



## Some solutions to preserve the traditional costumes of the dao ethnic group in trung minh commune, yen son district, tuyen quang province

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### Abstract

This article is based on directive perspectives and theories regarding traditional costumes of ethnic minorities, as well as the current state of preservation of traditional costumes of the Dao ethnic people. It aims to propose solutions for preserving the traditional costumes of the Dao people in Trung Minh commune, Yen Son district, Tuyen Quang province. The research findings confirm the necessity and feasibility of preserving these traditional costumes in the present situation. The responsibility primarily lies with cultural agencies, local authorities, and the people in preserving, promoting, and disseminating the traditional costumes of the Dao people in Trung Minh commune, Yen Son district, Tuyen Quang province, both domestically and internationally.

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### 1. Introduction

Vietnam is a multi-ethnic country. Throughout the course of its historical development, each ethnic group has crafted its own unique identity, contributing to the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the Vietnamese people. Most of the ethnic groups in Vietnam have their own distinct costumes, each outfit embodying its own charm, beauty, uniqueness, and deeply imbued with the traditional cultural values of each ethnic group<sup>[1]</sup>.

Tuyen Quang province is a place where all 9 subgroups of the Dao ethnic group converge<sup>[3, 4, 14]</sup>. The traditional costumes of the Dao people, especially the Dao Lo Gang and Dao Tien in Trung Minh commune, Yen Son district, Tuyen Quang province, play an important role in the life of this ethnic group. The traditional costumes of the Dao people hold significant material and spiritual value for the Dao people in all activities, from daily life to festive occasions within the family and community. In the context of international integration, preserving the traditional costumes meets the need for clothing for family members, contributes to the development of the family's economy, and, moreover, preserves the cultural identity of the ethnic group and promotes this cultural heritage to tourists and friends from around the world<sup>[7, 9, 13]</sup>.

Based on theory and practice, this article proposes some solutions to preserve the traditional costumes of the Dao people in Trung Minh commune, Yen Son district, Tuyen Quang province.

### 2. Content

#### 2.1. Issues concerning the preservation of traditional costumes of the Dao people

##### 2.1.1 Establishing and directing the implementation of state policies on preserving traditional costumes of the Dao people

The preservation and promotion of the value of traditional costumes are of utmost importance, requiring attention, guidance, and direction from Party committees and the State<sup>[1, 6, 9]</sup>. To carry out this work, it is necessary to have management documents from the central to local levels, providing a legal basis for the preservation and promotion of the value of traditional costumes. The issuance of legal documents by the State related to the preservation and promotion of the value of traditional costumes will create a legal framework to help localities and agencies effectively perform their functions and tasks.

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Furthermore, it is essential to establish appropriate regulations, rules, and conservation policies that align with the specific conditions in each specific locality. This ensures that traditional costume preservation activities are conducted in the right direction and with specific goals, compatible with the cultural, economic, and social conditions of the locality. The Department of Culture, Sports, and Tourism of Tuyen Quang province has implemented the plan to carry out the project "Preservation and Promotion of the Traditional Cultural Values of Ethnic Minorities Linked to Tourism Development" [7] within the National Target Program for Socio-Economic Development in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas in Tuyen Quang province for the period 2021-2025. Through this project, activities such as surveying, collecting, inventorying, and documenting traditional cultural heritage related to costumes, household items, musical instruments, and other elements of ethnic groups in the province have been carried out. The objective is to preserve and promote the value of traditional culture while integrating with tourism development, creating conditions to attract tourists and contributing to the socio-economic development of ethnic minority and mountainous areas.

The People's Committee of Trung Minh commune recognizes the importance of developing plans and implementing activities for the preservation and promotion of cultural values in general, and specifically, the costumes of the Dao people. These traditional cultural values are not only unique and distinct but also play a significant role in building an advanced cultural foundation and reflecting the ethnic identity. However, until now, there have been no specific management documents dedicated to the traditional costumes of the Dao people and other ethnic groups living in the province and district, including the Dao costumes in Trung Minh commune. The exhibition and performance activities of these costumes are limited and not regularly conducted, mainly appearing in cultural exchange programs, festivals, New Year celebrations, and cultural days organized annually by Yen Son district. Therefore, it is necessary to create a favorable environment for the display and dissemination of traditional costumes to showcase their beauty.

### 2.1.2 Collecting, researching, and promoting Dao costumes

Tuyen Quang is the only province in the country that encompasses all nine Dao branches. The establishment and maintenance of Dao branch clubs at the grassroots level have contributed to the preservation of traditional cultural values and helped the younger generation appreciate, preserve, and promote their ethnic cultural identity within the community. Mr. Ban Xuan Trieu, Chairman of the Dao Ethnic Cultural Preservation Club in the province, stated, *"Since its establishment in 2014, the club has had clear regulations and objectives. Our goal is to research, collect, preserve, and promote the beautiful traditional cultural values of the Dao ethnic group, such as preserving and teaching the spoken language and written script, maintaining and promoting the values of rituals and ceremonies, embroidery patterns on costumes, teaching traditional melodies and dance styles in religious ceremonies, and traditional folk games"* [2].

The promotion of traditional Dao culture, particularly in showcasing costumes, has not received sufficient attention. To effectively carry out this activity, the local authorities and the Dao community in Trung Minh commune need to have a proper understanding of the value and affection for traditional

costumes and incorporate them into their daily lives. In the villages and hamlets, a public address system has been established, so it is necessary to establish connections and linkages to broadcast articles about traditional costumes in the morning or afternoon. This will have a positive impact on raising public awareness about the value of traditional costumes.

We propose creating a dedicated website for Dao costumes on the Internet, where various articles and short videos about traditional costumes can be shared. This information can also be disseminated on social media platforms such as Facebook, Zalo, TikTok, etc. Additionally, it would be beneficial to share information about the Dao people and the beauty of their traditional costumes on other websites to reach a wider audience and increase awareness about the ethnic group and their traditional costumes.

Active participation in collective activities, fairs, exhibitions, ethnic cultural festivals, and schools within the province should also be encouraged. This will provide opportunities for Dao costumes to interact and engage with the communities of other ethnic minorities.

### 2.1.3 Dao People's Awareness

To ensure the preservation of traditional Dao costumes, local authorities need to enhance education and training efforts to raise awareness of cultural values. Specifically, it is crucial to provide training and support to officials with knowledge of traditional costumes and send them to participate in training programs and exchange experiences to gather preservation techniques and methods. Through these efforts, cultural values can be preserved and passed down to future generations in a sustainable manner. For example, techniques such as indigo dyeing, processing of indigo for dyeing, or methods of sewing, embroidery, and intricate decorative patterns of the Dao Lo Gang people, or the beeswax printing of the Dao Tien people, should be documented, recorded, and reconstructed to serve as materials for future generations. However, it is also necessary to address certain limitations to better preserve traditional costumes while considering possible adaptations in fabric materials and colors that respect the cultural identity of the Dao people while incorporating modern, aesthetic, and practical elements to encourage regular use of their costumes. Encouraging the Dao people to wear their traditional costumes can be achieved by creating an environment that allows them to proudly showcase their cultural heritage with honor and ethnic pride [3].

Raising awareness among cultural subjects, especially the young Dao people in Trung Minh commune and the Dao ethnic group as a whole, regarding the preservation and promotion of traditional costumes is essential. Their changing awareness is one of the fundamental factors leading to either sustainable preservation or rapid transformation of the current traditional costumes among their community. Therefore, the Party, local authorities, and organizations need to strengthen propaganda and educational activities to foster the voluntary consciousness of the population. Honoring and providing reasonable rewards to those who transmit and preserve the cultural values of the ethnic group are necessary. Additionally, cultural issues should be incorporated into the general education curriculum as they play a crucial role in determining the sustainable development of Tuyen Quang province. Families and lineages also have an important role in educating their children about preserving traditional

values, including language transmission, family rituals, and the ways of making and wearing traditional costumes. They are the foremost elements in transmitting and maintaining these significant values within the community.

## 2.2 Solutions for preserving the distinctive features of Dao costumes

### 2.2.1 Solutions on mechanism and policy

In the context of industrialization, modernization, and international integration, along with cultural convergence, the Dao costumes in Trung Minh commune have undergone rapid transformations. The usage of traditional Dao costumes, especially among the younger generation, is decreasing significantly, almost to the point of nonexistence. Therefore, the preservation and promotion of traditional culture, including traditional costumes of the Dao people, face many challenges. Given this situation, immediate and long-term solutions are needed to preserve the traditional costumes of the ethnic groups residing in the province as a whole and the Dao people in Trung Minh commune in particular.

In 2012, the first national-scale ethnic costume competition took place at the Village of Vietnamese Ethnic Cultures. The organization of this competition marked an important turning point, demonstrating the special attention of the Party and the State towards the preservation of traditional costumes.

The first National Dao Ethnic Culture Festival was organized in Tuyen Quang province in 2017, in collaboration between the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism and the provincial People's Committee. In 2022, the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, together with the People's Committee of Thai Nguyen province, organized the opening ceremony of the second National Dao Ethnic Culture Festival, under the theme "Preserving and Promoting the Cultural Identity of the Dao Ethnic Group - Equality, Unity, Integration, and Development."

The organization of the National Dao Ethnic Culture Festival is a culturally significant and practical activity that embodies the Party's and the State's policies and demonstrates the care and concern of all levels of government and relevant sectors for the spiritual lives of the Dao ethnic community. It also plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting the value of ethnic costumes and continuing to build new cultural values that are relevant to the modern era.

Currently, Trung Minh commune in Yen Son district, Tuyen Quang province, does not have specific policies dedicated to the costumes of ethnic minorities in general, and the Dao people in particular. This is a shortcoming in cultural management that needs to be addressed. Without timely solutions, traditional costumes may gradually disappear and not be maintained. Therefore, local authorities need to implement effective measures and establish consistent guidelines to ensure that the Dao people understand and appreciate the beautiful values of their traditional culture.

Based on existing cultural policies issued by the State, such as the Law on Cultural Heritage, Resolution No. 24-NQ/TU dated March 12, 2003, by the Party Central Committee on ethnic affairs <sup>[1]</sup>, the National Target Program for Socio-Economic Development in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas for the period 2021-2030 (Phase 1: 2021-2025) with Project 6 "Preservation and Promotion of the Good Values of Traditional Culture of Ethnic Minorities Linked to Tourism Development" <sup>[7]</sup>, Circular No. 04/2011/TT-BVHTTDL dated January 21, 2011, by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism on promoting civilized practices in marriage,

funerals, and festivals, as well as laws on museums and state organizational and management mechanisms, budgetary systems, etc. These policies provide a basis for local authorities to establish a legal framework and consistent guidelines for preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values, including costumes, of the Dao people and other ethnic minorities. Implementing these policies will play a crucial role in maintaining and transmitting these valuable cultural traditions to future generations.

Some policies issued by the People's Committee of Tuyen Quang province include Decision No. 550/QD-UBND dated September 8, 2021, regarding the content orientation of village and neighborhood conventions in the province <sup>[13]</sup>, and Document No. 1234/UBND-THVX dated April 13, 2022, on strengthening the implementation of civilized practices in marriage and funerals <sup>[14]</sup>.

Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the responsibility, awareness, and effectiveness of management from local authorities and relevant sectors in maintaining, preserving, and promoting the cultural values of ethnic minorities. Building and encouraging scientific research projects on preserving the cultural identity at the local level is crucial to creating a suitable environment for promoting the value of traditional costumes and introducing them to the community. Particularly, information and knowledge about costumes should be incorporated into the school curriculum to help students recognize and honor the beauty of traditional ethnic costumes. This aids in transmitting and inheriting the traditional cultural values to the younger generation, contributing to the preservation and appreciation of the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities.

### 2.2.2 Solutions for utilization

Each ethnic group in Vietnam has its own unique traditional costume, with distinct beauty that embodies the values of their traditional culture. Costumes serve as a means of identification among different ethnic groups living together in the same region.

Currently, traditional costumes of various ethnic groups have undergone changes, and many of them have lost the cultural essence of their traditional attire, particularly among smaller ethnic groups or those living in culturally diverse areas. The traditional costumes of the Dao people in Trung Minh commune have also experienced rapid transformations. Therefore, it is essential to carry out the preservation of traditional costumes.

Firstly, Party committees, government authorities, and local administrations need to enhance awareness-raising efforts to help people recognize the value of using traditional costumes. Encourage ethnic groups to wear traditional costumes when participating in local competitions and festivals. Appropriate authorities should document and capture images of traditional costumes worn by ethnic groups in specific circumstances, such as farming activities, festive occasions, and spiritual rituals, to provide reference materials for restoration efforts. In addition to the Tuyen Quang Provincial Museum, it is also necessary to build a traditional house in Trung Minh commune to exhibit cultural products of the local ethnic groups. Organizing exhibitions and displays, and introducing the traditional costumes of the community will help them understand the significance of these costumes and encourage regular use in daily life and work. Additionally, this will provide valuable information and knowledge for researchers to study and learn about ethnic cultures. The traditional house

should have a dedicated space to exhibit the traditional costumes of the Dao people, ensuring the preservation of their cultural value over time, even in the face of market-driven changes.

It is important to focus on building websites to promote and introduce traditional costumes, connecting them with the promotion of ethnic minority cultures. Sharing videos, photos, and managing various social media channels such as Facebook, Zalo, TikTok can help raise awareness about the Dao ethnic culture.

Encouraging students in boarding ethnic schools throughout the province to wear traditional costumes when attending classes and during school festivals is crucial. Using traditional costumes during important events, festivals, and significant life milestones will contribute to strengthening and enhancing the awareness of preserving the cultural values of the ethnic community. The support and encouragement from the state and local authorities, along with policies that promote production, will help foster a stronger sense of love, attachment, and responsibility among the ethnic groups in preserving traditional costumes. Furthermore, this will stimulate their creativity in producing brocade weaving products such as scarves, handkerchiefs, pillowcases, brocade bags, and decorative items for shoes and sandals. These products can serve both daily life purposes and contribute to the market supply for community tourism and cultural tourism, promoting overall tourism development.

### 2.2.3 Solutions concerning human factors

The Dao community in Trung Minh commune consists of two main branches: Dao Lo Gang and Dao Tien, along with other ethnic groups, collectively creating a diverse and culturally rich traditional living environment. The best way to preserve traditional costumes is through mass media, community activities, family and compatriots meetings, etc.

Tuyen Quang province possesses numerous advantages due to its rich cultural heritage and longstanding traditions. Additionally, the province is home to universities and colleges specializing in cultural management. These institutions provide in-depth training in cultural management activities and equip cultural officers with the necessary knowledge for their work. This allows them to share and implement the best solutions for managing overall cultural affairs and preserving the traditional costumes of the Dao people in Trung Minh, while promoting the positive values of the Dao people's traditional culture.

Close and regular coordination between the cultural department and cultural centers with village-level activities is crucial. Cultural officers should be well-equipped with comprehensive knowledge and deep understanding of related fields such as architecture and language. They need to be passionate about their profession, possess practical knowledge, and actively participate in on-site surveys to promptly propose effective solutions for cultural movements and activities at the local level.

The state needs to ensure budgetary support to develop human resources in cultural management. This includes employment policies and attracting talented individuals to work at the local level, especially young professionals. Raising awareness among the Dao people in Trung Minh commune about the importance of traditional costumes should also be carried out comprehensively and extensively through widespread dissemination.

Cultural officers in villages and communes should share the

positive values of the ethnic group to enhance ethnic pride and encourage community members to actively participate in preserving traditional costumes. To achieve this, the Party committees and local authorities need to:

Implement coordination, unity, and consistency among relevant levels and sectors to ensure the preservation and promotion of the cultural value of traditional costumes among the Dao people. Additionally, it is necessary to establish appropriate incentives for individuals, organizations, and units involved in this work.

Therefore, the coordination between Party committees, the state, local authorities, and the Dao community in Trung Minh commune is crucial in the preservation of traditional costumes and ethnic culture. Cultural officers have been proactive in disseminating and promoting the image of traditional costumes, as well as preserving and developing the cultural identity of the community. They have also collaborated with training institutions and established embroidery, weaving, and sewing clubs for the younger generation in the community. Through these efforts, they help the Dao people understand the value of traditional costumes and maintain the practice of using them in daily life, important family events, and ethnic festivals.

Preserving traditional culture alongside tourism development is a long-term and sustainable direction for the locality. Encouraging and creating conditions for the development of traditional handicrafts require local authorities to collaborate with businesses to find outlets for products and plan traditional craft sales areas in tourist destinations throughout the region. As a result, the traditional costumes of the Dao people, particularly in Trung Minh commune, will be used more frequently by local residents, leaving a positive impression on domestic and international tourists and contributing to the motivation for tourism development in the area.

### 3. Conclusion

The traditional costumes of the Dao people in general, and those in Trung Minh commune, Yen Son district, Tuyen Quang province, have undergone various changes. These changes have occurred in different historical contexts and over time, while still preserving the fundamental essence. This is the law of the combination between tradition and modernity. Preserving the traditional costumes of the Dao people in Trung Minh commune requires close and effective collaboration among the Dao community, cultural management officers, local authorities, and scientific researchers. Effective solutions are needed in terms of economy, culture, and education to improve the material and spiritual lives of the Dao people. Additionally, regular awareness campaigns are necessary to ensure the long-term preservation of cultural values, including the traditional costumes of the Dao people in Trung Minh commune, Yen Son district, Tuyen Quang province.

### 4. Acknowledgement

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