflicted, as the consumption of their products is not regular. The data shows that 48.5% of respondents rarely visit the café, meaning it is not a regular consumption spot. Only 18.2% visit it weekly, and 23.3% monthly, with no one visiting daily. This means that, rather than a habit driven by nostalgia, visits to the establishment may be prompted by cravings for products that evoke their culture of origin. Additionally, nostalgia affects people in different ways. While some may feel it immediately after migrating, others may experience it later or not significantly at all. For this reason, it is possible that Matthew's customers view its products as just another option in their regular consumption, influenced by factors such as product quality, price, other food offerings in Cuenca, and how well customers adapt to their environment.

In the United States, specifically in New York City, bagels are consumed at least twice a week as a quick breakfast, easy to eat on the way to work (New Yorker Bagels, 2016). Similarly, in New Jersey, around 82 bagels are consumed annually (Makin, 2024). In contrast, in the survey conducted, 48.5% of customers mentioned that they rarely visit the café, 33.3% do so monthly, and 18.2% do so weekly. This means that the habit of consuming bagels in Cuenca is significantly lower. While the product may attract the American community, it has not been able to replicate the same level of consumption. This shows that nostalgia does not always guarantee consistent consumption from customers. It may spark initial interest, but not always a sustained consumption feeling. Moreover, the context in which the product is developed plays an important role. In the U.S., bagels are considered a quick and practical breakfast for people with a fast-paced routine. In Cuenca, expatriates no longer work and do not need to consume something quickly, so they eat it more as a reminder of home. This is why the emotional connection with customers could be reinforced through campaigns and constant advertising highlighting the product's authenticity.

Regarding nostalgia, the survey shows that 62.1% of expatriates find it very important or somewhat important to find products that remind them of their country of origin. This reinforces the nostalgia marketing theory, where consumers seek products that remind them of their homeland, reflecting a strong emotional attachment to their cultural and gastronomic traditions. This connection can influence customer loyalty and their willingness to pay a premium price. Meanwhile, 27.3% find it slightly important, and 10.6% do not find it important. These results suggest that while the café benefits from nostalgia, it is not a universal factor. Therefore, it is crucial for the café to complement its attributes with quality and variety to attract customers.

On the other hand, it is important to analyze the elements that contribute to creating a sense of nostalgia in expatriates. Therefore, the ambiance, menu, service, and promotions of the business will be analyzed based on the survey results. First, regarding the ambiance, the café is located in Puertas del Sol, on the ground floor of a building, with parking for about 3 cars. Its walls feature drawings that evoke the U.S., especially New York, such as the Statue of Liberty, with vivid colors that catch attention and create a welcoming atmosphere that transports customers to the U.S. Additionally, the name, which is in English, allows customers to immediately identify the products offered, such as bagels and pastries. This creates a sense of familiarity and belonging for expatriates, reminding them of cafés back home.

Regarding the menu, which is also in English, it includes products like bagels, coffee, cakes, desserts, traditional breads, and sandwiches. According to the survey results, 71.2% of customers find that the flavors fully reflect North American tastes, reinforcing the café's authenticity. Additionally, 56.1% of respondents are very satisfied with the quality of the products, suggesting that, in addition to nostalgia, the business stands out and differentiates itself by its level of flavor and preparation. Keeping this in mind, it can be said that the combination of nostalgia and quality creates satisfaction and loyalty from customers. In this way, the consumption experience can be guaranteed to be pleasant and meet customer expectations in terms of freshness and authenticity. Similarly, the ambiance of the place, decoration, and customer service in English help strengthen the emotional bond with customers.

Another key aspect is the way the business is promoted. 62.1% of customers prefer to receive notifications, offers, and promotions through social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. In particular, on Facebook, the business is present through groups focused on and managed by expatriates in Cuenca, where ads and promotions are posted. However, these posts are not very frequent, which could affect the effectiveness of the impact strategy. Additionally, in these Facebook groups, customers can share their opinions about the products and their experiences at the café through comments.

On the other hand, 21.2% of customers prefer to receive communications by email, while 16.7% choose GringoPost or text messages. This suggests that the digital marketing strategy should focus on strengthening its presence on social media by posting more images of products, preparation videos, and customer testimonials, which would be key to engaging consumers and keeping them informed about products, location, and opening hours.

Additionally, the café makes special products for commemorative U.S. dates such as July 4th, and for Jewish customers, special recipes for important dates like Purim and Hanukkah. These are promoted through social media and are made upon request via WhatsApp. Another way the coffee shop targets its audience is by participating in fairs in the city, where large numbers of foreigners, especially Americans, attend, such as Common Grounds and Sabatino's Garden.

Likewise, "Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery" has a close business relationship with the U.S. Embassy in Ecuador, specifically with the one located in Guayaquil. Every two weeks, the embassy places orders for bagels, which are either sent via Servientrega or delivered personally by the owner. This connection strengthens the brand's presence within the U.S. society in the country, as it becomes more visible to the expatriate and diplomatic community, allowing it to reach a larger audience with similar tastes and even gaining a reputation as a reference for traditional American products in Ecuador. This relationship could also enhance future partnerships with other institutions and companies with similar interests, fostering the expansion of the business to new markets.

Regarding the marketing and advertising used by the business, there is an inconsistent presence on social media and communication channels like GringoPost. This lack of consistency in communication has impacted the effectiveness of reaching the North American community in Cuenca. According to the data collected, only 7.6% of respondents consider their advertising to be very effective, while 39.4% rate it as effective. However, 36.4% are neutral, and 16.7% perceive it as ineffective. This means that, although the current advertising strategy has some reach, it does not create a significant impact on a large portion of the target audience. The high percentage of neutral responses indicates that many consumers do not perceive an effort to communicate or find it persuasive enough. Additionally, the percentage of people who consider the strategy ineffective highlights the need to improve the frequency, content, and channels used for diffusion. Therefore, to strengthen the connection with the North American community, it is necessary to be more consistent on social media, with regular posts, interaction on platforms frequented by expatriates, and campaigns directed at them.

4.3 Importation Opportunities

In addition to improving its marketing strategy, exploring new import options could represent an opportunity to attract and retain its target audience. Survey results indicate that 63.6% of respondents are interested in the importation of American products for Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery. Among the most appealing imported products for customers are snacks, such as pretzels, packaged cookies, and granola bars with a 50% preference. Specialty sauces, like maple syrup, ranch dressing, or BBQ sauce, rank second with 31.8%. Baking mixes, including gluten-free options, are also popular, reaching 24.2%. On the other hand, American beverages such as coffee and iced teas account for 19.7%, and non-food items like cookbooks or themed decorations reach 15.2%, while the remaining 30% are not interested in purchasing any type of imported product. Finally, a key data point is that 59.1% of respondents would be willing to pay a premium price for imported products that are not easily available in Ecuador, opening the possibility for complementary business opportunities. Despite these findings, the percentages obtained are not high enough to justify large-scale importation of either food or non-food products. Additionally, although more than half of the respondents are willing to pay a higher price for certain items, this does not guarantee a sufficient sales volume to make importation profitable, considering additional costs such as transportation, tariffs, and permits. For this reason, real demand should be carefully evaluated, and alternatives such as similar local products should be considered.

Table 2
Opportunities and threats in the importation of products

Opportunities	Threats
Attraction of new customers	Competition: Tosta bakery
Customer loyalty	Importation costs
Authentic atmosphere	Tariffs
	Purchase frequency
	Product shelf life

While the data reflects considerable consumer interest in imported products, it is important to conduct a deeper analysis of the main opportunities and threats associated with this strategy. First, there is the opportunity to attract new customers by incorporating products from the United States that are difficult to find in the country, appealing to both local and foreign consumers. This would not only allow for diversification of the product offering but also help position the business as a reference point for high-quality imported goods. Additionally, offering imported products that customers are already familiar with can strengthen their connection to the establishment. For example, if a customer finds their favorite brand of BBQ sauce, it is very likely they will return. Finally, these imported products would contribute to reinforcing the bakery's identity as a traditional American bakery, not only through the menu but also through the overall atmosphere of the location, enhancing the full customer experience and differentiating it from the competition.

As for the threats, there is competition from businesses that offer similar products, especially Tosta Bakery, which sells bagels and various types of bread, both with and without gluten, targeting both local and foreign clients, often at lower prices. Similarly, there are restaurants that offer items like bagels, although they are not specialized in their production, such as Café San Sebastián. These types of products can also be found in supermarkets like Supermaxi and Coral Hipermercados, which import brands like “Bagel Connection” at lower prices, though the quality and flavors are not quite the same as the originals.

In terms of threats, competition from other establishments offering similar products is a significant factor, particularly Tosta Bakery, which offers bagels and various types of bread, both gluten-free and regular, targeting both local and foreign customers, and at lower prices. Similarly, there are restaurants that serve items like bagels; however, they do not specialize in their production, such as Café de San Sebastián. Additionally, these products can be found in supermarkets like Supermaxi and Coral Hipermercados, which import brands such as “Bagel Connection” at lower prices, though the quality and flavor are not the same as authentic ones.

Another major concern is the high cost of importing products. Beyond the purchase price, one must factor in transportation and tariff costs. For example, baking mixes carry a 15% tariff (Servicio Nacional de Aduana del Ecuador, 2015), plus a 15% VAT and a 0.5% FODINFA tax. Other items, such as snacks and sauces, are subject to tariffs of up to 45% (Servicio Nacional de Aduana del Ecuador, 2015). These costs significantly raise the final price for consumers, thus reducing competitiveness.

Furthermore, the uncertain purchase frequency and limited shelf life of perishable imported products, which require special storage conditions such as refrigeration or dry environments, mean that if they are not sold or consumed in time, they may spoil or expire. Since these are premium products, customers are also less likely to purchase them as frequently as more common items, which can negatively affect inventory turnover. Therefore, although importing products presents an opportunity for differentiation, its implementation must be approached with caution, taking into account costs, inventory management, and the existing competition in the local market.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to analyze the adaptation strategy of “Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery” in Cuenca to meet the needs of foreign residents, identifying opportunities to import products that could diversify its offerings. The results show that there is a close relationship between the products offered by Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery and the nostalgia and attachment people feel toward their country of origin, in this case, the American community residing in Cuenca. This connection aligns with what Kotler (2016) proposes regarding Marketing 2.0, which focuses on providing a more personalized experience, and it progresses toward Marketing 3.0, where, as Suárez (2018) highlights, the values, emotions, and identity of the consumer play a fundamental role for the brand.

In this context, nostalgia marketing is of utmost importance, since, as Núñez (2025) and Ramos (2020) mention, this type of marketing is a strategy that appeals to past emotions, emphasizing the simplicity and authenticity of memories—elements that were identified among the surveyed Americans. Traditional American

products such as bagels, the decoration of the store, customer service, and advertising in English allow customers to relive moments and memories from their home country.

Likewise, as Thompson and Tambyah (1999) emphasize, expatriates maintain certain consumption habits that help them stay connected to their roots, even when living within cultures completely different from their own. As Gissi & Olmos (2023) point out, food has globalized, and culinary traditions originating in one country can now be found in others. Examples of this include well-known brands like “Tajín,” which has managed to position itself in various parts of the world but originally focused on Mexican migrants living in the United States. Similarly, “Goya Foods,” a brand aimed at the Hispanic population in the United States with traditional products like beans and plantains, gained popularity and entered other international markets. Another example is “Café Medrano,” a Honduran coffee brand that was well received by the Latino community in the United States due to its unique flavor. These cases demonstrate how food can evoke a sense of nostalgia among migrant communities, as also reflected in the survey conducted with customers of Matthew’s Bagel Store & Bakery, who expressed that the products offered by the store remind them of home.

However, it is important to consider what Sørensen et al. (2021) argue that nostalgia marketing must be applied strategically. Otherwise, if a brand lacks authenticity, it will not be well received by customers, who will opt for more innovative options. In the case of Matthew’s Bagel Store & Bakery, there is coherence between the brand’s identity and the nostalgic elements it employs. Nevertheless, it is essential to ensure that the emotional connection with customers is maintained in order to avoid becoming repetitive or lacking innovation. This can be achieved through ongoing marketing efforts and consistent advertising that resonates with consumers and keeps the brand top of mind.

Another limitation of this type of marketing can be seen in the case of the 2017 relaunch of Crystal Pepsi. Despite being a highly desired product among nostalgic consumers, it failed to capture the general public due to changes in consumption trends. As López (2017) states, nostalgia is not always enough to guarantee a product’s or brand’s sustainability. Keeping this in mind, it is necessary to consider the new demands and preferences of today’s consumers. If their expectations are not met, they will simply abandon the product and look for another brand that does. A clear example of this was seen in the survey, where one customer stated they would not return if there were no gluten-free products, while another mentioned only consuming goods made with almond and coconut flour. This reflects the importance of adapting offerings to current dietary needs, even within a nostalgic strategy. Failure to address these demands may exclude valuable market segments.

Regarding import opportunities, there is a visible trend toward typical products of a traditional American diet. As noted by Ramón and Burguete (2011), in the case of Mexican residents in the United States, chili is a highly demanded food item, as it was a regular part of their diet in their home country. Similarly, American residents living in Cuenca show great interest in pretzels, baking mixes, and coffee, which could represent strategic import opportunities for the café, provided that the business manages to maintain its authentic focus.

Furthermore, the impact and potential of using digital media as a tool to reinforce nostalgia, reach consumers, and create engagement can also be observed. As Farhan et al. (2024) point out, social media allows for faster connection with the environment, while Puspita and Hendrayati (2020) mention that content creators can evoke memories and emotions in consumers through social platforms. In this sense, Matthew’s Bagel Store & Bakery could expand its digital presence through posts such as reviews, testimonials, consumption experiences, and anecdotes that help build a close bond with consumers and spark the desire to visit the store. In addition to maintaining a consistent presence on social media, it is also important to interact with customers and build a strong brand within the community.

6. Conclusion

This study made it possible to analyze in depth how Matthew’s Bagel Store & Bakery, through a strategy focused on nostalgia marketing, has managed to position itself as a benchmark for traditional American cuisine and flavors in Cuenca. This approach has not only allowed the business to emotionally connect with its target audience, but also to build a value proposition based on authenticity, quality, and the evocation of positive memories. Based on this analysis, both the strengths that have favored customer loyalty and the weaknesses and challenges currently faced by the business were identified. In this context, the four proposed objectives were addressed, providing a comprehensive view of the store’s operations, environment, and growth opportunities.

Initially, the aim was to describe the foundations, components, and adaptation strategies of nostalgia marketing, thus establishing the theoretical framework to understand its application in a business context. Secondly, the research focused on understanding the history and distinctive characteristics of “Matthew’s Bagel Store & Bakery,” providing a specific contextual basis for the analysis. Subsequently, the adaptation strategies

of nostalgia marketing implemented by "Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery" were analyzed, allowing the identification of how this approach is reflected in practice. Finally, the study aimed to identify import opportunities to enrich the offering of "Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery," exploring concrete paths for its expansion and improvement.

First of all, it became evident that marketing, in addition to being a commercial tool, has become a key factor in understanding and responding to consumer needs and emotions. Its evolution from a product-centered approach to the current Marketing 4.0, which combines the digital with the human, demonstrates its adaptability to social and technological changes. Taking this into consideration, through the description of the foundations, components, and adaptation strategies of nostalgia marketing, it was determined that this type of marketing relies on evoking positive memories from the consumer's past, triggering emotions through sensory, symbolic, and cultural elements. In the case of Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery, this is reflected in traditional products such as bagels, sandwiches, and typical American desserts, as well as in an atmosphere that imitates cafés from the home country of its target audience. This connection has been key in fostering loyalty among foreign customers.

Secondly, research on the history and characteristics of Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery revealed that the café has successfully positioned itself in Cuenca as a reference point for American cuisine, standing out for its authenticity and its focus on the foreign community, especially North Americans. Through its varied menu, which includes bagels, chicken pot pies, and cheesecakes, the café has created a value proposition not only based on quality but also on nostalgia and emotional connection with consumers. This has resulted in a loyal customer base, mostly expatriates, who appreciate the authenticity and traditional flavor of the products.

However, the business faces several challenges related to its reliance on this specific niche, which makes it vulnerable to demographic changes and a potential decline in the foreign resident population in the city. Additionally, the high cost of its products, due to the importation of ingredients, represents a barrier for local consumers, who often prioritize price over quality. To ensure long-term growth, Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery needs to explore opportunities to diversify its clientele and product offerings without sacrificing the authenticity that defines it. Expansion to other cities such as Quito and Guayaquil, along with an enhanced presence on social media, could be key strategies to broaden its reach and adapt to new markets.

Thirdly, surveys conducted with 66 American customers showed that nostalgia plays an important role in attracting U.S. expatriates, but it does not guarantee consistent consumption. 62.1% of respondents consider it important to find products that remind them of their country of origin, highlighting the relevance of nostalgia marketing in the café's strategy. However, despite the emotional connection, consumption habits are not frequent, with 48.5% of respondents indicating they visit the café occasionally. This suggests that nostalgia does not drive regular consumption. This consumption pattern differs from that in the U.S., where bagels are often consumed as a quick breakfast. In Cuenca, expatriates do not have the same need for fast food due to their more relaxed routines, meaning consumption is more driven by a desire for a taste of home.

Likewise, the café's atmosphere and menu reinforce the nostalgic experience, as the location is decorated with visual elements related to the United States, and its products reflect American flavors, which are highly valued by customers. 71.2% of respondents consider the flavors to be authentic, and 56.1% are very satisfied with the quality of the products. This underscores that nostalgia combined with quality can foster customer loyalty. As for promotion, results show that the marketing strategy needs to be more consistent, especially on social media, as only 7.6% of customers consider the current advertising to be very effective. Therefore, it is important to improve the frequency and quality of advertising to strengthen emotional connections with customers and increase the café's visibility within the foreign community.

Fourthly, through the evaluation of import opportunities for Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery, it can be said that there is notable consumer interest in acquiring products from their home country, though the viability of implementing this strategy requires careful analysis. Data shows that 63.3% of respondents expressed interest in imported products, with a preference for typical snacks, special sauces, and baking mixes. Additionally, over half would be willing to pay a premium for items that are hard to find in the city or country, demonstrating a potential opportunity for diversification and differentiation that could strengthen the café's positioning. However, the level of interest is not high enough to justify large-scale imports. Furthermore, the associated costs, such as tariffs, taxes, and logistics could raise the final price for consumers, affecting competitiveness against local businesses that already offer similar products at lower prices, albeit of different quality. Moreover, factors such as the expected low purchase frequency, the limited shelf life of some perishable items, and inventory management present logistical and financial challenges that must be considered. Thus, imports can be a valuable strategy and enhance the overall customer experience, but their implementation must be based on strategic planning.

In conclusion, Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery has a solid and differentiated business model, with authenticity as its core value. However, to ensure sustainability and growth, it is essential to diversify its clientele, strengthen its digital presence, and carefully evaluate strategies for importing products. With all these factors in mind, the business has the potential to expand its reach and consolidate itself not only as a gathering place for expatriates but also as a cultural experience appreciated by a broader audience.

7. References

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8. Appendix

Appendix 1

Questions first interview

Business history and vision

1. What motivated the opening of Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery in Cuenca and how was its focus on American expatriates defined?
2. What distinguishes the store's value proposition from other local bakeries?
3. How does the business vision adapt to Cuenca's multicultural environment?

Customer Profile

4. What approximate percentage of your customers come from the American community?
5. What cultural or emotional aspects do you consider key to attracting and retaining expatriate customers?
6. Have you identified specific products that evoke nostalgia among American residents?

Product Offering

7. What products have been the most successful among American residents?
8. Are there products that customers have requested but that you don't yet offer?
9. What factors influence your decision to include imported products in your offering?

Marketing Strategies

10. What communication channels do you use to reach the American community in Cuenca?
11. Have you implemented marketing strategies based on nostalgia or American traditions? What has been the impact?
12. How do you assess the role of social media in connecting with your customers, especially foreigners?
13. Adaptation and Import Opportunities
14. What challenges do you face when importing products that meet American customer expectations?
15. Do you consider it feasible to expand your range of imported products to better meet the needs of this community?
16. What non-food products do you think could complement your offering to attract even more of the American community?

Business Challenges and Opportunities

17. What have been the main challenges in balancing the preferences of local and foreign customers?
18. What expansion opportunities do you foresee for Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery?
19. How do you assess the impact of the American community on the growth of your business?
20. Reflection and Projection

21. If you had to highlight a key lesson learned in adapting to the Cuenca market, what would it be?
22. How do you envision the future of Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery in the next five years, both in terms of market and product offering?

Appendix 2

Questions second interview

Origin of the bakery

1. What was the bakery like in the United States?
2. What happened to the bakery in the United States? Does it still exist there?
3. What was the process of expansion from New York?
4. Why did you decide to come to Cuenca?
5. In which year did the family owners arrive in Cuenca?

Establishment in Cuenca

6. Under what name did the bakery initially open in Cuenca?
7. Why did you decide to change the name?
8. What changes has the bakery undergone over time?

Context and expansion

9. What was the expatriate community like in Cuenca at that time?
10. What led the family owners to choose Cuenca over other cities in Ecuador?

Appendix 3

Survey for Customers of Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery

Section 1: Respondent Profile

1. What is your nationality?
 - ☐ American
 - ☐ Ecuadorian
 - ☐ Other (specify): _____
2. How long have you lived in Cuenca?
 - ☐ Less than 1 year
 - ☐ 1–3 years
 - ☐ 4–6 years
 - ☐ More than 6 years
3. How often do you visit Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery?
 - ☐ Daily
 - ☐ Weekly
 - ☐ Monthly
 - ☐ Rarely
4. How did you hear about Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery?
 - ☐ Social media
 - ☐ Recommendations from friends or family
 - ☐ Local advertising
 - ☐ Other (specify): _____

Section 2: Preferences and Consumption Habits

5. What products do you usually buy at Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery? (Select all that apply)
 - ☐ Bagels
 - ☐ Cakes or desserts
 - ☐ Traditional breads
 - ☐ Coffee or other beverages
 - ☐ Other (specify): _____
6. How satisfied are you with the quality of the products offered?
 - ☐ Very satisfied
 - ☐ Satisfied
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Unsatisfied
 - ☐ Very unsatisfied

7. *Do you think the products reflect American flavors and traditions?*
☐ Yes, completely
☐ Partially
☐ Not at all
 8. *What aspects do you value most about the products and services the store offers?*
☐ Quality
☐ Authenticity
☐ Price
☐ Customer service
☐ Other (specify): _____
-

Section 3: Nostalgia and Cultural Connection

9. *How important is it for you to find products that remind you of your home country?*
☐ Very important
☐ Somewhat important
☐ Slightly important
☐ Not important
 10. *What emotions or memories does consuming products from Matthew's Bagel Store evoke? (Answer in one or two words):*
-
11. *Do you think the store offers an authentic experience that connects with your cultural identity?*
☐ Yes, completely
☐ Partially
☐ No
-

Section 4: Opinions on Marketing and Communication

12. *How effective do you find the store's marketing in attracting the American community?*
☐ Very effective
☐ Effective
☐ Neutral
☐ Slightly effective
☐ Not effective
 13. *What communication channels do you prefer to receive news, offers, or promotions from the store?*
☐ Social media (Facebook, Instagram)
☐ Email
☐ Flyers or physical publications in the store
☐ Other (specify): _____
 14. *What suggestions would you have to improve the store's communication or promotions? (Specify):*
-

Section 5: Opinions on Imported Products

15. *Would you be interested in Matthew's Bagel Store offering more imported products from the United States?*
☐ Yes
☐ No
16. *Which types of imported products would you find most appealing? (Select all that apply)*
☐ Specialty sauces (e.g., maple syrup, ranch, BBQ)
☐ Baking mixes (e.g., gluten-free pancake mix, bagel mix)
☐ Unique snacks (e.g., pretzels, packaged cookies, granola bars)
☐ American beverages (e.g., cold brew coffee, iced tea)
☐ Non-food items (e.g., holiday decorations, cooking utensils)
☐ Other (specify): _____
17. *Which specific gluten-free or specialty products would you like to see in the store?*
☐ Gluten-free snacks (e.g., vegetable chips, chocolate-covered pretzels)
☐ Prepackaged gluten-free desserts (e.g., brownies, donuts)

- ☐ *Gluten-free baking ingredients (e.g., almond flour, oat flour)*
- ☐ *Other (specify): _____*
18. *What non-food products related to American culture would you find attractive?*
- ☐ *Cookbooks or recipe collections*
- ☐ *Themed decorations (for holidays like the 4th of July)*
- ☐ *Specific kitchen utensils*
- ☐ *Other (specify): _____*
19. *Would you be willing to pay a premium price for imported products that are not easily available in Ecuador?*
- ☐ *Yes*
- ☐ *No*
- ☐ *Depends on the product*
20. *How often would you buy imported products if they were available at the store?*
- ☐ *Weekly*
- ☐ *Monthly*
- ☐ *Rarely*
- ☐ *Only on special occasions*
-

Section 6: General Opinion

21. *On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate your overall experience at Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery?*
- ☐ *1 (Very bad)*
- ☐ *2*
- ☐ *3*
- ☐ *4*
- ☐ *5 (Excellent)*
22. *What aspects would you improve about the store? (Specify):*
-
23. *Would you recommend Matthew's Bagel Store & Bakery to other expats or friends?*
- ☐ *Yes*
- ☐ *No*