

Research article

การวิจัยคุณค่าทางสุนทรียภาพของเครื่องแต่งกายชนชาติตุ๋เจีย
เพื่อเสริมสร้างความแข็งแกร่งให้กับสัญลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมในอำเภอสิ่วจู่
Research of Aesthetic Value for Enhancing Tujia Ethnic Costumes
as a Cultural Symbol in Shizhu County

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บทคัดย่อ

การก่อตัว การเปลี่ยนแปลง และการพัฒนาของเครื่องแต่งกายชนชาติตุ๋เจียขึ้นอยู่กับปัจจัยต่าง ๆ เช่นสภาพแวดล้อมทางธรรมชาติ วิธีการผลิต และประวัติศาสตร์ทางการเมืองที่แตกต่างกัน ตลอดจนปัจจัยด้านสิ่งแวดล้อมของมนุษย์ เช่น ประเพณี วิถีชีวิต ความเชื่อทางศาสนา และลักษณะประจำชนชาติในท้องถิ่น ดังนั้นการศึกษาเครื่องแต่งกายชนชาติตุ๋เจียจึงช่วยให้เกิดความเข้าใจ และวิเคราะห์วัฒนธรรมและสุนทรียภาพอันเป็นเอกลักษณ์ของชนชาติตุ๋เจียได้อย่างชัดเจนยิ่งขึ้น ในขณะเดียวกัน ยังเป็นข้อมูลทางศิลปะที่สำคัญสำหรับการวิจัยวัฒนธรรมของชนชาติตุ๋เจียอีกด้วย การวิจัยนี้ใช้วิธีการวิจัยเชิงเอกสาร การลงพื้นที่ภาคสนาม และการวิจัยแบบสหวิทยาการเพื่อส่งเสริมการแลกเปลี่ยนความรู้ระหว่างสาขาวิชาต่าง ๆ และกระตุ้นความคิดสร้างสรรค์ ตลอดจนใช้ทฤษฎีสุนทรียศาสตร์ทั้ง 7 มิติของดิอริอียมาเป็นเครื่องมือในการวิเคราะห์คุณค่าเชิงสุนทรียศาสตร์ มิติทั้งเจ็ดนี้ผสมผสานประสบการณ์ทางอารมณ์และปัจจัยข้อเท็จจริงเฉพาะ ซึ่งเหมาะสมมากสำหรับการศึกษาคู่เจียที่ไม่มีสคริปต์ของตนเอง โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์คุณค่าทางสุนทรียศาสตร์และความหมายแฝงของเครื่องแต่งกายชนชาติตุ๋เจียในท้องถิ่น เพิ่มความแข็งแกร่งด้านอัตลักษณ์ให้กับเครื่องแต่งกายของชนชาติตุ๋เจีย ตลอดจนเป็นการอนุรักษ์และสืบทอดวัฒนธรรมเครื่องแต่งกายในท้องถิ่น จากผลการวิจัยชี้ให้เห็นว่าชนชาติตุ๋เจียในท้องถิ่นยังคงรักษาประเพณีการแต่งงานประเพณีทางเกษตรกรรม และมรดกทางวัฒนธรรมของตุ๋เจียแบบดั้งเดิมไว้และสามารถพบเครื่องแต่งกายที่สอดคล้องกันได้ในพื้นที่ทางวัฒนธรรมเหล่านี้ โดยแบ่งออกเป็นชุดน้ำคาง เครื่องแต่งกายสำหรับผู้สูงอายุ และเครื่องแต่งกายของฉินเหลี่ยงซึ่งเป็นมรดกทางวัฒนธรรม ดังนั้น การวิจัยนี้จะทำการวิเคราะห์เครื่องแต่งกายทั้งสามประเภทอย่างละเอียด โดยสรุปถอดความหมายแฝงและอัตลักษณ์ทางทัศนศิลป์ของเครื่องแต่งกายออกมาเป็นองค์ความรู้ใหม่เกี่ยวกับสัญลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรม

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คำสำคัญ: วัฒนธรรมเครื่องแต่งกาย คุณค่าทางสุนทรียศาสตร์ เอกลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรม สัญลักษณ์

Abstract

The formation, transformation, and development of Tujia ethnic costumes are influenced by various macro factors such as different natural environments, modes of production, and political histories. Additionally, they are shaped by local customs, religious beliefs, and ethnic characteristics, which are cultural factors. Therefore, studying Tujia ethnic costumes aids in a clearer understanding and analysis of Tujia ethnic culture and its unique aesthetics. It also serves as significant artistic material for research on Tujia culture.

The present study employs literature analysis, field investigation, and interdisciplinary research as its methodologies, to promote the exchange of knowledge between different disciplines and stimulate innovative thinking. While utilizing John Dewey's seven dimensions of aesthetic theory as a research tool for analyzing aesthetic values, these seven dimensions combine emotional experience and specific factual factors, which are very suitable for the study of Tujia without their own national characters. The objective is to analyze the aesthetic value and connotations of the local Tujia clothing in order to enhance the recognition of local Tujia clothing culture, which is beneficial for the protection and inheritance of this cultural heritage. The findings reveal that the local Tujia community continues to uphold their original marriage customs, agricultural festival traditions, and cultural relics associated with the Tusi culture, with corresponding attire identified within these cultural practices. Specifically, these include the Dew Suit, the attire of the elderly, and the relics of Qin Liangyu. Consequently, this study conducts a thorough analysis of these three types of attire, summarizing and extracting their intrinsic connotations and specific visual characteristics, thus contributing to new knowledge as cultural symbols

Keywords: Costume Culture, Aesthetic Value, Cultural Recognition, Symbol

1. Introduction

The Tujia ethnic group is one of China's ancient and culturally developed minorities and is the only one among the minorities with populations exceeding one million that is not geographically situated in the border regions. The Tujia people refer to themselves as "Bi Zi Ka," meaning "indigenous people." They value hard work and a harmonious life (Li & Zhang, 2023). Lacking their own written script, Tujia culture relies on non-written media for recording and preserving cultural heritage, especially through costumes, decorations, and performances during significant cultural events such as festivals, rituals, and weddings (He, 2020). However, with changes in popular aesthetics and the industrialization of the costume industry, Tujia costumes have become increasingly distant from contemporary public life, largely surviving through cultural tourism efforts for protection and transmission. In Shizhu County, the protection and development of Tujia costumes face particular challenges due to geographical constraints and underdeveloped economic conditions.

Shizhu County is located in the southeastern part of Chongqing, China. It borders Lichuan City in Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture to the east, Pengshui Miao and Tujia Autonomous County to the south, Fengdu County to the southwest, Zhongxian County to the northwest, and Wanzhou District to the north. While surrounding regions have experienced rapid development in cultural industries and have gradually formed a complete cultural tourism chain, Shizhu County faces challenges such as limited sunlight, significant diurnal temperature variation, and frequent adverse weather conditions, which constrain its tourism industry. Consequently, the county has preserved a substantial amount of original cultural materials and characteristics, making it a highly valuable area for Tujia cultural research (Figure 1).



Figure 1 ShiZhu County General Picture.

Source: <http://www.45win.com/forum.php?mod=viewthread&tid=1174843>

On the other hand, Feng and Ye (2021) highlighted the difficulties in researching and preserving Tujia ethnic costume culture. They noted that the changes in Tujia costume culture are influenced by four factors: the natural environment, social environment, modern technology, and the difficulty of integrating traditional costumes into the daily lives of modern Tujia people. Currently, theoretical research on Tujia costumes primarily focuses on the evolution of costume development, basic characteristics, cultural connotations, and innovative development. Practical research, on the other hand, centers on how to market Tujia costumes, such as through professional attire and commercial performance costumes. Finally, they emphasized that the core of preserving Tujia costume culture is to deeply explore its cultural connotations and to protect the spiritual value of Tujia costume culture.

In summary, both theoretical and practical research on the cultural connotations and spiritual value of Tujia ethnic costumes inherently serve a protective function. Therefore, the focus should be on identifying the unique cultural connotations within these costumes and developing distinctive symbols to help Tujia costume culture find more viable development paths. This study conducts an in-depth cultural analysis of Tujia costumes in Shizhu County, examining their aesthetic value and specific visual characteristics through the lens of related geographic backgrounds, customs, beliefs, relics, and aesthetic theories.

2. Research Objectives

2.1 To investigate the cultural meanings and historical significance of Tujia marriage customs, agricultural festival traditions, and the Tusi culture in Shizhu County.

2.2 To explore the design, symbolism, and cultural importance of the Dew Suit, elderly attire, and the Mang Feng Robe of Qin Liangyu, as specific to the Tujia people in Shizhu County.

2.3 To analyze the aesthetic value and visual characteristics of Tujia clothing in Shizhu County, with the aim of enhancing their recognition and reinforcing their role as cultural symbols

3. Literature review

3.1 Cultural Connotations of Tujia Costumes

On the Cultural Connotations of Tujia Costumes (Wang, 2009), four primary carriers of Tujia costume cultural connotations were defined, and the importance of studying these connotations was emphasized. This study serves as a significant reference for research on Tujia costume culture. The four carriers are: social development, ethnic cultural exchange, aesthetic preferences, and religious beliefs. To explore the intrinsic value of Tujia costumes, one should consider these four carriers.

Later, Dr. Yang Ting, in her work "Research on the Aesthetic Culture of the Tujia Ethnic Group," proposed conducting an aesthetic study of Tujia culture. Her research integrated and analyzed the Tujia culture from different regions, focusing on aspects such as historical context, political economy, customs and beliefs, folk arts, and Tujia intangible cultural heritage (including stilted houses, brocade weaving, and music and dance). She employed a multidisciplinary approach that merges aesthetics, sociology, and anthropology to synthesize and summarize a significant academic resource on the aesthetic culture of the Tujia people.

However, the existing studies primarily focus on the macro-level cultural connotations of the Tujia ethnic group and lack research on the cultural connotations of Tujia clothing in Shizhu County, as well as unique documentation of the clothing culture in this specific region. Therefore, this study narrows the geographical scope to Shizhu County and focuses solely on the field investigation and analysis of Tujia clothing-related materials in this area. In addition, with local customs and culture as the core, the costume objects are focused on: women's wedding costumes related to marriage customs, the costumes of Qin Liangyu, an important figure related to Tusi culture, and the costumes of the elderly related to agricultural culture.

3.2 Innovations in Tujia Costume Design

In Research on Tujia Costume Elements and Fashion Design (Zhu, 2017), a valuable attempt was made to study the integration of traditional Tujia costume elements with contemporary fashion design. This study was divided into two parts: the first part analyzed the forms and characteristics of Tujia costumes, while the second part combined popular elements from fashion design to infuse traditional Tujia costumes with a sense of modernity and style.

In contrast, Professor Huang Zimian, in the social science planning project *Application of Modern Dyeing Techniques in Tujia Costume Design* (Huang, 2017), introduced additional variables. Huang proposed that the innovation and development of Tujia costumes should focus on distinctiveness. Modern dyeing techniques, such as digital printing, reverse printing, and engraving printing, were applied to transform traditional patterns into visually dynamic high-resolution designs. This approach aims to meet contemporary aesthetic demands while maintaining the original cultural and ethnic significance of the patterns.

The researcher believes that innovation in clothing cannot be separated from the inheritance of original culture. In the aforementioned studies, contemporary craft techniques were extensively used as tools for clothing innovation. However, there remains a lack of research on the clothing of the elderly and the attire of Qin Liangyu within Tujia clothing, along with an insufficient analysis of their cultural and symbolic connotations. Therefore, this study also aims to fill the gap in this area of research.

3.3 Clothing Cultural Symbols and Consumption

In semiotics, the interdisciplinary theory of symbolic consumption is an important concept that integrates cultural consumption with consumer class dynamics. This theory, introduced by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (Zhang, 2021), examines how cultural and symbolic goods are consumed differently by various social classes. In his book, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Bourdieu investigated the fashion industry in Paris during the 1960s. He concluded that fashion creators and marketers primarily cater to the needs and tastes of the upper-class consumers, whose preferences then influence the aesthetic tendencies of lower social classes. Therefore, the researcher concludes that the essence of cultural consumption lies in "symbols." It is a process in which the aesthetic preferences and needs of a minority group are satisfied, gradually influencing broader aesthetic trends. Consequently, this study identifies that, in addition to examining the visual aesthetic value of the clothing itself, it is more critical to investigate and analyze the underlying reasons for the creation of these visual elements. This includes the cultural connotations of the clothing, as well as the environment and human factors associated with it. Only through this comprehensive analysis can clothing be summarized as a cultural symbol.

4. Research Scope

This study is segmented by regional culture and delves into areas where the Tujia ethnic group resides in Shizhu County, as well as locations that preserve Tujia cultural history, such as landmarks and villages. The relevant scope of the study includes:

4.1 Scope of Content:

(1) Study of Tujia Cultural Context in Shizhu County: This involves the examination and narration of the origins, development, and historical context of Tujia culture in Shizhu County, providing a background overview of the local Tujia community. (2) Study of Tujia Costumes in Shizhu County: This includes the analysis of visual form characteristics and aesthetic value of traditional attire worn by the elderly, Lushui costumes, and Qin Liangyu costumes within the Tujia community in Shizhu County.

4.2 Geographical Scope:

Chongqing Shizhu Tujia Autonomous County. (1) Intangible Cultural Heritage Preservation Base - Wanshou Ancient Village. (2) Chinese Historical and Cultural Town - Xituo Ancient Town. (3) First Batch of Traditional Chinese Villages - Huanglong Ancient Village

4.3 Temporal Scope:

(1) Tusi System Management Period: Documents and materials from the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) to the early Qing Dynasty (1726). (2) Modern and Contemporary Period: Academic publications, local chronicles, and primary sources from field investigations in Shizhu County since the formal recognition of the Tujia ethnic group as a minority in 1956 to the present.

5. Research methods

5.1 Literature Review

Literature represents a unity of content, form, and medium. It is not restricted by time or space and allows for the examination of necessary research materials. Additionally, literature does not present issues of reactivity or physical interaction, providing researchers with ample time and environment to read and analyze the required materials. In this study, relevant documents on Tujia culture and Tujia costumes are collected and reviewed to summarize and analyze previous research findings, serving as foundational data for the study.

5.2 Field Investigation

The fieldwork method, proposed by the British anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski, involves unstructured participant observation (Zhang, Liu & Wu. 2018). This research approach emphasizes that anthropologists should immerse themselves in the daily lives of local people, integrating as fully as possible to conduct comprehensive observations of their culture. To minimize subjectivity in the research, this study will primarily involve on-site observations and recordings to collect primary cultural data from three locations: the Intangible Cultural Heritage Preservation Base of Wanshou Ancient Village, the Chinese Historical and Cultural Town of Xituo Ancient Town, and the First Batch of Traditional Chinese Villages, Huanglong Ancient Village.

5.3 Interdisciplinary Research

The interdisciplinary research method integrates theories and methods from multiple disciplines to address complex problems, thereby generating new knowledge systems. In this study, the analysis of the background of Shizhu County employs sociology and history for a comprehensive review and analysis. For the analysis of costume culture, it combines theories from costume design, semiotics, and aesthetic systems in philosophy to develop a novel aesthetic value system.

5.4 The research process is divided into the following five steps:

Review and Analysis: Examine relevant literature, papers, and research projects to obtain foundational research materials and develop a plan and content for field investigations.

Fieldwork Preparation: Prepare the necessary tools and documents for fieldwork, including conducting on-site photography, sketching, and note-taking to gather investigative data.

Data Organization: Organize the collected field data into categories such as images, tables, and textual data.

Comprehensive Analysis: Analyze the literature and fieldwork data using semiotic and aesthetic value theories to conduct a thorough analysis of aesthetic value and characteristics.

Data Synthesis and Reporting: Compile and summarize the research materials and findings to develop a new aesthetic value knowledge system, and write the academic paper.

5.5 Research tool

Theory of Aesthetic Experience (John Dewey)

John Dewey (October 20, 1859 – June 1, 1952) was a renowned American philosopher, educator, psychologist, and a leading figure in pragmatism. He was also one of the founders of functional psychology and modern pedagogy (Song, 2014). In her doctoral dissertation, Liu (2020) used Richard Shusterman's analytical framework as a reference point to organize Dewey's theory of aesthetic experience into seven dimensions: (1) Aesthetic Pleasure; (2) Phenomenological Characteristics; (3) The Role of Concepts: Boundary Theory and Transformation Theory; (4) Perception and Knowledge; (5) Integrity; (6) Intensity of Sensation; and (7) Contemplation vs. Self-Forgetfulness.

The reason why this research uses Dewey's aesthetic theory is that it integrates many philosophies, psychology and sociology. Unlike other aesthetic theories, his aesthetic theory emphasizes experience, researcher's experience, and perception while respecting facts. The Tujia family do not have their own character, so they recorded the aesthetics and value of the nation in other forms instead of the text, including clothing. Clothing is a concrete object that can be viewed, but the relevant information about their culture in clothing can be deeply discovered by observing, experiencing, learning, etc. Therefore, Dewey's aesthetic theory is exactly a reasonable research tool for this research, especially with the seven dimensions extracted by Dr. Liu from a contemporary perspective, which can be used as a specific principle for analyzing the aesthetic value of this research.

6. Research Results

6.1 Tujia Ethnic Group's Unique Customs and Culture in Shizhu County

6.1.1 Marriage Customs and the "Crying Marriage" Ceremony

In Tujia marriage customs, individuals enjoy a relatively free choice in selecting their partners, with mountain songs and tree leaves serving as mediators for emotional communication between the couple. Traditional marriage customs are characterized by simplicity, where no financial demands are made, and no sedan chairs are used during the wedding. However, with the gradual influence of marriage practices from the Central Plains, marriage customs in Tujia communities started to evolve. Particularly after the Qing Dynasty's policy of integrating local governance with imperial administration, Tujia marriages largely adopted the "arranged by parents and matchmakers" system. The marriage process includes proposal, engagement,

and the wedding itself, with key rituals such as the proposal, setting the date, preparing wedding items, making dowries, the crying marriage ceremony, preparing beverages, fetching the bride, wedding rituals (including kneeling), disturbing the bridal chamber, tea ceremonies, and visiting the bride's family (Wang, 2016).

The "Crying Marriage" is a unique Tujia practice where brides express their emotions in a distinctive manner. This ritual reflects the bride's mixed feelings of anticipation and anxiety about marriage. Tujia youths often express their affection through singing mountain songs and then marry. The crying marriage involves specific "crying marriage songs." From a young age, girls learn these songs in preparation for their own crying marriage ceremony. During the ceremony, the bride recites crying marriage lyrics while friends and relatives from the village accompany her in weeping. The more sorrowful, touching, and heartfelt the crying, the more sincere the wishes for the marriage, symbolizing greater blessings for the union (Figure 2).



Figure 2 Crying for Wedding.

Source: "Great View of Tujia Culture"

6.1.2 Drum and Gong Performance Customs

The term "Shua Luogu," which translates to "drum and gong performance," refers to a folk art form practiced by the Tujia people. This tradition varies across different regions, with distinct instruments, performance settings, and names (Figure 3). For instance, in the eastern part of Sichuan Province, specifically in Dazhou, the local Tujia people refer to their drum and gong performances as "Hao Cao Luogu." This practice occurs in the farming fields of the Ba Mountain Gorge area in Xuanhan County. It involves the Tujia people playing drums and gongs while singing folk songs during agricultural activities such as sowing and harvesting. This musical form helps alleviate fatigue and boost morale, with the singing style often reflecting the dramatic elements of Sichuan opera.



Figure 3 Farming and Sacrifice.

Source: “Great View of Tujia Culture”

In Shizhu County, “Shua Luogu” (drum and gong performance) is a vibrant folk art used to enhance the atmosphere during festivals and celebrations. This traditional music, performed with small drums, large gongs, and cymbals, is integral to local events such as weddings, funerals, and the Spring Festival. Men in traditional Tujia attire perform these lively songs, which often include descriptions of daily life and nature, showcasing the Tujia people's deep respect and love for their surroundings (Li, 2021).

6.1.3 Tusi Historical Culture and Beliefs

The Tusi system in Shizhu County persisted through the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, only being abolished in 1949. Historical records such as the “Ma Clan Genealogy,” “Origins of the Ma Clan Genealogy,” “Shizhu Hall Gazetteer,” “Shizhu Local Chronicles,” and “Ma Clan Genealogy” indicate that the Tusi lineage in Shizhu originated from Fufeng, Shaanxi. The Tusi rulers were descendants of Ma Dinghu, a general from the Han Dynasty. During the Southern Song period, Ma Dinghu was appointed as the pacifier of Shizhu for his achievements in subduing the Wuxi tribes, and his descendants continued to hold this position and govern Shizhu for generations.

Qin Liangyu (1574–1648), from Zhongxian, Chongqing, neighboring Shizhu County, married the 13th Tusi of Shizhu, Ma Qiansheng, during the late Ming Dynasty. After Ma Qiansheng's death, she assumed the role of Tusi, defending against external threats and managing the local people. Qin Liangyu was the only female general recorded separately in the official historical annals of China. Artifacts related to Tusi culture and Qin Liangyu are displayed in the Shizhu County Tusi Exhibition Hall, located within the Wan Shou Ancient Village (Figure 4). Her battle armor and official attire (dragon and phoenix costume) are preserved and exhibited at the Chongqing Three Gorges Museum, with the phoenix pattern featured in the 2008 Beijing Olympics torchbearer uniforms (museum display materials). Thus, the attire of Qin Liangyu also represents a distinctive aspect of the female spirit specific to the Tujia people of Shizhu County



Figure 4 The Exhibition Hall of ShiZhu Chieftain.

Source: Photographed by researcher

6.1.4 Analysis of Shizhu County's Tujia Ethnic Customs and Culture

In the crying marriage customs, the bridal attire known as the Dew Suit is a significant garment in Tujia customs, symbolizing important aspects of marriage and embedded with extensive connotations related to weddings. The attire associated with agricultural practices represents the most life-oriented clothing of the Tujia people, with a focus on male dress, especially since the modern era, which has gradually introduced elderly clothing with distinctive local characteristics. This attire encompasses extensive connotations related to agriculture and festive celebrations.

In Tusi culture, the clothing of Qin Liangyu has been designated as a national-level cultural relic, particularly the Mang Feng Robe and armor, which are preserved in excellent condition at the Chongqing Three Gorges Museum. These garments are unique to the Tujia people of Shizhu County and contain connotations related to historical changes.

Therefore, the researcher will begin by examining the visual characteristics of these garments, analyzing the associated craftsmanship, techniques, and cultural meanings.

6.2 Shizhu County Tujia Ethnic Clothing: Visual Features and Significance

6.2.1 Bridal Attire - Dew Dress

The Dew Dress is worn by Tujia brides during their journey to their new home. It consists of a Dew Coat, a Dew Skirt, Dew Shoes, a Dew Headscarf (also known as Dew Hat), and a Dew Umbrella. According to tradition, the Dew Dress is delivered from the groom's family to the bride's home as part of the wedding customs (Figure 5).



Figure 5 The The LuShui Costume.

Source: Photographed by researcher

The Dew Coat is a quintessential representation of Tujia women's attire. Legend holds that it was a gift from the Bodhisattva Guanyin to Tujia brides for protection against demons, warding off evil, and bringing good fortune. The coat is long and voluminous, featuring a large collar, wide sleeves, and a flared hem. The front is embroidered with peony flowers, symbolizing wealth and beauty, or lily flowers, representing purity. The edges of the coat are trimmed with a green border accented with red, symbolizing good fortune and prosperity. The sleeve patterns are created using the "tiao hua" technique, where interconnected small cross-stitches form lines or squares that are then combined into designs of flowers, birds, fish, and insects (Wang, 2016).

The Dew Skirt, also known as the "Eight-Piece Silk Skirt," is named for its vertical panels of eight colors: red, orange, yellow, green, cyan, blue, purple, and white. It is a hallmark of Tujia women's traditional attire. Historical records, such as the Youyang Tongzhi, indicate that the Eight-Piece Silk Skirt was originally worn by Tujia shamans during rituals and later became the standard bridal wear after the "reformation of indigenous governance" (Figure 6). The skirt is made of silk, with patterns and decorations consistent with those of the Dew Coat. It preserves the style of the Yuan Dynasty, featuring intricate ruyi-shaped embroidery along the hem (Wang, 2016).



Figure 6 The Tujia Wizard with Eight-Pieces Skirt.

Source: "Great View of Tujia Culture"

Dew Shoes are meticulously crafted, with the shoe mouth decorated with "dog tooth" shapes created by a rolled-edge stitch. The shoe tops are typically made from cyan, blue, or pink silk, adorned with embroidery of various flowers, butterflies, bees, and auspicious symbols like dragons and phoenixes, mandarin ducks, or magpies, symbolizing marital bliss and good fortune. The Dew Umbrella is an exquisitely crafted red oiled paper umbrella, carried open in both sunny and rainy weather to shield from light and modesty. Wealthier families might also adorn the umbrella with silver or gold ornaments. The Dew Headscarf, or "Xi Pa" (also known as "Dream Scarf"), is a red silk square scarf worn on the head. Tujia folklore holds that a bride carrying this scarf into the wedding sedan will dream of exchanging heads with a fairy, signifying extraordinary beauty (Yang, 2011).

6.2.2 Elderly Attire

After the "reformation of indigenous governance," the clothing of elderly Tujia people in Shizhu County has diverged significantly from that of the younger generations, reflecting a greater emphasis on practicality and care. Elderly Tujia attire generally falls into two categories: everyday clothing and funeral attire. Everyday clothing is characterized by simpler colors, predominantly white, blue, and black. The sleeves are wide and short, reminiscent of traditional Tujia styles, and the overall appearance is more austere compared to the attire of younger adults. This clothing is often made by the elderly's children (Liu, 2007).

Long Robes: Elderly men typically wear long robes, influenced by Manchu and Han cultures. When wearing a long robe, they may also don a cotton low-neck vest (similar to a vest) over it. Their heads are wrapped with a white cloth scarf, approximately 2.67 to 3.33 meters long, coiled around the head and left hanging down the left side. The ends of the scarf are used to hold a tobacco pipe. The fabric of the robe is cotton in winter and single or layered fabric in other seasons. The robe features a low collar, diagonal front opening with right-side overlap, and straight front below the waist. The diagonal opening has fabric buttons, while the straight part may have buttons, all of which are traditional Chinese knot buttons. A belt is worn around the robe to secure items such as a cloth tobacco pouch, a cowhide tobacco pouch, or a bamboo-tipped copper pipe, and to keep the bottom of the robe secured at the waist, facilitating movement during walking and labor.

Cross-collar Jackets: Another traditional garment for elderly men is the cross-collar jacket, which is symmetrical and typically made from coarse cotton fabric (土布). This jacket is usually blue or green and features a waistband with a floral pattern bordered by white trim. Some elderly men wear this cross-collar jacket as an inner layer, topped with a full-front jacket. The full-front jacket has a right-side opening, a low collar, and a belt for holding a tobacco pipe. It is paired with wide trousers made of blue or green cotton fabric and white cloth waistbands (Luo, 2019).

Elderly Women's Attire: Elderly Tujia women also favor simple colors, often opting for blue or green cotton clothing with right-side openings. Their garments come in both collarless and low-collar styles, decorated with embroidered patterns at the cuffs, collars, and front edges.

Footwear: Elderly Tujia people share similar footwear habits with middle-aged individuals. During the early labor seasons (spring, summer, and autumn), they wear straw sandals or hemp shoes. In winter, they switch to fully-closed straw shoes and long socks, or self-made leather shoes with nails for better grip on snow (Figure 7). For everyday leisure, they originally wore hemp-woven sandals, which have since been replaced by simple cloth shoes, usually in blue or green.



Figure 7 The Tujia Old-Age Male.

Source: <https://www.meipian.cn/fnm4rc8>

6.2.3 Qin Liangyu's Ceremonial Attire

Phoenix Robe (Figure 8): Qin Liangyu's Phoenix Robe, a Ming Dynasty artifact of national significance, is crafted from yellow silk and adorned with intricate gold embroidery. Measuring 112 cm in length and 96.5 cm in sleeve length, the robe features a round collar and large sleeves, with a right-side opening—a hallmark of Han clothing. The robe is embroidered with a four-clawed dragon on the front and back, symmetrical phoenix patterns on the hem, and auspicious symbols such as longevity and prosperity. Both sleeves display phoenix and cloud patterns. Despite the prohibition on yellow attire for commoners since the Song Dynasty, Qin Liangyu was granted the privilege of wearing yellow as a high-ranking consort according to the Ming Dynasty's regulations. The robe is preserved at the Chongqing Three Gorges Museum, which also exhibits related cultural artifacts, including samples of the phoenix pattern, a commemorative T-shirt design from the 2008 Beijing Olympics, China Telecom recharge cards featuring Qin Liangyu, and a 1930s trademark from Shanghai's Tianfu Weaving Factory (Museum Collection Data).



Figure 8 The Dragon and Phoenix Robe of Qin LiangYu.

Source: Photographed by researcher

Armor (Figure 9): Qin Liangyu's Ming Dynasty armor, a national treasure, measures 162 cm in length and 113.5 cm in sleeve length. It includes a helmet, shoulder guards, a breastplate, a skirt, waist guards, and heart shields. Made of gilded brocade with blue satin trim, the armor features gilded bronze decorations and dragon motifs. The helmet is bronze with coral and peacock feathers. The heart shields are plain with gilt dragon patterns. This armor is displayed at the Chongqing Three Gorges Museum (Museum Collection Data).



Figure 9 The Armour of Qin LiangYu.

Source: Photographed by researcher

6.3 Analysis of Aesthetic Value in the Costume Culture of the Tujia Ethnic Group in Shizhu County

The previous two sections have analyzed the distinctive customs of Shizhu County and the unique attire associated with these customs, focusing on both their form and content. In this chapter, Dewey's theory of aesthetic experience will be applied to further analyze the aforementioned materials, aiming to obtain a deeper understanding of their aesthetic value (see Table 1).

Table 1 Tujia Costume Aesthetic Evaluation with Seven Factors.

Factors of Value	“The Dew Clothing” (Marriage Custom)	“Elderly Clothing” (Humanistic Care)	“The Qin Liangyu's Costume Relics” (History and Belief)
(1) Aesthetic Pleasure: Aesthetic pleasure refers to the individual psychological enjoyment derived from aesthetic stimuli.	Bright red / Richly embroidered decorations	Simple blue and dark navy colors	Bright red and imperial yellow, a royal color during the Ming Dynasty
(2) Phenomenological Characteristics: Phenomenology is characterized by its use of unconventional frameworks and structures to transcend traditional Western philosophical distinctions between the particular and the universal, and between phenomenon and essence.	Once worn by "shamans," the attire later evolved into wedding garments.	Worn during agricultural activities and celebrations.	Official robes and armor correspond to politics and warfare.
(3) The Role of Concepts: Theories of demarcation and transformation (Transformational Theory and Demarcational Theory) highlight the importance of concepts in art. Concepts guide the classification of art, emotional direction, functional zoning, and design methods.	The emotions reflect blessings of goodwill, as well as the reluctance and attachment of parents and family.	The emotions reflect care and concern, as well as filial piety towards the elderly.	The emotions reflect bravery and a steadfast commitment to protecting family and community members.
(4) Perception and Knowledge: According to aesthetic experience theory, perception is the most direct way for the public to engage with art, setting aside prior knowledge.	Perception of the Wedding Scene	Perception of the Agricultural Scene	Perception of Historical Changes
(5) Integrity: Experiencing the complete process of an aesthetic object is a crucial pathway to achieving an aesthetic appreciation.	Only by combining relevant customs can the aesthetics of clothing be reflected, and the	Only by combining relevant customs can the aesthetics of clothing be reflected, and the	The aesthetic approach of clothing depends on the description of the text and the

Factors of Value	“The Dew Clothing” (Marriage Custom)	“Elderly Clothing” (Humanistic Care)	“The Qin Liangyu's Costume Relics” (History and Belief)
	links between clothing emotions and cultural materials can be appreciated in the performance.	links between clothing emotions and cultural materials can be appreciated in the performance.	knowledge displayed by the museum.
(6) Intensity of Sensation: The intensity of sensation is an unquantifiable data point that needs to be recorded through genuine experiences with a specific work.	Each individual style has specific requirements and rules, which gives "female marriage" a strong sacredness and faith.	Soft and durable fabrics strengthen the emotion of "children's care for the elderly" represented in clothing.	The aesthetic intensity of clothing becomes strong through the quantification of embroidery technology and the yellow that can only be used by the royal family.
(7) Contemplation vs. Self-Forgetfulness: Contemplation refers to an entirely rational and objective approach to aesthetics through analysis, while self-forgetfulness involves abandoning rationality and self-control to fully immerse oneself in the experience.	The costumes combined with the "crying marriage" performance created the aesthetics of forgetting their knowledge and devoting themselves to the strong feelings of Tujia people about marriage.	The simple fabrics and decorations in the clothing created the aesthetics of forgetting their knowledge and feeling the strong humanistic care of the Tujia family.	The fabrics, colors, embroidery techniques and patterns in clothing have rich knowledge, so that the aesthetics can foster thinking and learning completely rationally.

Based on the analysis of the aesthetic dimensions in the table, it is evident that these three types of attire clearly embody the first four aesthetic values: they possess visual aesthetic pleasure, value through the phenomenon of visual perception, special emotional value, and the ability to guide the viewer's

perception. Next, in the fifth and sixth dimensions, the researchers added theories related to clothing design, and analyzed these two dimensions with specific clothing knowledge, it turned out there was a clearer aesthetic characteristics and emotional orientation in these three different clothing. The analysis of the last dimension's result is unexpected. Although these three costumes are all special costumes of the local Tujia family, "The Dew Clothing" and "Elderly Clothing" have absolute emotional influence on the aesthetics, whereas the connotation of "The Qin Liangyu's Costume Relics" has no emotional influence. It contains clear historical and political information, as well as the class division in the Tusi period. There are clear requirements for the knowledge of the aesthetics, otherwise it is impossible to really understand the value in the costume.

7. Discussion of Results Summary and Suggestions

7.1 Discussion of Results

This study uses Dewey's aesthetic theory as the framework, and uses the seven dimensions in the theory as the aesthetic analysis standard. Through research and analysis, this study believes that Dewey's aesthetic theory is of great help and effect on the aesthetic research of Tujia clothing. The seven dimensions correspond to the visual form, process technology, knowledge data, cultural connotation, and the environment and cause of clothing. More importantly, its theory balances the rational and perceptual factors of aesthetic research, so that researchers can clearly integrate subjective factors and objective facts when carrying out clothing analysis, which is a principle that cultural and artistic research should have.

As the next stage, this study provides new insights and clear knowledge in both the research of Tujia ethnic costumes and creative design. As outlined in the background, many studies on Tujia costumes fail to establish distinctive features, symbols, and signs because they do not regionalize, differentiate, or singularize Tujia culture. Therefore, this study proposes that exploring and identifying the cultural symbols of Tujia costumes in Shizhu County is a crucial method for enhancing the recognition of Tujia costume culture. In conjunction with contemporary mass aesthetic demands and the diversity of consumer groups, this study employs the theory of aesthetic experience to elucidate the value of original culture within contemporary aesthetic theory. This has led to clear standards and impacts for future cultural and artistic research as well as art design research:

(1) The aesthetic value of Tujia costumes lies in the scene experience within the costume. Thus, each specific costume study should be conducted in its correct and relevant context.

(2) The aesthetic value of Tujia costumes includes the transmission of historical knowledge through patterns, craftsmanship, and colors, which are non-textual forms of historical records. Therefore, innovative design should first establish inviolable design principles, which should preserve authentic Tujia costume information and avoid creating designs with incorrect information to satisfy popular tastes.

7.2 Conclusion

Based on the research, the conclusions are as follows:

(1) Shizhu County's unique landscape and cultural customs reflect the Tujia people's values: family harmony, children's happiness, elderly health, joyful life, and successful farming, without a need for technological or industrial change.

(2) The most symbolic Tujia costumes in Shizhu are the Dew Dress from marriage customs, elderly attire from labor activities, and Qin Liangyu's costume artifacts, representing the local spirit and cultural essence.

(3) The aesthetic value of Tujia costumes is found in their emotional significance: The Dew Dress symbolizes maternal blessings and handcraft inheritance; elderly attire represents diligence and respect for elders; Qin Liangyu's artifacts express future aspirations and safety wishes.

7.3 Suggestions

(1) Theoretical Suggestions

Under the framework of seven dimensions, this study analyzes the clear different characteristics of clothing. In future research, it is recommended to study the color formation of Tujia clothing with color psychology, or in-depth analysis of customs and rituals in clothing from the perspective of social cohabitation, activities, etc. from the perspective of sociology, behavior, etc.

(2) Policy Suggestions

The Shizhu County government and cultural committee should adapt cultural tourism projects to local conditions. For instance, the intangible cultural heritage museum in Wanshou Ancient Village should showcase cultural symbols related to marriage customs, agricultural traditions, and Qin Liangyu's attire to genuinely convey the cultural essence of the Tujia.

Additionally, as Chongqing has become a renowned cultural tourism city, the Chongqing Cultural Committee and Chongqing Three Gorges Museum should establish special funds. They should consider large-scale live performances similar to the "crying marriage" customs and protect and promote Qin Liangyu's artifacts through AR, VR, CATWALK, and live performances to increase public visibility.

(3) Further Application Suggestions

This study has identified the core aesthetic values of Tujia clothing in Shizhu County. Future work should convert these insights into artistic concepts and expand them into various art forms, for example, applying marriage scenes to interior space design; integrating the functional aspects of elderly clothing into research on materials for special populations; and combining the cultural significance of Qin Liangyu's artifacts with contemporary female spirit in installation art research.

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