

IMPLEMENTING THE NAXI ETHNIC CLOTHING ELEMENTS IN MODERN OUTFIT DESIGNS

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ABSTRACT

China's ancient ethnic minority clothes contain remarkable cultural elements, and among its treasures is the unique Naxi dress, the nation's oldest-standing traditional ethnic clothing. This study analyses the traditional Naxi clothing's structure, colour, fabric, motif characteristics, and accessories. These studies specify traditional Naxi clothing as the primary goal, which is fashioned in contemporary ways. Through an investigation of clothing composition and culture, the four main elements that constitute Naxi costumes should be applied to contemporary clothes. Firstly, the term "variability" designates a distinct style that differs in appearance depending on the way it is dressed. Secondly, the term 'colour contrast' denotes a high level of visual contrast. Third, 'material difference' integrates various materials into one. Fourth, 'symbolic meaning' provides meaning to the wearer. As a consequence of this research, two modern clothing outfits were created with the implication of the unique character of Naxi costume clothes as a fashion design product, based on the traditional cultural characteristics of the Naxi people. By integrating components of traditional Naxi clothing and emphasising innovation, this study investigates and offers novel ideas for contemporary clothing design while simultaneously preserving traditional cultural elements for future generations.

Keywords: Naxi people, Naxi traditional costumes, cultural elements, modern appeal

INTRODUCTION

Clothing is gradually formed through the long history of human development (Pangayan et al., 2019), is the product of human society and civilization. The changes in mainstream culture in the historical period can be viewed from the inheritance of Chinese costume culture. The advent of modernization has led to significant advancements in the realm of clothing, prompting customers to increasingly prioritise the style, design, and visual attributes of clothing as a means of enhancing their emotional wellness (Qurashi, 2020). In the present era,

a notable trend in the realm of fashion involves the incorporation of distinctive elements from diverse ethnic minorities into contemporary clothing designs (Ye & Lu, 2023; Chen 2016; Zou, 2019). This practise serves to revitalise and introduce these ethnic cultures into the mainstream consumer market, thereby augmenting the range of clothing preferences and enhancing consumer satisfaction

As a minority ethnic group in China, the Naxi have their own unique character that remains to be investigated in terms of the cultural essence and heritage of Naxi clothing. As a result, in order to advance the essence of Naxi culture and art and further the development of Naxi society, it becomes a research objective to enhance the allure of traditional Naxi dress and art (Wang, 2014). As a result, the incorporation of Naxi cultural motifs into modern or contemporary apparel design has emerged as a focal point and a source of innovation for stakeholders seeking to assess the distinctive aesthetic and cultural significance of Naxi while also conforming to current fashion trends. Consequently, due to the ethnic, artistic, and structural attributes of Naxi clothing, it is possible and potentially viable to incorporate it into the fashion industry as Naxi-inspired outfit.

EXTRACTION OF NAXI ELEMENTS

In order to gain support and interest from current youth, it is imperative to incorporate functional, comfortable, and fashionable clothing enhancements into Naxi-inspired outfits (Lei, 2023). This study places emphasis on the analysis and extraction of traditional Naxi clothing art elements, such as craftsmanship, style, deconstruction, fabric, colour, and pattern, in relation to so-called Naxi-inspired clothing. Based on the examination of ethnic aspects, the adaptation and innovative application of Naxi ethnic elements in current clothing design is shown in terms of design, fashion techniques, innovation, and symbolic expression.

Extraction of style structure elements

Findings from field research show that the Naxi style of clothing is simple, flexible, allows free movement, and easy to put on. This must be implemented into Naxi-inspired outfits intended for the general public's daily use. As determined by this research, the benefit of Naxi-inspired outfits is that it incorporates the fundamental qualities of Naxi garments for public display.

Extraction of Fabric elements

Additionally, geographical elements impact Naxi clothing. The Naxi, who inhabit predominantly agricultural regions, favor long-sleeved dresses adorned with high and fitted collars. The women's dress is more layered, hefty, and wears a unique sheepskin scarf than men's clothes, because Naxi women must do agricultural work and care for the household. Further, the environment of the unique natural area restricts the selection of apparel fabrics. The Naxi typically wear clothing made of cowhide, sheepskin, and cotton wool (also known as handmade woven cotton, 土棉布).

In consideration of the design's pleasing and appear attributes and the extracted fabric features, imitation suede is preferred over traditional cowhide due to its accessibility and smoothness. The wool sheep was substituted with fleece of comparable composition, which was comparatively lighter and easy to be carry on by the youth of today. Knitted fabric, which is more comfortable and wrinkle-resistant while also being more skin-friendly, has supplanted thick cotton fabric in this research clothing apparel. In addition, contemporary design is

integrated with the selection of cutting-edge fabric weaving technology to advance the overall artistic of cultural integration in a more deliberate and comprehensive manner. The fabrics used to create the overall feeling of the Naxi-inspired outfits are shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Selection of fabric elements & extraction

Extraction of colour elements

Colours that are revered by the Naxi community include red, black, cream-white, and Tibetan blue. As a result, the predominant hues in traditional Naxi attire are red, black, creamy white, and Tibetan blue. Each colour has its own context; for example, black is worn by men to signify their nobility and by women to represent their beauty. A creamy white robe paired with a deep red vest for women's apparel symbolises genuine beauty and purity; the colour red is symbolic of good fortune and prosperity.

In order to create contemporary garments infused with Naxi elements, traditional hues are blended with the developing hues of the Blue Moon Valley waters, including aqua blue (which signifies serenity) and peacock green (which represents life according to the botanical palette), to emphasise the significance of the original hues of traditional Naxi apparel and current trend colours (See Figure 2).

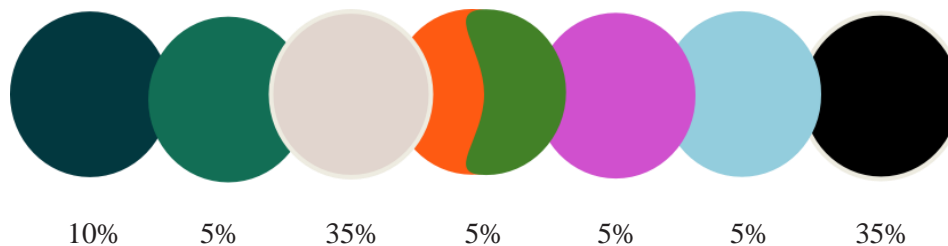


Figure 2. Selection of colour elements & extraction

Extracting the Seven Star Disc embroidery elements

The seven-star disc adornment on the sheepskin scarf symbolises the calm diligence and laboriousness of Naxi women. The seven stars, which are a significant part of the Naxi people's identity, are utilised as the primary component of the inventive and elegant design in order to artistically interpret the concept and symbolise the optimistic attitude of the Naxi people (refer to Figure 3).

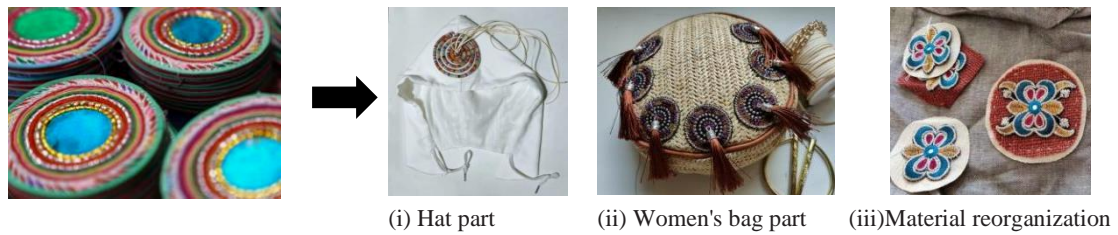


Figure.3 Selection of decoration seven-star disk elements & extraction

Extraction of patterned decorative elements

The elements of ethnic clothing cannot be separated from the meaning and artistry of the motifs that decorate it. In daily wear, patterns are categorized into single and continuous patterns, while the pattern making process requires subtraction and refinement. In the research, the characteristic embroidery, appliqué technique and *Dongba* characteristics are extracted from the pattern, and modernized, and then sewn on the garment body, cuffs and hem of the trousers, which are matched with the clothes to show the ethnic culture and tradition (See Figure 4).

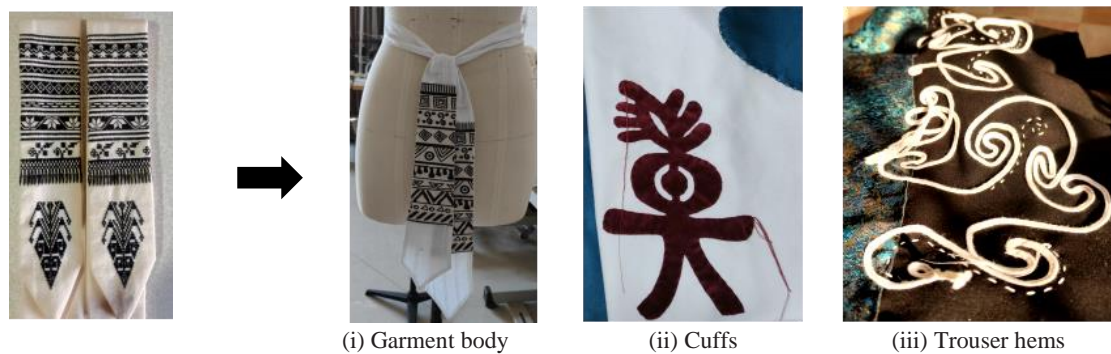


Figure. 4 Selection of pattern decoration elements & extraction

Extraction of decorative elements for trims

Naxi attire is predominantly composed of dark-colored fabric adorned with floral motifs that are delineated at the edges. To emphasise the structural elements of the costume, contrast techniques and the use of vibrant hues predominate in the colour scheme. As an illustration, the Yongning "Nari" dress, which is an offshoot of the Naxi dress, is the sole Naxi parquet dress and a stunning example. The modern design of this study incorporates this ornamental technique onto the collar region of women's blouses and the lining of men's headwear. (See Figure. 5).



Figure. 5 Selection of trim decoration elements & extraction

Extraction of silver & beadwork elements

Beads and ornaments in metallic silver that contrast with the fundamental hues of Naxi attire not only enhance its visual appeal but also serve as symbols of status and order. Nonetheless, contemporary apparel incorporates this ornament's singularity; the design incorporates flat needle embroidery that conceals the tassels and superimposes the disc on the fabric. This renders the ideal amalgamation of various styles and materials more ornamental and inventive (Refer to Figure 6).

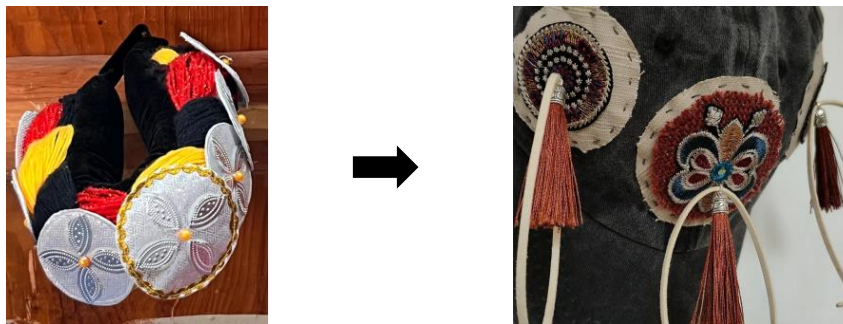


Figure. 6 Selection of silver, bead decoration elements & extraction

INNOVATIVE DESIGN OF MODERNISED NAXI CLOTHING

The main goal of the design aesthetic for this collection of apparel is the fusion of contemporary and traditional elements. As a result, contemporary casual clothing predominantly incorporates representative elements such as Chinese collars, pan buckles, technological fabrics, and new techniques, which are then combined and reorganised.

The basic colour of the seven-star disc is transformed into the form of water ripples, and its elemental qualities are reflected in contemporary sportswear. The structure of the style is delineated through curved lines, the woman's top is trimmed to a length just below the waist, thereby casting a shadow over her skin, and the overall aesthetic is diminished in proportion. Furthermore, a patchwork design featuring a combination of white and diverse hues is incorporated to enhance the dress's aesthetic appeal (see Figure. 7)



Figure. 7 Naxi clothing modern innovation design

INNOVATIVE CLOTHING INTEGRATED PRACTICE

Comprehensive clothing practice production includes three aspects: i) clothing CAD structure board production, ii) blank samples and iii) ready-to-wear production, accessories design and production, all three at the same time, and finally complete a series of Naxi clothing elements and modern clothing design combined with the innovative design of men's and women's clothing, and according to the overall effect of tailoring and production of the works (See Figure 8 and Figure 9).

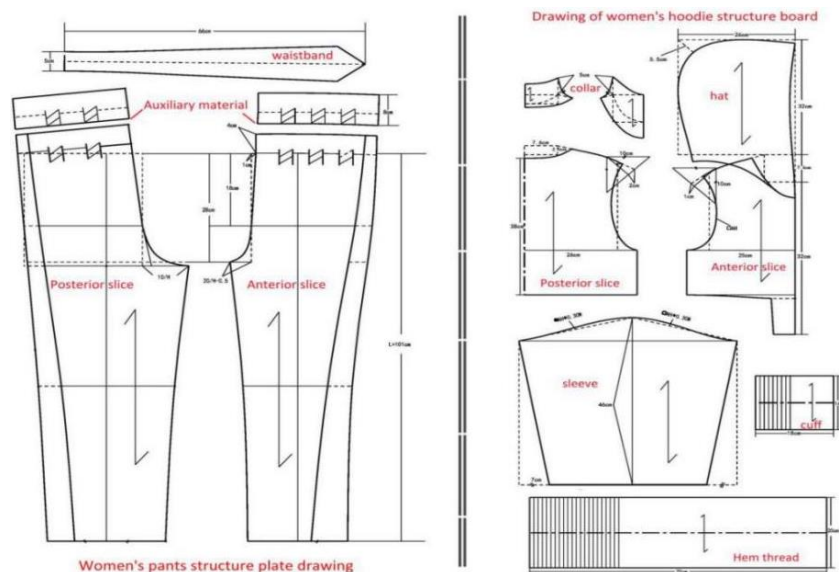


Figure 8. Women's clothing structure template making chart

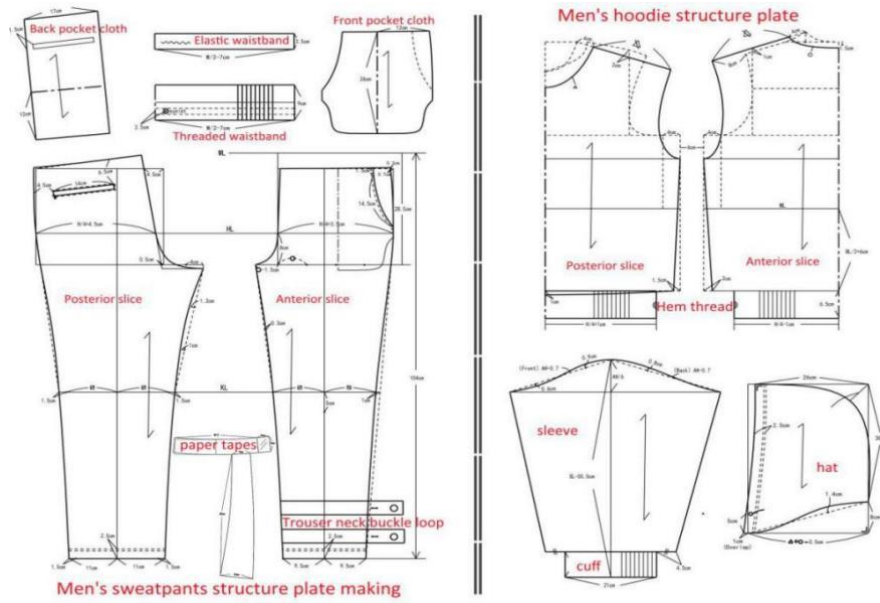
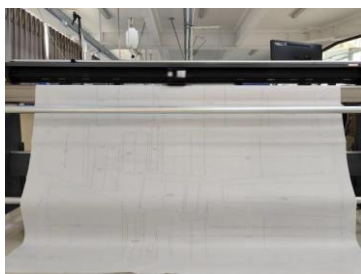


Figure 9. Men's clothing structure template making chart

Grey fabric sample cutting & sewing process

Initially, conduct an observation and analysis of the designed style's structure, including its outline, piece shape, size, and overall impact. Subsequently, prepare blanks comprising various textures and iron them flat. Lay the drawn and printed structural samples onto the blanks, delineate the cutting lines, and proceed to cut out the garment samples. Sew the constituent parts together and assemble them into a physical sample garment. Lastly, position the sample garment on a model and align the marking lines at the position (Refer to Figure 10).



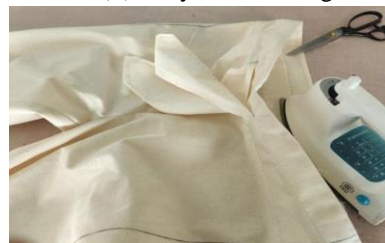
(i) Paper pattern printing



(ii) Grey cloth cutting



(iii) Grey fabric sewing process



(iv) Grey fabric ironing process

Figure. 10 Grey fabric cutting & sewing process

Garment Sewing Process

First of all, lay each piece of fabric of different color's & materials flat on the table; Arrange the structural samples regularly on top of fabrics and outline the lines along the edges of the outer contour, this step should be fine and error-free, after all, it will affect the cutting of the garments at a later stage; Test the fabrics, cut and finish according to the drawings; combine with the quality requirements of the ready-to-wear garment process, make the whole set of series of garments in accordance with the standards and iron and correct the garments to adjust the effect. (See Figure 11 and Figure 12).



Figure.11 Hand-pieced fabric



Figure. 12 Pattern design sewing process

ACCESSORY DESIGN AND FABRICATION

Steps for sewing handbags and backpacks

After producing the series of garments, the author has to complete the design and finished product of the matching accessories for the garments at the same time. The first step of the bag is to handcraft the disc embroidery part of the seven-star embroidery. The second step is to cut the fabrics according to the contour lines of the accessory structure sample; the third step is to fit the embroidery pieces to the colour-matching fabrics and hand sew; the fourth step is to weave the bag straps with leather strips; finally, the finished parts are assembled and sewn into the finished product and the effect is displayed (See Figure.13).



Figure 13. Embroidery Bag design with Naxi elements display

Hat embroidery and sewing

The hat making process of this research is in order of preparing auxiliary materials, making creative seven-star discs, sketching embroidery pattern line drawing, hand embroidering flower pattern, sewing embellishment decorations, and ironing and shaping. Due to the different types of hats for men and women, the production process is also different in complexity and simplicity (see Figure 14).



Figure 14. Embroidery Cap design display

SERIES OF CLOTHING WORKS SHOW

The innovative clothing style of this series is the seven-star disc shape selected as the decorative element of Naxi shawl, which is abstracted and deformed in design, dividing the clothing structure into irregular curves; the clothing process partly adopts the Japanese quilting (拼布) process, which splices different colours and materials together, which is both decorative and highlights the characteristics of the colour cascade.

Cotton thread hemming is added to the edges of each different coloured fabric, and flat-needle embroidery and tassels are used to enhance the visual three-dimensionality, due to

the fact that the seven-star disc embellished with whiskers represents the light of the stars. This multi-coloured division method was mainly used for the body and sleeve parts of men's and women's tops. Subsequently, the disc embroidery process was used as a decoration for the trouser hem motif, which is more innovative and interesting than the original body embroidery (See Figure 16 and Figure 17).



Figure. 16 Clothing Front Effect Show (Hooded Show)



Figure. 17 Indoor men's and women's combination clothing shooting effect show

CONCLUSION

In fashion design, traditional Chinese culture is an indispensable source of inspiration (He & Wang, 2008). Elements including fabric, craft, structure, colour, pattern, and pattern, as well as traditional Naxi clothing components, must be harmonised with modern aesthetics and design principles to produce innovative contemporary clothing designs. Traditional elements incorporated into fashion design not only aid in the advancement of the indigenous culture, but also serve to expose the younger generation to traditional values via the mainstream of contemporary clothing design. The study's findings indicate that designers must understand the essence of Naxi costume elements, as well as the functional needs and artistic tastes of today's youth, in order to combine traditional and modern elements harmoniously and produce clothing designs that blend together to show the beauty of traditional culture and the attractiveness of current trends. It is intended that this research would have ramifications for clothing designers, particularly in terms of providing innovative ideas for designers who want to produce designs influenced by specific cultures that correlate to current fashion trends. As a result, developing a strong, deep, and harmonious relationship between ethnic and culturally inspired clothing and those who wear it is critical for enhancing ethnic group identity, meeting consumer desires and tastes, assisting in the continuation of traditional crafts, and providing opportunities for the development of the local fashion industry.

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