

## Gerovital: A Case Study of Revitalizing an Iconic Romanian Brand through Media Representation of Cultural Heritage

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### Abstract

The following study examines the revitalization of Gerovital, an iconic Romanian brand, through strategic media representation of cultural heritage. Gerovital, renowned for its anti-aging skincare products, carries a legacy of scientific innovation initiated by Ana Aslan (1897–1988). This research investigates how the brand has reinterpreted its historical significance, positioning itself as a symbol of Romanian ingenuity and resilience, a concept explored by Torelli et al. (2010) in their study on cultural brand meanings.

To analyze Gerovital's brand revitalization, this study employs a mixed-methods approach. A quantitative content analysis, based on the framework of Gibson and Ward (2000) and adapted by Filipescu (2020), evaluates the structure and messaging strategies of the Gerovital-Farmec website and its official social media pages. By measuring the frequency of heritage-related themes and user interactions, the study assesses how digital communication reinforces brand identity and engagement. In parallel, a qualitative audiovisual analysis of YouTube content follows the methodology outlined by Kozinets (2010) for studying digital narratives, exploring how Gerovital integrates historical storytelling with modern marketing strategies to maintain relevance.

Findings reveal that Gerovital successfully leverages nostalgia, national pride, and authenticity to foster emotional connections with consumers, a phenomenon well-documented by Hartmann and Brunk (2019) in their work on nostalgia marketing. Digital storytelling, visual imagery, and social media engagement serve as key pillars in revitalizing its identity while appealing to both domestic and international audiences. As Wilson (2018) emphasizes, the power of storytelling in brand management plays a crucial role in sustaining consumer interest and loyalty.

By balancing heritage with contemporary branding tactics, Gerovital exemplifies how legacy brands can thrive in evolving markets. This case study highlights the role of media representation in shaping consumer perceptions of heritage brands, offering insights into effective revitalization strategies. It underscores the importance of integrating historical narratives with digital engagement to sustain brand longevity in a competitive landscape.

*Keywords:* brand revitalization, cultural heritage, media representation, online communication, Romanian brands

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## **The Significance of Heritage Brands in Modern Marketing**

### **Introduction**

Heritage brands play a crucial role in contemporary marketing, as they combine tradition, authenticity, and emotional connection to foster consumer loyalty. According to Urde, Greyser, and Balmer (2007), these brands rely on their historical legacy to establish a strong identity, differentiating themselves from competitors. This legacy, often built over decades or centuries, allows them to maintain consumer trust and credibility in an era where authenticity is highly valued (Aaker, 2004). However, as consumer preferences shift and digital marketing becomes increasingly dominant, heritage brands must carefully navigate the balance between preserving their historical identity and adapting to modern market expectations (Hudson, 2011).

In response to these challenges, brands strategically highlight their heritage through storytelling, visual representation, and digital engagement. Balmer (2011) emphasizes that heritage branding thrives on narratives that reinforce a brand's historical significance, craftsmanship, and long-standing values. By doing so, companies create a sense of stability in contrast to rapidly changing market trends. Kapferer (2008) further notes that heritage brands are frequently associated with superior quality and reliability, which enhances their appeal across generations. However, maintaining relevance requires more than just nostalgia-driven marketing; it necessitates innovation and digital adaptation. As Ryan (2020) argues, the integration of social media, influencer collaborations, and immersive brand experiences has become essential for sustaining heritage brands in the digital age.

This study explores how Gerovital, an iconic Romanian brand specializing in anti-aging skincare products, successfully revitalized its identity by leveraging its rich cultural heritage and digital marketing strategies. Founded by Ana Aslan in 1952, Gerovital gained international recognition for its pioneering research in gerontology (Dobrescu, 2017). As a post-communist brand, Gerovital faced significant challenges in repositioning itself in a globalized market while maintaining its legacy. By employing storytelling, nostalgia-driven marketing, and national heritage narratives, the brand strategically connected with both domestic and international audiences (Hartmann & Brunk, 2019).

The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative content analysis of the Gerovital-Farmec website and social media platforms with qualitative audiovisual analysis of YouTube content. This methodology enables a comprehensive understanding of how digital branding techniques contribute to heritage brand revitalization (Kozinets, 2010; Filipescu, 2020). By examining Gerovital's marketing strategies, this study aims to provide insights into how heritage brands can maintain their authenticity while adapting to contemporary consumer expectations. The findings contribute to broader discussions on cultural heritage branding, media representation, and the evolving role of storytelling in brand management (Wilson, 2018).

Ultimately, this case study highlights the importance of integrating historical narratives with modern digital engagement strategies. As consumers increasingly

seek authenticity and emotional connections with brands (Swann et al., 2012), the ability to merge tradition with innovation is critical for long-term brand sustainability. Gerovital serves as a compelling example of how heritage brands can navigate the complexities of modern marketing while staying true to their legacy.

### **Tradition and Emotional Connection in Brand Revitalization**

Brand revitalization is a critical process for heritage brands, requiring a balance between preserving tradition and adapting to contemporary market demands. A strong emotional connection with consumers plays a pivotal role in this transformation, as nostalgia, cultural pride, and brand authenticity foster consumer engagement and loyalty (Hartmann & Brunk, 2019). According to Urde et al. (2007), heritage brands leverage their historical narratives to create meaningful relationships with consumers, drawing on collective memory and national identity. For instance, Eldesouky (2020) highlights that a brand's resurgence demonstrates how it can intertwine historical authenticity with modern marketing strategies, ensuring relevance without compromising legacy.

Brand revitalization – a method used by businesses and brand managers to avoid a brand's deterioration or aging – acquired appeal in post-communist countries by offering a rapid repair for “transitional” brands' identity crisis (Hallegatte, 2014). Almost every surviving post-communist brand in Central and Eastern Europe has participated in multiple branding initiatives of varying scope and sophistication since 1989. These initiatives have ranged from repositioning strategies to complete rebranding efforts, all aimed at aligning with new consumer expectations and international standards. However, revitalizing a brand primarily involves developing unique products that cater to the tastes of today's customers, rather than those of the past (Hallegatte, 2014).

A fundamental aspect of this revitalization process is the strategic use of storytelling, which enables brands to communicate their rich heritage while fostering consumer trust (Wilson, 2018). As noted by Kapferer (2008), through visual and textual narratives, heritage brands emphasize their origins, craftsmanship, and historical milestones, positioning themselves as symbols of resilience and enduring quality. Gerovital's association with Ana Aslan's pioneering research in anti-aging cosmetics serves as a compelling storytelling device, reinforcing its credibility and deepening emotional ties with consumers (Torelli et al., 2010).

Moreover, digital marketing has become an essential tool in brand revitalization, allowing heritage brands to engage with both older and newer audiences effectively (Hudson, 2011). Aaker (2004) argues that social media campaigns, influencer partnerships, and immersive brand experiences help bridge the gap between tradition and modernity, making historical brands relevant in contemporary cultural contexts. By aligning with values such as self-care, scientific innovation, and national pride (Hartmann & Brunk, 2019), Gerovital successfully revitalized its image while preserving its core identity.

As Dion and Mazzalovo (2016) assert, successful brand revitalization is not solely about reviving historical narratives but also about reinterpreting them to fit the evolving cultural and economic landscape. Companies must adapt to contemporary trends while ensuring their brand's authenticity remains intact. This is particularly evident in post-communist regions, where consumers' expectations have shifted toward globalized aesthetics, digital engagement, and sustainability concerns (Hallegatte, 2014).

Ultimately, as Balmer (2011) suggests, the case of brands such as Gerovital underscores the significance of emotional connection in brand revitalization. Consumers increasingly seek authenticity and heritage in their purchasing choices, and brands that effectively harness their legacy while adapting to evolving expectations stand to gain a lasting competitive advantage.

### **Purpose of the Study: Heritage, Innovation, and Digital Revival**

Founded in 1952 by Prof. Ana Aslan M.D., a pioneer in anti-aging treatments, Gerovital quickly became a symbol of Romanian innovation and medical advancement (Dobrescu, 2017). Dr. Aslan's groundbreaking research in gerontology led to the development of Gerovital H3, a product that gained international recognition and was used by renowned figures such as John F. Kennedy, Marlene Dietrich and Salvador Dalí (Dobrescu, 2017). This historical significance provided the foundation for Gerovital's brand identity, reinforcing its position as an emblem of Romanian scientific ingenuity.

This research explores how Gerovital, as a long-established Romanian brand, revitalized its identity through strategic online and media representations. Brand revitalization relies heavily on the ability to adapt traditional values to modern consumer expectations (Dion & Mazzalovo, 2016). Gerovital has successfully achieved this by incorporating digital marketing strategies, using social media engagement, and implementing brand storytelling techniques (Wilson, 2018).

One of the core components of Gerovital's revitalization has been its ability to align with narratives of national pride and cultural heritage. Through advertisements, social media campaigns, and influencer collaborations, the brand has reinforced its historical roots while appealing to contemporary consumer sensibilities (Kapferer, 2008). Nostalgia-driven marketing, particularly in post-communist contexts, plays a crucial role in consumer engagement (Hartmann & Brunk, 2019). The ability to foster an emotional connection through cultural identity allows brands like Gerovital to remain relevant despite market fluctuations (Urde et al., 2007).

In addition to traditional storytelling, visual imagery has been instrumental in Gerovital's modern rebranding efforts. By incorporating elements of Romanian history, aesthetics, and medical advancements, the brand has managed to differentiate itself in an increasingly competitive global market (Hallegatte, 2014). Digital platforms have further enabled the company to reach international audiences, promoting its products while maintaining its heritage identity (Aaker, 2004).

## **Research Framework**

This research examines Gerovital's positioning as a symbol of Romanian ingenuity and resilience (Torelli, Monga, & Kaikati, 2010) by employing both quantitative and qualitative methods. A quantitative content analysis is conducted to analyze the construction of the Gerovital-Farmec website, as well as its official Facebook and YouTube pages. The analysis covers the period from January 1, 2023, to April 1, 2024, allowing for an evaluation of how the brand has recently communicated its heritage and innovation. This approach enables the identification of recurring themes, messaging strategies, and visual elements that reinforce the brand's historical identity and digital engagement. Similar methodologies have been utilized in studies analyzing brand posts on social media platforms to assess user engagement and content effectiveness (Zoha, Bhutto, Syed, & Soomro, 2016).

Scoring for evaluating the informative and interactive nature of the website is based on the framework proposed by Gibson and Ward (2000), adapted from Filipescu (2020). This scoring system provides a structured assessment of how effectively the website communicates brand-related content, historical narratives, and product details. Additionally, the study evaluates the social media activity of revitalized brands using an adapted scoring model from Filipescu (2020), allowing for a comparative analysis of Gerovital-Farmec's digital engagement strategies.

A qualitative 'scanning model' is applied to assess the brand's audiovisual content on its official YouTube channel, Farmec Romania. The analysis focuses on videos uploaded between January 1, 2023, and April 1, 2024, examining how Gerovital communicates its identity, values, and engagement strategies. The scanning model allows for an in-depth exploration of narrative structures, aesthetic choices, and audience interaction, offering insights into how the brand adapts to contemporary digital marketing trends while maintaining its historical essence. This approach aligns with methodologies proposed for performing qualitative content analysis of video data in social media research (Kozinets, 2010).

The study further includes:

- Analysis of the informative dimension of the Gerovital-Farmec website, examining the depth and accuracy of brand-related content, historical narratives, and product details available on the platform.
- Assessment of the interactive dimension of the website, exploring the level of consumer engagement, interactive features, and digital communication strategies implemented.
- Evaluation of social media activity on Facebook and YouTube, focusing on user interactions, engagement metrics, and the strategic dissemination of brand messaging across different platforms within the selected timeframe.

From the structure of the website and social media pages emerges a new approach that restores Gerovital-Farmec's credibility, attracts new consumer segments, revalues its brand heritage, and rearticulates its identity. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, this study provides a comprehensive

understanding of how Gerovital leverages its legacy while evolving in the modern marketplace. The findings contribute to broader discussions on heritage brand positioning, digital branding strategies, and the role of national identity in consumer perceptions.

## **Storytelling and Emotional Attachment**

Gerovital's marketing campaigns have adeptly harnessed themes of nostalgia and authenticity to strengthen emotional connections with consumers. By aligning with Romania's rich cultural heritage, the brand forges profound emotional bonds, resonating deeply with its audience (Hartmann & Brunk, 2019).

An analysis of comments on the Gerovital-Farmec website and its official Facebook page reveals two primary antecedents of emotional attachment: emotional memory and the perceived benefits of use. Emotional memory refers to the sentimental recollections that consumers associate with a brand, often rooted in personal or collective past experiences. These memories can significantly influence brand attachment, as they evoke feelings of affection and connection. For instance, Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011) identify emotional memories as a key antecedent of emotional attachment to brands, highlighting how past experiences and sentimental associations can foster deep consumer-brand bonds.

The perceived benefits of use pertain to the tangible and intangible advantages consumers believe they gain from a product. When users recognize consistent quality and efficacy in a brand's offerings, it enhances their emotional attachment. This perception is crucial, as it reinforces the brand's reliability and value proposition, leading to sustained consumer loyalty.

Additionally, a sense of product patriotism is evident in user-generated content, with comments such as, "Gerovital is the brand of my youth", "The cream of beautiful Romanian women", and "I have been and remain an admirer of the products conceived by our great Lady Ana Aslan". Product patriotism involves consumers expressing national pride through their preference for domestically produced goods, thereby reinforcing their national identity. Research by Kipnis et al. (2013) delves into how consumption practices contribute to the construction and maintenance of national identity, suggesting that consumers often choose products emblematic of their nation's heritage to affirm their cultural belonging.

Moreover, the concept of identity fusion offers insight into this phenomenon. Swann et al. (2012) propose that individuals with a strong sense of identity fusion with their country are more inclined toward patriotic consumption behaviors. This means that consumers who feel a deep alignment between their personal and national identities are more likely to support brands that symbolize national pride and heritage.

The revitalization of a brand often requires a multidimensional approach that integrates cultural heritage, modern digital tools, and strategic storytelling to create a compelling narrative. In the case of Romanian branding efforts, several key elements contribute to an effective strategy: storytelling, visual imagery, and digital marketing.



Storytelling is a fundamental aspect of branding, as it helps forge emotional connections with audiences. In the context of Romanian heritage branding, narratives often focus on themes of national pride, cultural resilience, and historical continuity (Fog, Budtz, & Yakaboylu, 2020). These stories can highlight Romania's folklore, historical figures, and traditional customs to establish a strong identity. For instance, integrating myths such as that of the legendary shepherd from Miorița ballad or historical figures like Vlad the Impaler can reinforce a brand's cultural authenticity and enhance engagement (Kotler & Keller, 2022). By leveraging compelling storytelling, brands can evoke a sense of belonging and nostalgia among both domestic and international audiences.

Visual branding plays a crucial role in reinforcing identity and recognition. In Romania, iconic symbols such as the *ia* (the traditional Romanian blouse), the edelweiss flower, and the Făgăraș Mountains serve as powerful visual markers of national heritage. The *ia*, for instance, symbolizes Romanian craftsmanship and cultural continuity, having been recognized by UNESCO as part of the country's intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2021). Similarly, the Făgăraș Mountains represent Romania's natural beauty and adventurous spirit, appealing to both local and foreign travelers. Such visual elements create a strong aesthetic appeal and enhance the emotional resonance of the brand (Schroeder, 2019).

With the advent of digital marketing, brands now have the ability to engage audiences across multiple platforms. Social media, search engine optimization (SEO), and influencer partnerships are among the key strategies used to increase brand visibility (Ryan, 2020). In the Romanian context, digital campaigns incorporating heritage-based storytelling and visuals can foster engagement among both local citizens and the Romanian diaspora. Platforms such as Instagram and Facebook provide opportunities to showcase the country's traditions through curated content, live storytelling sessions, and interactive campaigns.

A comprehensive brand revitalization strategy should address both physical and virtual spaces. Modernizing physical spaces—such as redesigning stores, museums, or cultural centers—can enhance consumer experience and create a more immersive interaction with the brand (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2017). Simultaneously, improving the navigation and user experience (UX) of virtual spaces, such as websites and e-commerce platforms, ensures accessibility and engagement for a global audience. Combining these efforts with data-driven insights allows brands to align their digital presence with evolving consumer expectations.

## Results and Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the effectiveness of Gerovital's revitalization strategy, demonstrating its success in leveraging cultural heritage, digital marketing, and emotional branding to maintain relevance in contemporary markets. The analysis of Gerovital's digital presence—including its website, social media platforms, and

audiovisual content—reveals a well-structured and multi-layered branding approach that balances historical authenticity with modern marketing tactics.

### **Digital Presence and Engagement**

A quantitative content analysis of the Gerovital-Farmec website demonstrates a strong emphasis on heritage-driven messaging. The brand frequently references its scientific legacy, its connection to Ana Aslan, and its long-standing presence in the global cosmetics industry. The high frequency of heritage-related keywords—such as “innovation,” “tradition,” “Aslan,” and “anti-aging”—suggests that Gerovital strategically reinforces its historical credibility to differentiate itself from newer competitors in the cosmetics market. As Dion and Mazzalovo (2016) argue, reviving heritage brands requires rearticulating past identities in ways that resonate with present consumer expectations. Gerovital does this effectively by blending its historical significance with contemporary product innovations, thus maintaining both trust and market appeal.

The brand’s social media presence also reflects a highly interactive engagement strategy. Gerovital’s Facebook page (Farmec Romania) exhibits high levels of consumer interaction, with thousands of likes, comments, and shares per post. This high engagement rate suggests that consumers perceive the brand as authentic and emotionally significant (Hartmann & Brunk, 2019). A sentiment analysis of user-generated content on social media further confirms this emotional attachment, with many consumers referring to Gerovital as “the brand of my youth” or “a symbol of Romanian beauty.” Such expressions indicate that Gerovital benefits from brand nostalgia, a key factor in the success of heritage brands (Urde et al., 2007).

The qualitative audiovisual analysis of Gerovital’s YouTube content highlights the brand’s ability to blend visual storytelling with digital communication strategies. The majority of the videos emphasize themes of scientific expertise, natural ingredients, and national heritage. This aligns with previous research on heritage branding, which suggests that visual narratives play a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions of authenticity (Schroeder, 2019). Furthermore, the aesthetic choices in Gerovital’s video campaigns—including the use of historical references, Romanian landscapes, and testimonials from dermatologists—reinforce the scientific legitimacy and cultural roots of the brand.

### **The Role of Emotional Branding and Cultural Identity**

A significant aspect of Gerovital’s success lies in its ability to evoke national pride and cultural heritage. The study’s analysis of user comments and reviews reveals two primary antecedents of emotional attachment:

**Emotional Memory** – Many consumers associate Gerovital with personal or collective past experiences, particularly the legacy of Ana Aslan’s pioneering work in anti-aging research. This connection fosters a deep emotional bond, reinforcing the brand’s significance over time. Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011) define this as emotional memory, where brands that evoke strong sentimental recollections benefit from



increased consumer loyalty and advocacy. By tapping into nostalgia and heritage, Gerovital strengthens its position as a trusted and cherished brand across generations.

**Product Patriotism** – The analysis of consumer discourse indicates that many users perceive Gerovital as a national treasure, emphasizing its Romanian origins as a point of pride. Research by Kipnis et al. (2013) suggests that brands that align with national identity foster deeper emotional connections with their consumers. This is particularly relevant in post-communist countries, where brands often serve as symbols of resilience and transformation (Hallegatte, 2014). Spielmann, Maguire, and Charters (2018) further emphasize that product patriotism shapes consumer identity, influenced by cultural capital, national orientation, and context.

By reinforcing these emotional and cultural associations, Gerovital positions itself not only as a cosmetic brand but as an emblem of Romanian scientific innovation. The implications of this approach extend beyond marketing; they highlight how heritage branding can serve as a tool for cultural preservation and national identity reinforcement (Wilson, 2018).

### **Wider Implications: Heritage Brands in a Globalized Market**

Gerovital's case study underscores several broader implications for heritage branding in a globalized market. First, the brand demonstrates that heritage alone is not sufficient for long-term success—it must be continuously reinterpreted and communicated through digital strategies. As Ryan (2020) notes, successful brands merge historical narratives with contemporary digital engagement, allowing them to remain relevant across multiple consumer demographics.

Second, this study highlights the potential for heritage brands to appeal beyond national borders. Gerovital has successfully expanded its audience by leveraging digital marketing, demonstrating that nostalgia-driven branding can resonate internationally. This finding supports research by Torelli et al. (2010), which argues that cultural branding strategies can bridge local heritage with global consumer aspirations.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that social media analytics and user-generated content are valuable tools for assessing brand perception and engagement. By analyzing consumer discourse, brands can identify key emotional triggers that enhance loyalty and advocacy. This reinforces Aaker's (2004) assertion that brand equity is increasingly shaped by consumer participation in digital spaces.

Finally, Gerovital's case demonstrates that a strong digital presence can help heritage brands compete with modern industry giants. By integrating scientific credibility with cultural storytelling, the brand has successfully differentiated itself in the crowded global beauty market. This aligns with Kapferer's (2008) perspective that brands must continuously innovate while preserving their core identity.

## **Conclusion**

The revitalization of Gerovital illustrates how heritage brands can successfully navigate contemporary markets by balancing tradition with innovation. Findings suggest that long-established brands thrive when they align with consumer expectations while preserving their historical essence (Wilson, 2018). By leveraging national pride, scientific credibility, and digital engagement strategies, Gerovital has reestablished itself as a leader in the anti-aging cosmetics sector.

A key takeaway from this study is the vital role of brand storytelling in fostering consumer loyalty and engagement. As Wilson (2018) highlights, storytelling enables brands to create meaningful narratives that reinforce their historical identity while resonating with modern audiences. Gerovital has successfully positioned itself within narratives of Romanian scientific achievement and cultural heritage, strengthening its market presence. Additionally, this study underscores the importance of digital transformation in heritage branding, as Ryan (2020) emphasizes that a strong online presence, social media engagement, and influencer collaborations are essential for maintaining relevance in today's marketplace.

Despite offering valuable insights, this study has several limitations. One major limitation is its reliance on digital representation and publicly available consumer data, which provide a broad overview of brand engagement but fail to capture the deeper psychological motivations behind consumer loyalty. Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011) argue that emotional attachment to brands is often shaped by personal experiences and sentiment, which cannot be fully understood through digital interactions alone. Future research could incorporate qualitative methodologies, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, to explore how nostalgia, emotional connections, and personal experiences shape consumer attitudes toward Gerovital.

Another limitation concerns the geographic and cultural scope of the study. Hakala, Lätti, and Sandberg (2011) suggest that consumer perceptions of heritage brands vary significantly across cultural contexts, as local traditions and historical associations influence brand reception. This study primarily examines Gerovital's branding strategies within Romania and its international digital presence, but further research could explore how heritage brands adapt their narratives across multiple markets. Comparative studies across different cultural and economic landscapes could provide broader insights into the global adaptation of heritage branding strategies.

Additionally, the study does not assess the long-term sustainability of Gerovital's brand revitalization efforts. Kapferer (2008) emphasizes that heritage brands must not only focus on short-term engagement but also ensure their strategies contribute to sustained brand equity. While digital marketing has proven effective in reviving Gerovital's identity, its long-term impact on consumer retention and market performance remains uncertain. Future research could analyze sales data, customer loyalty trends, and brand sentiment over time to determine whether digital engagement translates into lasting consumer commitment.

Furthermore, emerging digital marketing trends such as artificial intelligence-driven personalization, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR) are not explored in this study. Ryan (2020) notes that technological advancements are reshaping consumer expectations, and heritage brands must integrate these innovations while maintaining their authenticity. Future research could examine how brands like Gerovital can leverage AI-driven marketing, interactive experiences, or sustainable product innovations while preserving their historical identity.

The findings of this study have practical implications for marketers, brand managers, and scholars interested in heritage branding. Gerovital's case demonstrates that successful brand revitalization requires a careful balance between historical authenticity and modern consumer expectations. Urde, Greyser, and Balmer (2007) argue that heritage brands must preserve their legacy while embracing innovation and digital transformation to remain competitive.

For heritage brands looking to revitalize their image, this study suggests several key strategic approaches. First, storytelling is essential, as Wilson (2018) highlights that narratives rooted in historical significance and cultural heritage strengthen consumer engagement and loyalty. Second, digital engagement is crucial, with Ryan (2020) emphasizing that social media campaigns, influencer partnerships, and interactive content enhance brand reach and relevance. Third, brands must balance nostalgia with innovation. Kapferer (2008) suggests that while heritage provides a strong foundation, brands must continuously adapt to contemporary trends to attract younger generations while retaining existing customers. Lastly, understanding cultural differences is essential, as Hakala et al. (2011) argue that global heritage brands should tailor their marketing approaches to different cultural contexts to ensure resonance with diverse audiences.

Ultimately, this study underscores the significance of heritage in contemporary brand management, providing a framework for other legacy brands seeking to modernize while maintaining authenticity. The case of Gerovital serves as a model for leveraging cultural heritage, demonstrating that a well-executed digital strategy can bridge the gap between tradition and modernity, securing brand longevity in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.

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## **Revitalizacija brenda „Gerovital” kroz medijsko predstavljanje kulturnog nasleđa**

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### **Apstrakt**

U našem radu se ispituje revitalizacija ikoničnog rumunskog brenda, „Gerovitala” kroz strateško medijsko promovisanje kulturnog nasleđa. Kompanija „Gerovital”, poznata po svojim proizvodima za negu kože i borbu protiv starenja, nasleđuje naučne inovacije koju je pokrenula Ana Aslan (1897–1988). Naše istraživanje analizira način na koji je ovaj brend protumačio istorijski značaj, pozicionirajući se kao simbol rumunske kreativnosti i otpornosti, koncept koji su uneli Toreli i saradnici (2010) u njihovu studiju o kulturnim značenjima brendova.

Za analizu revitalizacije brenda „Gerovital”, koristili smo pristup kombinovanih metoda. Kvantitativna analiza sadržaja, zasnovana na radove Gibsona i Vorda (2000) i koju je prilagodio Filipesku (2020), procenjuje strukturu i strategije komunikacije na zvaničnom veb-sajtu „Gerovital-Farmec” i stranicama na društvenim mrežama. Merenjem učestalosti tema vezanih za kulturno nasleđe i interakcije korisnika, naš rad procenjuje metode na kojim je digitalna komunikacija ojačala identitet i angažovanost brenda. Paralelno, kvalitativna audiovizuelna analiza sadržaja na YouTube-u prati metodologiju koju je razvio Kozinets (2010) za proučavanje digitalnih narativa, istražujući kako je „Gerovital” integrisao istorijsko nasleđe sa savremenim marketinškim strategijama da bi održao svoju relevantnost.

Rezultati pokazuju da „Gerovital” uspešno koristi osećanja nostalgije, nacionalnog ponosa i autentičnosti kako bi stvorio emotivne veze sa potrošačima, fenomen koji su detaljno istražili Hartman i Brunk (2019) u njihovom radu o nostalgijском marketingu. Transmedijalno pripovedanje, vizuelna estetika i angažovanost na društvenim mrežama predstavljaju ključne stubove u revitalizaciji brenda identiteta, omogućavajući da privlači kako domaću, tako i međunarodnu publiku. Po mišljenju Vilsona (2018), moć naracije u upravljanju brendova igra ključnu ulogu u održavanju interesovanja i lojalnosti potrošača.

Balansirajući strategije tradicije i savremenih brendova, „Gerovital” jeste pravi primer kako legendarni brendovi mogu napredovati na tržištima u razvoju. Naš rad naglašava ulogu medijske prezentacije u oblikovanju percepcije potrošača o brendovima kulturnog nasleđa, nudeći uvide u efikasne strategije revitalizacije. Takođe, ističe značaj integracije istorijskih narativa i digitalne komunikacije kako bi se osigurala dugovečnost brenda u konkurentnom poslovnom okruženju.

*Ključne reči:* revitalizacija brenda; kulturno nasleđe; medijsko predstavljanje; onlajn komunikacija; rumunski brendovi.

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