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Research on the Development of Yunnan Ethnic Clothing

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Abstract

With a focus on four areas—cultural interaction and social value, modern translation of aesthetic qualities, cultural protection and industrialization, and symbolic systems—this study provides an overview of the current status and future prospects of Yunnan ethnic clothing research. It examines using examples as well. According to the research findings, Yunnan ethnic apparel has a critical role in promoting cultural innovation, women's empowerment, and rural area revitalization in addition to serving as a vital conduit for national culture. It can eventually be changed from "cultural heritage" to "cultural capital" by using digital technology for preservation, sustainable derivative methods, educational inheritance methods, and cultural dissemination to other nations. This will help to preserve both China's own culture and the diversity of cultures around the world.

Keywords: Yunnan ethnic clothing; Symbolic meaning; Cultural protection; Industrialization; Modern design; Social value; Sustainable development

Review of Yunnan Ethnic Clothing Research

China's Yunnan province is home to the greatest number of ethnic minority groups. Minorities in Yunnan use ethnic dress that reflects their distinct aesthetic conceptions and preserves their historical memories and life experiences. The clothing of ethnic minorities in Yunnan has been the subject of multidisciplinary research in recent years from a variety of perspectives and levels, with notable academic outcomes. This paper examines previous studies from four perspectives: cultural interaction and social value, modern translation of aesthetic qualities, cultural protection and industrialization, and symbolic systems. Based on this, it combines case analysis with theoretical direction for further research.

Studying Symbols and Symbolic Systems Structurally

Academic circles have long focused on the construction and interpretation of Yunnan ethnic apparel, which is a symbol carrier with composite connotations. In order to reflect the collective consciousness of ethnic groups and carry a social concept system that embodies historical memory and representational meaning as an intermediary, the clothing symbol is a comprehensive cultural symbolic system built on visual symbols like form, color, and patterns [1]. For instance, the outward features of wedding dresses and formal wear, such as material, design, and color, as well as the



cultural meaning and symbolism they contain, are the main areas of focus in a study that categorizes multicultural wedding photos [1].

Based on Lotman's symbolic circle theory, Wang Kunqian applies the idea of the "symbolic circle of ethnic minority clothing" to the study of Yunnan ethnic minority clothing. According to Wang Kunqian, the "symbolic circle of ethnic minority clothing" is a dynamic closed-loop system with reincarnation characteristics during the creation, use, and reception of clothing symbols. In addition, clothing itself has been given a wider range of meanings throughout history, and research and interpretation are still ongoing today [1]. Clothing from various ethnic groups shows great symbolic recognition based on their external appearance. For instance, the Dai ethnic group's ornamental armbands represent the concept of peaceful coexistence among all things, whereas the Yi ethnic group's broad sleeves reveal a forthright personality [2]. Ethnic culture's calling card is these symbolic patterns [3].

Regional variables have an impact on the color scheme of ethnic apparel in terms of beauty. According to Yang Zhufei's book "Aesthetic Characteristics of Yunnan Ethnic Clothing," Yunnan ethnic clothing is light and elegant, with colors that are bright and vibrant yet harmonious. This aesthetic element expresses the feelings of various ethnic groups for nature in addition to being a result of the plateau region's intense light. According to Shao Jing's research, ethnic groups' clothing colors will be influenced by differences in labor productivity and lifestyles, as clothing colors are influenced by people's production and lives. For example, certain ethnic groups' clothing colors change when they go from nomadic to agricultural lifestyles; this is particularly evident in the formation of new color systems. Thus, a particular cultural foundation is provided by the previously described research [3].

The formal guidelines of conventional patterns and contemporary translation techniques are the main subjects of the aesthetic study of patterns. The methods of using old patterns in contemporary garment design, such as direct application, element extraction, and creative reconstruction, are methodically outlined by Liu Yuan. According to Zeng Wanlin's article "A Brief Discussion on the Characteristics of Yunnan Ethnic Minority Clothing," translation requires striking a balance between "form" and "meaning," preventing the random pile-up of symbols. The clothing of the Yunnan Yanbian Lisu ethnic group, which incorporates digital printing and recreation of the "sunflower" pattern, and the Chuxiong Yi embroidery, which blends two color systems using 72 traditional needlework techniques and contemporary clothing silhouettes, are both excellent examples of practical applications that resulted from the collection, organization, and diversification of old color photographs [1].

For instance, the use of the Lahu ethnic group's intangible cultural heritage abilities in contemporary design. In order to extract the distinctive green, yellow, and red colors from the Lahu ethnic group's land, sky, and vegetation—which stand for forest, sunlight, and red earth, respectively—the China Women's College team was inspired by the Yunnan Lahu ethnic group's millennium-old intangible cultural heritage skills. They created three-

dimensional embellishments for sports apparel by utilizing the Lahu ethnic group's intangible cultural heritage weaving traditions to create national totems like gourds. In keeping with the current trend of hand-painted styles, they have developed a line of parent-child camping apparel using modular and technologically blended textiles (Figure 5). This preserves the coziness of handcraft while utilizing digital technology for accurate reproduction. The finished goods can be marketed in the marketplace, satisfying the demands of contemporary manufacturing.

A Synergistic Development Path Between Industrialization and Cultural Preservation

Yunnan ethnic clothing's living history is facing significant challenges as a result of modern society's growing modernization. One of the main areas of academic research at the moment is the coordinated development of industrialization and cultural preservation. Three areas are the focus of the majority of current research: industrial innovation, standardized construction, and protective methods [4].

For instance, Chuxiong Yi embroidery's industrialization and brand expansion. Chuxiong Yi needlework, which has been an intangible cultural heritage project for more than 1,800 years, has evolved from a "fingertip skill" to a "fingertip economy" [5]. By establishing the first national "Chuxiong Yi Handicraft Embroidery Production Technology" industry standard, registering the collective trademark of "Chuxiong Yi Embroidery," building a database of embroidered women and a pattern copyright database, and putting together an entire industrial system. The industry has created a revenue circle with stable working embroidery women earning over 40,000 yuan per person annually, employed over 2,000 disabled people, and made appearances three major fashion weeks in New York, Milan, and Paris. As of right now, the industry's output value has reached 1.13 billion yuan, propelling the development of 2,233 business entities (Figure 1). Over 12,000 stores globally have Yi embroidered elements installed, and it has progressively co-created goods with global companies like Adidas and Starbucks (Figure 2). Scholars support a comprehensive protection idea when it comes to protective measures [6].

Li Xiaodi also notes in his paper "On the Protection and Development of Ethnic Minority Costume Culture in Yunnan" that different life experiences in non-material qualities should be conserved in addition to the preservation of material heritage. To finish the "Cultural Relic + Skill" protection format, which is an effort at museum-based protection, the Yunnan Ethnic Museum, for instance, held an exhibition called "Ethnic Costume and Production Techniques," which presented the particular technical procedures while reenacting the production scenes [7]. In order to better regulate inheritance, ensure orderly inheritance, and promote orderly advancement, Qiu Xiaoyan suggested that a standard system for ethnic costume techniques be established. This would not necessarily limit all standardization; rather, it would achieve technical support for standardization through the formulation of pertinent standards.



Figure 1: Yi ethnic minority clothing fashion show.



(Courtesy: Yunnan Provincial People's Government website)

Figure 2: Exquisite Yi embroidery cultural and creative product.

Research on industrialization looks at how traditional crafts might compete in today's market. According to "The Clash Between Adherence and Fashion—An Exploration of the Industrialization of Yunnan Ethnic Minority Traditional Costumes" by Lu Yue, the key to effective industrialization is preserving a fusion of the two and looking for areas where they might come together to produce innovations. Sustainability is a benefit of the "Company + Cooperative + Embroiderer" model, and the completion of the "Brocade Pu'er" project has lifted 14,628 local women out of poverty and onto the path to prosperity, generating over 29 million yuan in handicrafts and demonstrating the handicrafts' value in passing down intangible cultural heritage. The advancement of Chuxiong

Yi embroidery has been facilitated by the strengthening of the protection of intellectual property, with a total of 50 trademarks being applied for and patents granted, fostering the industry's scientific growth [8].

Numerous studies have been conducted to address the relationship between development and cultural preservation, as well as between economic development and cultural preservation during the industrialization process. According to Zhang Shixin, an overzealous focus on business concerns could result in the oversimplification of costume symbolism and the deterioration of clothing's cultural significance [9]. Some academics suggest using

the “dynamic standardization” approach, which entails innovating in product designs and usage circumstances while maintaining tradition in conventional abilities.

In general, this is a means of embodying cultural development and protection. The database of brocade and embroidery patterns created by Pu'er University gathers 106 traditional patterns that can serve as both references for enhancing the school's output and a means of conserving traditional cultural resources.

Research on the Translation of Aesthetic Features into Modern Design

In the present academic field of design, the aesthetic qualities of Yunnan ethnic clothes and how to incorporate them into modern design have steadily gained popularity. This design-theoretical research, which gradually progresses from the surface to the inside and from the shallow to the deep, is also becoming more

comprehensive through the study of traditional ethnic clothing colors, patterns, and craftsmanship aesthetics and their ongoing application to contemporary design.

For example, modern design translation has helped to revive the weaving methods of the Wa ethnic community in Ximeng, Yunnan with contemporary design changes, Yan Yong and his wife (Figure 3) have finished a second makeover of Wa Mountain Beautiful Brocade. Yan Yong and his spouse incorporated the Wa ethnic group's bull totem and traditional red and black embroidery designs into the collars of shirts. They also incorporated the rhythm of the Wa wooden drum dance into the skirt hems. They used bonding materials of cowhide and denim, carried ethnic emblems while representing the traits of the new era, and abandoned the intricacy of traditional designs, leaving only the rhythm and general feeling of the pattern [10]. Many young people have expressed their love for these handcrafted “wearable cultural name cards” (Figure 4) [11].



Figure 3: The Yan couple carrying bags of the Yi ethnic group's weaving technique (Courtesy of People's Daily).



Figure 4: Yao ethnic style earrings and handbags (Courtesy of People's Daily).

Regional characteristics have an impact on ethnic garments' color schemes in terms of beauty. In Yang Zhufei's work "Aesthetic Characteristics of Yunnan Ethnic Costumes," this is mirrored. Yunnan ethnic costumes are distinguished by light and graceful tones, as well as vibrant and bright colors that are beautifully combined. In addition to being a result of the plateau region's intense light, this aesthetic element also symbolizes the diverse ethnic groups' emotional projections of nature in different locales [12]. According to Shao Jing's research, ethnic clothing colors can change in tandem with changes in labor, production, and lifestyles, since clothing colors are influenced by people's everyday lives and production. For instance, certain ethnic groups' clothing colors change when they go from nomadic to agricultural lifestyles; this is particularly evident in the formation of new color systems. As a result, the research indicated above gives us a specific cultural foundation.

The formal guidelines of conventional patterns and contemporary translation techniques are the main subjects of the aesthetic study of patterns. The methods of using historic patterns in contemporary garment design, such as direct application, element extraction, and creative reconstruction, were methodically compiled by Liu Yuan [13]. According to Zeng Wanlin's paper "A Brief Discussion on the Characteristics of Yunnan Ethnic Costumes," translation requires striking a balance between "form"

and "meaning," and the random accumulation of symbols should be avoided. Both the Chuxiong Yi embroidery, which combines two color systems using 72 traditional needlework techniques and recreates modern clothing silhouettes, and the Yali ethnic costume, which features digital printing and recreation of the "Sunflower" pattern, are excellent examples of practical applications that were produced after gathering, organizing, and applying old photographs of color materials in various ways.

For instance, the use of the Lahu ethnic group's intangible cultural heritage techniques in contemporary design. In order to extract the distinctive green, yellow, and red colors from the Lahu people's land, sky, and vegetation—which stand for forests, sunlight, and red earth, respectively—the China Women's College team was inspired by the Lahu ethnic group in Yunnan and their millennium-old intangible cultural heritage techniques. They created three-dimensional embellishments for sports apparel by utilizing the Lahu ethnic group's intangible cultural heritage weaving traditions to create national totems like gourds [10]. In keeping with the current trend of hand-painted styles, they also used modular and technologically advanced cloth patchwork to create a set of parent-child camping outfits (Figure 5). This preserves the coziness of handcrafted craftsmanship while leveraging digital technology for accurate reproduction [14].



Figure 5: The President of China Women's College wearing the Lahu woven textile clothing (Courtesy: Guang ming Online).

The finished goods satisfy contemporary production requirements and can be offered in the market. Regarding craft aesthetics, researchers have discovered that traditional crafts (like silverware forging and wickerwork) represent highly advanced techniques and a conceptual ecological perspective. These are also important considerations for the current trend of "material beauty and skillful craftsmanship" design. The traditional creation concept

of "material beauty and skillful craftsmanship" has been shown to have some similarities with contemporary design ethics through Zhang Yuanyang's research on ethnic minority embroidered shoes. When it comes to ethnic aspects, Wu Xiaqing thinks that their creative, contemporary design should follow the rules of both artistry and appeal [15].

The Process of Cultural Exchange and Social Value Formation

As a conduit for social growth and cultural exchange, Yunnan ethnic minority attire has great current significance for fostering interethnic dialogue, encouraging the development of rural rejuvenation, and empowering women [16]. Historical study and theoretical discussion are increasingly occurring together, according to related studies.

Historical evidence suggests that the mutual effect of dress culture is a gradual process. In his paper “Mutual Influence and Integration of Ethnic Clothing Culture in Central Yunnan Since Modern Times,” Tang Jun uses empirical techniques to show how ethnic minorities and Han people have influenced one another in areas like decorative styles, craftsmanship, and clothing materials. “We are intertwined, and you are intertwined with us” is a distinctive feature of cultural blending between China’s ethnic minorities and the Han majority. Hu Yangquan, analyzing from the perspective of ethnic sociology, argues that the degree of mutual influence in clothing culture is proportional to the frequency of interethnic interaction and the strength of economic ties. Hu Yangquan, analyzing from the perspective of ethnic sociology, argues that the degree of mutual influence in clothing culture is proportional to the frequency of interethnic interaction and the strength of economic ties. On trade routes like the Tea Horse Road, frequent exchanges and trade interactions led to continuous mutual learning and absorption of each other’s clothing advantages, resulting in mutual influence [17].

The academic community has now reached a consensus on the importance of clothing culture in supporting rural revitalization. Peng Yao, in her article “The Continuity of Yunnan Ethnic Clothing Culture in the Context of Rural Revitalization,” points out that the

clothing industry can leverage the cultural advantages of rural areas, combining cultural heritage with economic development to ultimately form a rural cultural industry system [18]. In his article “The Continuity of Yunnan Ethnic Clothing Culture in the Context of Rural Revitalization,” Yu Ming suggests turning “fingertip skills” into a “fingertip economy,” which boosts women’s economic potential while also giving them more agency and a wider voice. Over 10,000 women have been empowered by Ping County’s Hua Yao Yi ethnic embroidery, for instance, and their average income has increased by about 6,000 yuan per person. Following a “company + poverty alleviation workshop” approach, Nanhua Yi embroidery has helped more than 2,000 rural women find jobs in their communities.

The ethnic apparel business has fueled rural revival in several Yunnan regions, creating unique growth models. The “intangible cultural heritage + tourism” model, for instance, has helped Ximeng County’s Wa nationality weaving skills flourish. To date, the county has successfully drawn 1.9936 million tourists, increased sales of Wa nationality weaving and related products to 40.4641 million yuan, employed over 4,000 people in weaving production and operation, and increased per capita annual income by 9,143 yuan (Figure 6) [19]. Er Yan, a member of Menghai County’s Hani ethnic group, established the “Hani Kangbo” brand, which gave about 200 Hani needlework artists jobs. For three years in a row, her enhanced and inventive Hani apparel has taken home medals at the “Silk Road Cloud Garment · Kunming Cloud Fashion Week” (Figure 7) [20]. Yingjiang County’s Nongzhang Town hosts ethnic fashion shows with Dai, Jingpo, Achang, and Lisu clothing on rice fields (Figures 8 & Figure 9) [21]. By combining local ethnic clothing with village scenery, the town draws hundreds of thousands of tourists, increasing local homestays’ and rural restaurants’ revenue by more than 30%.



Figure 6: Ximeng Workshop Studio Cultural and Creative Works (Courtesy of People’s Daily).



Figure 7: Creation of Hani Ethnic Costume (Courtesy: Yunnan Provincial Department of Ethnic and Religious Affairs Official Website).



Figure 8: Rice Field Fashion Show (Courtesy: Yunnan Civilization Network).



Figure 9: Rice Field Fashion Show (Courtesy: Yunnan Civilization Network).

The number of inheritors, the employment rate of women, and the community mediation rate are just a few of the metrics that are incorporated into the three-dimensional evaluation model that academics established in “Jinxu Pu’er” with “cultural heritage-economic income—social stability” as assessment indicators [22]. This model has significant reference value for future quantitative research on the social value of ethnic clothing. Multi-dimensional evaluation offers a more intuitive grasp of the social significance of this ethnic dress culture than earlier research that concentrated more on qualitative study.

In conclusion, multidisciplinary integration has progressively replaced a single-discipline focus in Yunnan ethnic clothing research, with a growing number of empirical studies and a wider variety of research methodologies [23]. However, there are still many areas in which the research content needs to be improved, including inadequate digital preservation of ethnic clothing, limited cross-ethnic comparisons, and insufficient exploration of the dynamic evolution mechanisms of clothing culture.

The research objectives have also shifted more toward practical application. By building a “symbol gene library,” doing cross-regional comparisons, and bolstering design ethics, more research and discovery can be conducted in the future, enabling Yunnan ethnic dress to continue innovating while expanding under protection. Overall, interdisciplinary integration has progressively replaced a single-discipline concentration in Yunnan ethnic clothing research, with a growing number of empirical studies and a wider variety of research methodologies. However, there are still many areas in which research content needs to be improved, including inadequate digital preservation of ethnic clothing, limited cross-ethnic comparisons, and insufficient exploration of the dynamic evolution mechanisms of clothing culture [24]. The research objectives have also shifted more toward practical application. By building a “symbol gene library,” doing cross-regional comparisons, and bolstering design ethics, more research and discovery can be conducted in the future, enabling Yunnan ethnic dress to continue innovating while expanding under protection.

Opportunities for Yunnan Ethnic Clothing Development

One important component of the Chinese nation’s superb cultural heritage treasure trove is Yunnan ethnic wear. In addition to inheritance and development, national strategies including rural regeneration, cultural confidence, and industrial transformation and upgrading are also important to the future growth of Yunnan ethnic apparel. It offers both benefits and problems in the context of globalization and digitization. The future development path of Yunnan ethnic apparel will be examined in this study from five perspectives: international diffusion, industrial innovation, technical empowerment, cultural inheritance, and educational assistance.

Establishing A Creative Environment for “Tradition-Modern” Discussion

In the future, Yunnan ethnic attire ought to transcend the idea

of “protection” and “development.” It should create a diversified and inclusive open innovation environment based on inclusiveness and dynamic development [25]. This ecosystem should integrate historic symbols with contemporary aesthetics, with traditional culture serving as its cornerstone, modern design as its motor, and market demand as its driving force. Establishing “ethnic clothing innovation laboratories,” inviting designers, academics, inheritors, and businesses to collaborate, combining resources to co-build studios or joint ventures, and encouraging the incorporation of regional features of intangible cultural heritage—like Yi embroidery, Dai brocade, and Miao embroidery—into modern apparel, home furnishings, and cultural and creative products through design workshops and cross-disciplinary fashion shows are a few examples of specific actions that could be taken. In order to develop unique brands with regional characteristics, it should promote long-term cooperative partnerships between businesses and brands, collaborating with cooperatives in ethnic areas [26] and moving away from “skill output” to “brand output.”

Digital Empowerment and Cultural Gene Pool Construction

The ways that ethnic clothes are preserved, studied, and shared have changed significantly with the advent of high-tech platforms like blockchain, big data, and artificial intelligence. The digitalization of Yunnan ethnic costumes must be actively promoted in the near future in order to establish a “Yunnan Ethnic Costume Cultural Gene Pool.” In order to do this, data on cultural components like patterns, colors, craftsmanship, and forms must be systematically gathered, organized, and intelligently managed and used. In addition to facilitating online displays, exhibitions, and interactive education through AR/VR experiences, it may be a source of research and creativity for academic institutions and the design industry, greatly increasing audience engagement and immersive experiences. In order to prevent the theft and plagiarism of ancestral totems or symbols and to better protect the cultural rights and economic interests of ethnic communities, blockchain technology can be used to convert existing patterns into digital cultural and creative products for protective registration, certification, and traceability management [27].

Green Design and Sustainable Development Routes

Yunnan traditional costumes’ natural dyes, handcrafted low-energy production, and biodegradable materials complement the prevailing green design ideas. These issues need to be investigated more in the future, and this idea should be used to direct the ethnic costume industry’s sustainable growth. To recognize and promote goods that use eco-friendly materials, handmade weaving, and natural dyes, a “Green Craftsmanship Certification” system should be established. In ethnic areas, a number of “Handicraft Ecological Villages” ought to be established in accordance with the rural rejuvenation development strategy [25]. In order to achieve synchronized development in culture, economy, and ecology, it is possible to create full cultural complexes that incorporate production and everyday life, product displays, craft experiences, and product sales by combining costume creation with ecological

tourism and educational tourism.

Innovative Techniques for Talent Development and Educational Inheritance

For culture to be passed along and flourish creatively, talent is essential. In the future, a multi-level, multi-type talent team should be established through increased efforts to teach inheritors, new designers, and cultural management specialists [28]. In order to integrate the “Modern Apprenticeship System” and “Intangible Cultural Heritage in Classrooms,” which emphasize both theoretical instruction and hands-on operations, universities and vocational institutions should encourage the addition of pertinent majors such as ethnic costume design and craftsmanship. Encourage ethnic regions to establish “Women’s Handicraft Empowerment Centers” and “Rural Maker Spaces,” which will turn “fingertip skills” into a “fingertip economy” by providing rural women and youth with product sales, business advice, and skill training.

International Communication Strategy and Branding

The internationalization of Yunnan’s ethnic costumes necessitates enhancing brand awareness and worldwide communication skills. There should be a number of international ethnic costume brands established in the future. Increase global visibility and reputation by holding international fashion weeks, cultural exchange events, and cross-border e-commerce to further broaden its influence [29].

For instance, the “Chuxiong Yi Embroidery” brand has made waves on the international scene by leveraging its international operations: it won the “2025 Annual Fashion Intangible Cultural Heritage Innovation Award” and held three themed exhibitions during the 2025 China International Fashion Week; it signed an international communication and strategic cooperation agreement, launched the “Precision Communication Joint Action,” and created new avenues for international communication and exchange in partnership with the Chuxiong Prefecture and the China International Publishing Group [22]; For two years in a row, Chuxiong Prefecture has hosted the Chuxiong Fashion Week with success. In the first year, 24 delegations from 7 countries (such as Bangladesh and Malaysia) and 6 domestic provinces (municipalities) as well as 24 teams from 16 Yunnan prefectures and cities participated. Chuxiong Yi Embroidery products established long-term partnerships with nations like the UK, Italy, and others in 2024, securing export orders totaling 5.1 million yuan.

By leveraging Yunnan’s proximity to South Asia and Southeast Asia, as well as its close ties to the rice culture and Dian Northeast historical and cultural belt, a “Lanmei Ethnic Costume Cultural Alliance” can be formed with countries in South Asia and Southeast Asia, strengthening cross-regional cultural exchange and interaction, enriching the cultural connotation of Yunnan’s ethnic costumes, and enhancing their role in the Belt and Road Initiative’s cultural system [29]. Governments, businesses, and social organizations can work together to establish the “Yunnan Ethnic Costume International Promotion Fund,” which will support

initiatives like brand overseas expansion, copyright cooperation, and cultural exhibitions.

The value of Yunnan’s ethnic costumes will change from “cultural heritage” to “cultural resource” and eventually to “cultural capital,” contributing to the prosperity of Chinese ethnic culture and enhancing and expanding the diversity of world cultures. This can be achieved by continuing the path of cultural continuity and inheritance, preserving traditions through innovation, safeguarding them in development, and advancing them through win-win cooperation [30].

Prospective Future Research Pathways

Even though Yunnan ethnic clothing research has advanced significantly, theoretical nuance, methodological creativity, and real-world application still need to be improved. Future research can go in the following five directions by fusing social development trends with academic frontiers:

Expanding research on cross-cultural comparisons and the dynamic evolution of dress symbols

Symbols’ dynamic mechanisms of integration into history, geography, and culture are frequently overlooked in current research, which frequently concentrates on symbols’ static condition. Future research can try to improve conversations on the “fluidity” and “recontextualization” of clothing symbols by utilizing methods like semiotics, cultural anthropology, and digital humanities. Comparative studies of ethnic attire in various locales, the spread and assimilation of clothing symbols among Yunnan ethnic minorities both inside and outside of Yunnan [31], the reconstruction and identity formation of Yunnan clothing symbols in the diaspora in the context of globalization, etc., are a few examples.

Establishing an Intelligent Innovation and Digital Protection Platform for Ethnic Clothing

In the future, ethnic dress can be digitally preserved and recreated thanks to the advancement of high-tech technologies like artificial intelligence, big data, and virtual reality. In addition to being a promising avenue for research and development, the “Yunnan Ethnic Clothing Digital Gene Bank” is one of the most widely used technologies and approaches at the moment [32].

Encouraging the Comprehensive Combination of Contemporary Sustainable Design and Traditional Crafts

Contemporary design can benefit much from the sustainable wisdom, ethical craftsmanship, and ecological philosophy ingrained in Yunnan ethnic apparel. By combining traditional crafts with contemporary sustainable design, eco-friendly materials, excavation natural dyes, and zero-waste processes from traditional handicraft, the aim is to investigate potential future development paths. Initiatives like “Process Lifecycle Assessment” should then be carried out to assess the environmental effects and resource consumption of traditional apparel production. In the end, this will provide a “Yunnan Ethnic Element Design Guide” for cross-disciplinary applications and thorough integration, laying the

groundwork for green certifications and allowing ethnic apparel to combine with fashion, architecture, and products [33].

Broadening Gender and Social Empowerment Views in Clothing Studies

One way that culture is transmitted is through ethnic attire. The study of social, gender, and community governance system issues in the production and consumption processes of clothing is important because it not only reflects a country's social structure but also gender power relations [32]. For instance, research can be done on the empowerment of rural women under the "embroidery women economy," as well as the subjective status of women in the process of inheriting and innovating craftsmanship. Participatory action research (PAR) can be used to support the growth of the community's own industry, improve the capacity to express cultural identity, and guarantee equitable benefit distribution.

Enhancing Ethnic Clothing's Promotional Function in the Educational System and Global Distribution

Innovation and cultural inheritance are based on education. In the future, it will be necessary to create intangible cultural heritage research bases and design innovation centers with a "school-local-enterprise" collaborative model, creating a platform for linkage among inheritors, designers, and researchers; strengthen the cross-cultural interpretation and brand building of Yunnan ethnic clothing, showcasing the charm of Yunnan ethnic clothing culture in new media like films and television, games, and digital art; and actively integrate ethnic clothing culture into the national education system, including in local courses for primary and secondary schools as well as university professional courses; and create pertinent teaching materials that combine theoretical knowledge with practical application based on the content characteristics of ethnic clothing culture; and participate in cultural exchanges with nations and areas along the "Belt and Road" project in terms of apparel. China's ethnic clothing culture will continue to gain soft power as a result of this, helping to convey its story in the global fashion discourse system [34].

From cultural focus to theoretical development, from static preservation to dynamic inheritance, and from single-discipline approaches to multidisciplinary collaboration, the study of ethnic costumes from Yunnan is changing. Future study should mainly address important issues, stress practical concerns, and, on the basis of more thorough theoretical reflection, focus on Yunnan ethnic costume studies in relation to national cultural strategies and the needs of society development. Yunnan ethnic clothing should be given more vitality through creative growth. Synergy between several fields can be attained by encouraging cross-disciplinary integration, which unifies various disciplines into a more comprehensive platform for ethnic costume research. This will open the door for the development of novel and unique ethnic costume research paradigms that satisfy Chinese and even global demands [35].

Conclusion

One important aspect of China's vast and varied multicultural

legacy is Yunnan ethnic attire. In addition to being one of the most distinctive forms of creative and inventive cultural expression amid China's contemporary societal upheaval, it acts as a material conduit for deep historical memory and cultural identity. Through specific case analyses, this study summarizes and synthesizes current research on Yunnan ethnic clothing's symbol system, industrialization and protection, design translation, and social value. It also presents multiple pathways from tradition to modernity and their intricate operational mechanisms from a variety of perspectives.

At the moment, the Yunnan ethnic clothing study demonstrates empirical orientation, multidisciplinary integration, and a focus on practical issues. Digital empowerment, more extensive cross-ethnic comparative research, and dynamic transformation, however, might all use some work. In order to achieve creative transformation and innovative development of clothing's cultural resources, it is imperative that a well-functioning "tradition-modernity" integrated innovative ecosystem be built, along with four strategic pillars: digital genetic libraries, green sustainable development, educational heritage, and international branding. By inheriting through innovation, protecting through development, and winning through cooperation, the value of Yunnan ethnic clothing can elevate from "cultural capital," thereby bolstering China's cultural confidence and contributing Chinese wisdom and solutions to the diversity of global culture.

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Conflicts of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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