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Media Convergence and the Revitalization of Time-Honored Brands: A Case Study from Liaoning Province, China

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Abstract: *Background:* Media convergence presents significant opportunities for revitalizing heritage brands, particularly in regions with rich industrial histories. Liaoning Province, China, hosts numerous century-old brands that represent profound cultural and commercial traditions. Exploring their adaptation to the modern media landscape is crucial for preserving historical value and maintaining economic vitality. *Purpose:* This study investigates how Liaoning's heritage brands leverage media convergence to address modern challenges and strengthen their market presence. *Methods:* The research combines literature review, case studies, and fieldwork to analyze the historical evolution, cultural significance, and modern media strategies of selected Liaoning heritage brands. *Results:* Heritage brands face challenges such as outdated brand identities, intensified market competition, and changing consumer preferences. Nevertheless, strategic adoption of digital platforms—including social media and short-video applications—significantly enhances brand visibility and attracts younger audiences. *Conclusion:* Effective integration of media convergence strategies enables Liaoning's heritage brands to revive their identities and sustain market relevance. The study offers practical insights and recommendations for preserving and enhancing these traditional brands in the digital age.

Keywords: Media convergence, Heritage brands, Brand revitalization, Liaoning Province, Digital strategy

1.Introduction

1.1 Research Background

As the digital economy develops, many long-established enterprises are actively adapting to the market changes through continuous innovation. In response, the national Ministry of Commerce launched the "Revitalization of Time-Honored Brands Project", supported by various policies and measures at the national, provincial, and municipal levels aimed at promoting the recovery and development of these brands.

In 2017, the Department of Commerce of Liaoning province, along with 14 other departments, formulated and issued the "Implementation Opinions on Promoting the Reform and Innovative Development of Time-honored Brands." This initiative strongly supports developing these brands through technological innovation and an innovative business management model. However, many time-honored brands face several challenges, including limited communication channels, a loss of younger consumer groups, and the dilution of brand value.

Traditional brands such as Shenyang Laobian Dumplings and Ma Jia Siu Mai have encountered a crisis associated with brand aging in the mobile Internet era. According to the data from the Department of Commerce of Liaoning Province in 2018, 30% of the old-famous enterprises reported operational difficulties. Xue et al. (2025) analyzed the multidimensional structure of innovation resilience among local Chinese established firms and developed specific measurement scales. Lu et al. (2019) found that media and

reference groups have a significant impact on consumers' perception of innovation in established brands. Xu and Zhang (2018) highlighted the theoretical and practical significance of understanding the internal logic of brand revitalization and branding decision-making for long-established enterprises.

1.2 Research Objectives

The rapid development of integrated media technology brings new possibilities for the preservation of traditional brands. As an old industrial base in Northeast China, Liaoning Province is home to many time-honored brands that have rich histories spanning over a hundred years. These brands carry significant regional culture and business wisdom. However, they currently face challenges in maintaining their legacy, and there is an urgent need to explore how integrated media technology can help reshape their brand value and facilitate communication across generations.

Specific research objectives include: to systematically sort out the development and inheritance status of time-honored brands in Liaoning Province; to analyze the transformative effect of integrated media technology on brand narratives, user interactions and value transmission; to assess the effectiveness and limitations of the existing integrated media communication practices; and to propose a brand inheritance strategy system that reflect regional characteristics.

The study will select time-honored brands in typical industries such as food, medicine, and crafts in Liaoning Province for in-depth analysis, focusing on innovative communication for brand rejuvenation and transformation.

1.3 Research Content

This study aims to address three core issues: how integrated media technology can effectively activate the cultural essence of time-honored brands in Liaoning Province; what are the obstacles to the inheritance of these brands in the digital communication environment; and how to achieve the innovative combination of integrated media communication strategies with traditional brand inheritance theories. The study focuses on constructing a three-dimensional analysis framework centered on "technology-culture-market" to reveal how integrated media communication influences brand cultural identity.

The study aims to go beyond the traditional single-perspective approach to brand research by integrating communication theory and brand management theory across disciplines. By empirically analyzing how integrated media communication influences consumers' brand perception, the study provides theoretical support and practical guidance for the sustainable development of long-established brands in the digital era. The results of the study will contribute to the theoretical system of regional brand research and provide reference cases for the digital transformation of cultural industries in the northeast region.

1.4 Research Methods

This research comprehensively uses literature research, case analysis, interviews, and other research methods to analyze the inheritance lineage and integrated development of integrated media from a multi-dimensional perspective. Collecting and organizing historical archives, local records, enterprise internal materials, academic papers, and other documents related to established brands in Liaoning Province.

Through examining these historical archives and local records, we understand the development background, operational modes, market status, and other relevant information about old brands in Liaoning Province across different historical periods. This will help us construct the historical lineage of the inheritance of these brands.

Select representative old brands from Liaoning Province as case studies, conducting an in-depth analysis of each case to explore their brand inheritance strategies and practical experience in the era of integrated media. A detailed interview outline is designed to gather insights from managers, inheritors, employees, and consumers of these brands.

2. Literature Review

To build a theoretical framework for the heritage of time-honored brands in the field of integrated media, it is essential to incorporate multidimensional perspectives from communication, brand management, and cultural studies. Utilizing Lasswell's 5W communication model alongside brand equity theory, this framework is structured around a three-dimensional analysis of "technology-content-culture". It aims to examine mechanisms of brand inheritance in the integrated media environment from five key dimensions: communication subject, channel, content, audience, and effect.

In terms of technological dimension, this analysis adopts the theoretical perspective of the media environment school to examine how 5G, big data, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and other technologies are revolutionizing the brand narrative. For example, the Shenyang Laolongkou Wine Industry utilizes a VR experience of a virtual brewing shop to digitally present traditional craftsmanship. This approach verifies the feasibility of technological empowerment to make the brand history visible and communicable.

According to Chen et al. (2025), the digital exploration stage is a transitional period that helps traditional enterprises overcome the "cold start" of digitalization. Additionally, digital technology acts as an enabling mechanism for inheritance and change while remodeling the business model for legacy brands. Liu and Miao's (2025) study helps these brands develop digital transformation strategies in AI-Generated Content (AIGC) to enhance market competitiveness and optimize consumer experience.

The content dimension integrates brand narrative theory and establishes a two-layer content production model composed of "historical genes" and "contemporary values." The "Old Objects Story Club" activity at Dalian Shopping Mall transforms corporate archives into user-generated content through a short-video platform. This illustrates the positive effect of the user-generated content (UGC) model on the reconstruction of brand memory. Wang (2022) points out that brand content operators can manifest their self-narrative kinetic energy and reflect the storytelling characteristics and techniques by enriching narrative perspectives, increasing narrative layers, and using hypertext narratives. Tao and Li (2012) explored the revitalization of Chinese time-honored brands based on brand extension, outlining various strategies for revitalizing these brands under different conditions.

The cultural dimension introduces the theory of cultural memory to build a model for the "intergenerational transmission" of brand cultural identity. The study shows that Hu Kui Zhang Pen Zhuang increased young consumers' awareness of traditional crafts by 42% through the combination of live streaming with the demonstration of non-heritage skills. This confirms the unique value of integrated media in bridging the cultural generation gap.

Cong (2023) pointed out in her study that cultural memory is selectively constructed under the social framework. Old-fashioned brands, regarded as treasures of China's commercial culture, not only preserve excellent traditional culture but also construct cultural memory through brand communication. Liu (2015) believes that Chinese time-honored brands must fully explore their inherent culture and effectively combine it with modern cultural marketing communication methods. This approach strengthens the communication and interaction with consumers and thus enhances brand value.

Table 1: Summary of Literature Features

Research Direction	Reference	Trait
Technical Dimension	Research on the Process Mechanism of Business Model	Digital technology plays an enabling mechanism of
	Remodeling of Digital-Enabled Old Firms	inheritance and changes in the process of remodeling
	Research on Digital Transformation Strategy of Tianjin	the business model of old enterprises

	Industrial Time-honored Brand Based on AIGC	
Content Dimension	On the Operation Mechanism and Narrative Dynamics	Branded content operators can manifest their
	of Brand Narrative SubjectsThe Case of Beijing's	self-narrative momentum by enriching narrative
	Time-honored Brand Stories	perspectives, increasing narrative layers, and using
	Brand Revitalization of "Chinese Old Firms": Brand	hypertext narratives to reflect storytelling characteristics
	Extension and Feedback	and techniques.
Cultural Dimension	Analysis of the Fantasy Theme of Time-honored Brand	
	Storytelling under the Threshold of Cultural	
	MemoryThe Case of Chinese Old Firms in Beijing	As a treasure of China's commercial culture, the old
	Area	firms have constructed cultural memories through
	Study on the revitalization strategy of time-honored	brand communication while inheriting the excellent
	brands from the perspective of cultural	traditional culture.
	economyTaking Changsha's time-honored brand	
	"Jiuzhitang" as an example	

3.1 History of Time-Honored Brands in Liaoning Province

The history of time-honored brands in Liaoning Province can be traced back to the Ming and Qing dynasties, with some brands originating from folk workshops and trade centers. During the period of Japanese colonial rule (1931-1945), some time-honored brands were forced to change their names or stop production, such as Liaoyang Old Shitai Confectionery, which was changed to a Japanese trade name.

In 1949, public-private partnerships were implemented, and the time-honored brands were incorporated into the state-run system. However, during the period of planned economy (1958-1978), the development of these brands stagnated. Despite this, traditional craftsmanship was preserved through the apprenticeship system, exemplified by the Jinzhou Small Vegetable Factory, which maintained the ancient sauce staining technology.

At the beginning of the reform and opening-up period from 1978 to 1992, the first batch of "Liaoning time-honored brands" was certified by the Ministry of Commerce, including 32 enterprises such as Anshan Hongqiao MSG. The promulgation of the Regulations on the Protection of Traditional Arts and Crafts in Liaoning Province in 1993 led to the systematic collation compilation of the techniques used by these time-honored brands.

Since the 21st century, 18 brands, such as Shenyang Tianjiang Lao Longkou, have been recognized as "Chinese Time-honored brands," and their brewing techniques have been included in the provincial non-heritage list. In 2015, Liaoning Tianjiang Lao Longkou brand and other brands were officially listed in this provincial non-heritage list. Additionally, in 2015, the Department of Commerce of Liaoning Province established a dynamic management database of time-honored brands, which currently recognizes 167 certified time-honored brands, with over 41% being more than 100 years old.

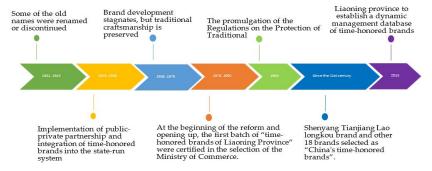


Figure 1: History of time-honored brands in Liaoning Province Source: https://baike.baidu.com

3.2 Distribution and Characteristics of Major Industries

Liaoning's time-honored brands are primarily found within traditional industries such as food processing, catering services, pharmaceutical manufacturing, arts and crafts, brewing industry, and other traditional industries. The food processing industry occupies a dominant position, accounting for about 42% of the sector. Notable brands in this category include Shenyang Laobian Dumpling, Ma Jia Siu Mai, and other catering brands, which highlight the distinctive characteristics of regional food culture.

The pharmaceutical manufacturing industry accounts for 18% of the market and is led by long-established companies such as Shenyang Tianyitang, Dalian Meiluo Pharmaceuticals. These enterprises exemplify the heritage of traditional Chinese medicine.

In the arts and crafts sector, which constitutes 15% of the industry, including Xiuyan Jade Sculpture and Fuxin Onyx, both of which are recognized as intangible cultural heritage projects. These crafts demonstrate the unique craftsmanship of the Northeast region.

Main distribution of time-honored

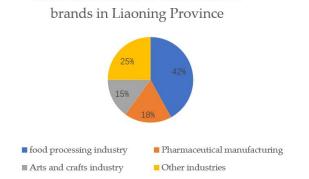


Figure 2: Main distribution of time-honored brands in Liaoning Province Source: https://baike.baidu.com

The distribution of the industries shows clear regional clustering characteristics. Shenyang, as the core city of the old industrial base, is home to 38% of traditional enterprises, which are specialized in machinery manufacturing and heavy industry support services. Dalian, with the advantage of its port, accounts for 25% of these traditional businesses, specializing in seafood processing and trade. In Western Liaoning, a cluster of industries has developed around mineral resources, particularly in agate carving and leather products. This distribution pattern is highly consistent with the historical industrial layout and resource endowment of Liaoning Province.





Figure 3: Geographical Distribution of Liaoning's Long-established Industries Source: https://baike.baidu.com

3.3 Current Situation and Problems of Brand Inheritance

The brand inheritance of time-honored brands in Liaoning Province faces several challenges. As noted by Zhu (2025), old firms struggle with issues such as gaps in cultural inheritance, insufficient innovation capabilities, and limited cultural influence that need to be solved.

A prevalent issue is the phenomenon of brand aging. Some enterprises still follow the traditional business models, resulting in insufficient product innovation and a decline in market competitiveness. Additionally, time-honored brands often feature a single product structure, which fails to align with the preferences of the younger consumer group. There is also a gap in skill inheritance, with the average age of non-genetic heirs exceeding 55 years old. Furthermore, the youth apprenticeship training system is not well developed.

The slow pace of digital transformation presents another significant obstacle. May time-honored brands have yet to establish a professional digital marketing team and lack systematic digital brand strategies, leading to user interaction rates that fall below the industry average. At the level of technology application, most brands remain at the basic graphic communication stage.

The loss of brand assets is particularly alarming. Some time-honored brands have unclear trademark ownership due to restructuring and reorganization, and insufficient exploration into their cultural prominence. Approximately 70% of the surveyed enterprises have not established a systematic brand archive, putting the oral histories of traditional crafts at risk of being lost.

4. The Influence Mechanism of Melting Media on Brand Inheritance

4.1 Application Mode of Integrated Media in Brand Inheritance

The application of integrated media technology in brand inheritance presents diversified characteristics, which are mainly reflected in three typical modes (Shang et al., 2025). Digital marketing shows a significant positive correlation with the performance of old firms. The first mode is interactive communication, which leverages social media to establish a direct dialogue between brands and consumers through platforms like microblogging and WeChat. A great example is Shenyang's long-established "Laobian Dumpling" which has effectively demonstrated its unique skills through short videos on Jittery Voice, achieving over 500,00 likes on a single video and creating a viral spread.

Second is the immersive experience mode, utilizing VR/AR technology to reconstruct the consumption scene. Dalian "Bangchui Island" sea cucumber project, for instance, restores the traditional fishing process through a virtual exhibition hall, which increases user participation by 120%.

The third is the cross-platform content matrix mode, which integrates various media forms, including graphics, audio, and live broadcasting. An example is Jinzhou "Daoguang 25" liquor, which launched a series of historical micro-documentaries on B station, seamlessly transitioning to e-commerce to achieve brand rejuvenation.

The technical application layer forms a three-tier structure. The basic layer builds a cloud database to integrate the brand's historical archives. The middle layer develops H5 interactive games and other light applications. Finally, the performance layer leverages algorithmic recommendations for accurate targeting. Shenyang "Bawangsi" soda uses LBS technology to carry out city memory card activities, forming a seamless connection between offline consumption data and online content dissemination. This approach effectively activates collective memory.

4.2 Technology-driven Brand Value Remodeling

The development of digital technology has opened a new path for remodeling the brand value of time-honored brands (Zhang et al., 2025). Designing a mechanism that illustrates the role of the time-honored brand products and the consumer's attitude

toward these products holds practical significance for these brands. According to Lu (2024), digital transformation has a more significant effect on promoting the brand value of large-scale and state-owned commercial long-established enterprises. The application of blockchain technology enhances the transparency of product traceability systems. For example, the Shenyang Lao Longkou brand Winery records the whole process of brewing process through blockchain, allowing consumers to scan a code to view key information such as raw material sourcing and production dates. Additionally, artificial intelligence algorithms optimize the efficiency of connecting brands with their users.

Virtual reality technology has transformed the brand experience landscape. The Jinzhou Small Vegetable Museum has restored a sauce workshop from the Qing Dynasty through VR technology, allowing visitors to experience the traditional production process in an immersive way. This innovative approach has significantly enhanced the dissemination of the brand's cultural heritage.

The popularization of 5G technology has given rise to a new type of communication pattern. The non-hereditary bearer of Anshan Xiuyan jade carving demonstrated his carving skills through 5G+8K live broadcasting, resulting in sales that exceeded the historical peaks for the product in a single session. Additionally, the cloud computing platform enables the digital management of brand assets, while the Liaoning Time-Honored Brand Association has established a cloud-based brand database.

Technological advancement has accelerated the change of the constituent elements of brand value. The traditional value system, which centered on product quality, is being transformed into a three-dimensional value model that includes "technological empowerment + cultural core + user experience." The AR try-on system developed by Shenyang Duihua Gold Shop combines centuries-old jewelry craftsmanship with modern technology to enhance the brand's premium ability. This technology-driven approach to value reinvention does not negate tradition, but rather it amplifies the unique historical advantages of established brands through digital means.

4.3 Brand Identity in Social and Cultural Contexts

Social and cultural contexts have a profound impact on the shaping of brand identity (Duan & Zhang, 2011). A positive approach to social responsibility significantly enhances the performance of established firms (Xu & Fan, 2022). Additionally, cultural alignment positively influences consumers' intention to purchase an extended product from a time-honored brand (Wang and Wang, 2014). Time-honored brands possess not only market value but also rich historical and cultural value.

In Liaoning Province, these brands are deeply rooted in the regional cultural soil of Northeast China, carrying unique collective memories and cultural symbols. For instance, Shenyang Laobian Dumpling integrates traditional dietary techniques with Manchu cultural elements, showcasing the craft of "kneading blessing patterns" through festival-themed short videos that resonate emotionally with consumers and regional folklore. Moreover, the Dalian acacia cake brand has launched the "acacia flower memory" topic interaction on social media to activate users' sense of belonging to the coastal city's culture.

The integrated media platform has transformed the spatial and temporal dimensions of cultural communication. Benxi Tieshashan Wine Industry utilizes VR technology to restore the traditional brewing setting, allowing young audiences to understand the value of intangible cultural heritage through a virtual experience.

Intergenerational cultural differences pose a challenge to brand identity. Brands can rejuvenate their identity by focusing on the perspective of literati consumers. This approach explores how old clothing brands can adapt to the changing preferences of the younger consumer groups by integrating authenticity theory.

Wang (2022) notes that cross-border matches are more likely to trigger consumers' perceptions of innovation, which in turn leads to positive brand attitudes. The survey shows that consumers over the age of 45 value the historical authority of time-honored brands, while those aged 25-35 are more interested in fashionable expressions of cultural

symbols. Anshan Tanggangzi Yogurt, for example, incorporates Manchu patterns into its packaging design and has launched a series of animations called "Non-heritage New Sayings" on the B station. This approach facilitates the intergenerational dissemination of traditional cultural elements. This strategy of cultural translation shifts brand identity from nostalgia to a more contemporary trend identity.

The globalization context brings complexity to cultural identity. Liaoning time-honored brands encounter the issue of cultural elimination when communicating on cross-border e-commerce platforms. Chaoyang Xiaomi compares Chinese and Western grain cultures through TikTok short videos, establishing a cross-cultural identity with the internationalized narrative of "golden crops." Shenyang Laolongkou Brewery released a documentary on its brewing process on YouTube, emphasizing the universal value of "craftsmanship" and effectively enhancing the brand 's cultural identity among international consumers.

5. Brand Inheritance Strategy from the Perspective of Integrated Media

5.1 Content Innovation and Narrative Optimization

In the context of integrated media, traditional brands must innovate their content by moving beyond the traditional narrative framework. Zhu and Yu (2023) highlighted that narrative theories such as structural, textual, spatial, interactive, and cross-media narrative can be effectively incorporated into the development of archives of old firms. He and Li (2006) identified four areas for brand revitalization: brand stories, idealized brand communities, brand essence, and brand paradox.

Take Shenyang Laobian Dumpling as an example, the brand reconstructs its brand story through the micro-documentary "100 Years of Craftsmanship." This film adopts immersive narrative techniques to show the dumpling-making process of five generations of inheritors. It visually showcases the brand's unique skills, allowing consumers to intuitively appreciate its rich history.

The optimization of narrative structure is reflected in the construction of a multi-dimensional content matrix. Dalian Bangchui Island Sea Cucumber adopts the dual narrative of "historical archives + modern technology." They launched a series of graphic articles on WeChat public account entitled "Centennial Evolution of Sea Cucumber Cultivation Technique", together with the live broadcast of VR cultivation base on Jitterbug platform, which intertwined narratives across time and space.

Content carrier innovation requires brands to transcend the limitations of a single medium. Liaoning Laolongkou liquor, for example, has developed "AR bottle" technology, which allows consumers to scan the product packaging to watch holograms of the brewing process while engaging in online interactive games of mixing wine. The brand is empowered by technology to transform the product into an engaging content carrier. Rejuvenation of narrative language is the key to content optimization. By deconstructing serious historical narratives, brands establish an emotional connection with Generation Z. The data-driven content optimization model provides a scientific decision-making basis among time-honored brands.

5.2 Multi-channel Integrated Communication Strategy

From the perspective of integrated media, Liaoning's time-honored brands should build a synergistic communication matrix that combines both online and offline channels. By effectively integrating traditional media with new media channels, these brands can achieve comprehensive coverage of their information and improve communication efficiency.

Traditional channels such as TV and radio maintain strong authority advantages and can effectively reach middle-aged and older consumer groups. In contrast, social media platforms have become the main battlefield for engaging younger audiences. E-commerce platforms should strengthen cultural empowerment, while the digital transformation of offline experience should not be overlooked. To enhance synergy

across all channels, brands should integrate the user behavior data to create detailed user profiles that include dimensions such as consumption preference and interaction frequency. Furthermore, establishing a unified content management mechanism is essential to ensure consistency in brand messaging and tone across all platforms.

5.3 User Participation and Interactive Experience Design

User participation and interactive experience design are important strategies for preserving brand heritage in the era of integrated media. By building an interactive platform, time-honored brands can effectively draw closer to consumers and enhance brand loyalty. Time-honored brands in Liaoning Province can take inspiration from the "Digital Palace" model of the Forbidden City cultural creation and develop immersive experience programs such as AR virtual try-ons and online handmade production workshops. For example, Shenyang Laobian Dumpling can launch a "cloud classroom of non-heritage skills," where users can learn the traditional pastry production process through live broadcasts. Gamification design can enhance the enthusiasm of young people for these traditions. Jinzhou Xiao Cai can develop a simulation game called "Pickle Workshop," allowing players to learn about the traditional brewing process through creates virtual production. Digitalizing offline experiences online-merge-offline (OMO) interactive environment, where the fusion of virtual and real-world experience design brings modern vitality to traditional skills.

5.4 Data-driven Brand Management

Data-driven brand management has become an important means for heritage brands in the era of integrated media. By establishing consumer databases and collecting behavioral data such as user browsing, purchasing, and evaluation, traditional enterprises in Liaoning Province have been able to implement precise marketing. Shenyang Lao Longkou brand Liquor Industry analyzes sales data from e-commerce platforms to understand the purchase preferences of consumers of different age groups, allowing them to adjust the product packaging design and marketing strategy accordingly.

5.5 Modern Interpretation of Cultural Connotation

The cultural significance of time-honored brands is an important part of their core competitiveness. However, in the era of fast-paced media, traditional cultural elements must be integrated with modern aesthetics and consumer demand to ensure effective inheritance (Jin, 2025). The emergence of vintage national tide symbols promotes the enhancement of the symbolic meanings. In Liaoning Province, the cultural essence of these time-honored brands is mainly reflected in their historical legacy, craft heritage, and regional characteristics. To enhance brand attractiveness, these elements need to be re-interpreted through modern means of communication. In an environment dominated of integrated media, time-honored brands can revitalize their cultural significance through the modernization of visual symbol design. Additionally, innovative narrative is vital for the modern interpretation of cultural connotation. Utilizing integrated media platforms, these brands can adopt storytelling and scenario-based communication methods to connect brand history with modern life. Furthermore, the application of VR technology provides more possibilities for cultural interpretation by recreating the historical context of time-honored brands and providing consumers with an immersive experience.



Figure 4: From left to right: Fountain Grove Gift Packaging, Laobian Dumpling Microvideo, Ma Jia Shao Mai Electricity, Lao Longkou Wine Museum Source: http://xhslink.com/a/bh3iBh4f9wpcb

6. Conclusion

This study explores how traditional brands are transforming in the digital era by systematically examining the historical lineage and realistic path of brand inheritance of time-honored brands in Liaoning Province from the perspective of integrated media. By combining the theories of communication and brand management, the study constructs a theoretical framework for the inheritance of time-honored brands in the context of integrated media. This work addresses the gap in existing research on the integration of traditional brand studies and emerging media technology.

The study introduces a three-dimensional interaction model of "technology-culture-user," which provides a new theoretical tool for analyzing the brand inheritance mechanism in the digital era. At the practical level, the research results provide a viable strategy system for the digital transformation of traditional enterprises in Liaoning Province, aiding these enterprises in accurately identifying their target audiences. Additionally, the proposed cultural development path and policy synergy mechanism provide a valuable reference for local governments in formulating industrial support policies.

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