



Preserving the Traditional Culture of Ethnic Minorities in Association with Sustainable Community-Based Tourism Development in Vietnam

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Abstract

The preservation of traditional culture among ethnic minorities and the development of community-based tourism are two independent fields that share a closely interdependent relationship, ensuring sustainability for economic, cultural, and social development. Culture plays a role as both the driving force and the goal of development; however, limitations or inappropriate preservation methods can become barriers to the overall development process. Sustainable community-based tourism development in ethnic minority areas generates positive impacts on the preservation and promotion of traditional cultural values. Conversely, negative impacts arising from uncontrolled socio-economic development will affect the sustainable tourism development of both local communities and the nation. This article analyzes the relationship between the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage and community-based tourism development, while evaluating the status of these efforts in recent times. On that basis, the author proposes several solutions to enhance the effectiveness of preserving and promoting traditional cultural identity associated with sustainable community-based tourism development for ethnic minorities in Vietnam.

Keywords:

Preservation of traditional culture, Ethnic minorities, Sustainable community-based tourism development, Vietnam.

1. Introduction

Culture is the spiritual foundation and an important resource ensuring the rapid and sustainable development of the country. Among these components, the traditional culture of ethnic minorities is a precious constituent element that contributes to creating the richness, diversity, and unity of Vietnamese culture.

The Party and the State have consistently identified the preservation and promotion of ethnic minorities' traditional cultural values as a strategic and long-term task. This orientation is clearly reflected in key documents such as the Resolution of the 13th National Party Congress, instructions from the late General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong at the National

Cultural Conference (2021), alongside new directives such as Resolution No. 80/BCT-TW (2026) of the Politburo on the development of Vietnamese culture. Based on these strategic orientations, the National Target Program for Socio-Economic Development in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas for the 2021–2030 period particularly Project No. 6 and the Law on Cultural Heritage No. 45/2024/QH15 have established a solid legal corridor, promoting a mindset shift from "static preservation" to "dynamic preservation" while closely linking cultural heritage with socio-economic development.

In practice, combining traditional cultural preservation with sustainable community-based tourism development is becoming an inevitable trend. This model not only awakens national pride and the sense of self-governance within local communities, but also transforms heritage into livelihood resources, contributing to poverty alleviation, employment generation, and the promotion of the nation's image to the world. However, the current implementation process in ethnic minority regions still faces numerous challenges, especially in harmonizing the relationship between in-situ preservation and economic value exploitation.

Originating from the above practical requirements, this article focuses on researching the topic: "Preserving the traditional culture of ethnic minorities associated with sustainable community-based tourism development in Vietnam today", aiming to assess the current status, identify limitations and bottlenecks, and thereby propose orientations and solutions to improve the effectiveness of this work in the new phase.

2. Theoretical Basis and Research Methodology

2.1. Theoretical Basis and Basic Concepts

Cultural preservation: Refers to the protection, safeguarding, maintenance, restoration, and assurance of the transmission capacity of traditional culture (Government, 2026, Decree No. 269/2026/ND-CP). In modern theory, cultural preservation is not merely "preserving the status quo" but is approached through "dynamic preservation" "maintaining the vitality of heritage through adaptation, creativity, and re-enactment within new contexts (Smith, 2006). According to the 2003 UNESCO Convention, the community itself serves as the decisive subject in identifying, preserving, and promoting intangible cultural heritage values (UNESCO, 2003). This establishes a requirement for research and policy to aim at empowerment mechanisms, encouraging active community participation while ensuring a balance between cultural authenticity and the capacity for integrating livelihood development, tourism, and education (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004).

Traditional culture of ethnic minorities: Refers to the totality of tangible and intangible cultural values created, preserved, and transmitted across generations by ethnic minority communities, contributing to the diversity and unity of Vietnamese culture (Government, 2026, Decree No. 269/2026/ND-CP).

Ethnic minorities: Refers to ethnic groups having a smaller population compared to the majority ethnic group within the territory of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Government, 2011, Clauses 2 and 3, Article 4, Decree No. 05/2011/ND-CP). According to the Press Release on the preliminary results of the 2019 Population and Housing Census, nationwide there are 82,085,729 Kinh people (accounting for 85.3%) and 14,123,255 people belonging to other ethnic groups (accounting for 14.7% of the total population) (Central Population and Housing Census Steering Committee, 2019).

2.2. Research Methodology

This article employs the method of collecting and analyzing secondary data from published research works in scientific journals, specialized reports, and related survey datasets. Simultaneously, the study combines analytical, synthetic, and situational evaluation methods to clarify the practical picture, providing a scientific basis for proposing effective solutions and mechanisms to link traditional cultural preservation with sustainable tourism development in ethnic minority regions.

3. Research Content

3.1 Current Status of Traditional Cultural Preservation Among Certain Ethnic Minorities

Preserving the culture of ethnic minorities is the process of maintaining, restoring, and promoting the value of tangible and intangible heritage within vulnerable communities. This process is implemented through two core forms: dynamic preservation and static preservation. Among them, dynamic preservation maintains the living quality of heritage through practice, transmission, and direct integration into the daily life of the host community. A typical piece of evidence for this form is the maintenance of the Cultural Space of Gong Culture in the Vietnamese Highlands—a heritage recognized by UNESCO in 2005—where the sound of gongs is closely attached to life-cycle rituals and community activities of the Ba Na, E De, and Jrai people (UNESCO, 2005; Ngo Duc Thinh, 2010). Conversely, static preservation focuses on collecting, digitizing, storing, and displaying heritage at institutions such as museums or database systems. Clear evidence of this is the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology, which currently holds over 15,000 artifacts along with thousands of photo and film ethnographic documents for long-term storage and research (Vietnam Museum of Ethnology, 2023).

Numerous studies on sustainable development have emphasized the link between cultural heritage preservation and community development: heritage can serve as an economic resource while simultaneously strengthening local cultural identity and social capital (Scheyvens, 1999; Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). A popular analytical framework in this field is structured around four pillars: (i) cultural authenticity; (ii) livelihoods and economic value; (iii) governance and institutions; and (iv) socio-environmental sustainability. This framework allows for evaluating not only preservation effectiveness but also spillover impacts on community cohesion and equity in benefit distribution.

Research on ethnic minorities in Vietnam in general, as well as studies on preserving and promoting traditional cultural values, has been conducted by many scholars. In the article "The Bo Y people preserving cultural identity" by author Vinh Phong published in the Journal of Mass Mobilization in 2015, the author analyzed achievements in preserving the traditional culture of the Bo Y people while proposing solutions to continue effectively preserving and promoting these cultural values. Another study on "Preservation of traditional cultural heritage of very small ethnic minorities in the context of development and integration" by Dang Thi Hoa published in the Journal of Ethnic Studies in 2019 highlighted the traditional cultural values of certain ethnic minorities in the northern mountainous region (Dang Thi Hoa, 2019).

Many articles focus on understanding cultural preservation across various ethnic groups. The article "Preserving the cultural identity of very small ethnic groups: A race against time" by Sy Hao, published in the Ethnic and Development newspaper in 2018, analyzed the current status of cultural preservation among ethnic minorities and proposed urgent solutions to conserve their traditional cultural values (Sy Hao, 2018).

Numerous programs, projects, and socio-economic support policies, especially policies on preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of ethnic groups, have been implemented in ethnic minority areas. The Government has approved key programs and projects such as: The Project "Educational development for ethnic minorities during 2010–2015" (2010); The Project "Preservation and development of Vietnamese ethnic minorities' culture through 2020" (2011)—which includes preserving and promoting ethnic cultural identities; The Project "Support and capacity building for preserving and developing ethnic culture, eliminating outdated customs in ethnic minority areas" (2013); and The Project "Support for socio-economic development of very small ethnic minorities during 2016–2025" (2016). With the policy of building an advanced Vietnamese culture rich in national identity, unified in diversity, with priority given to ethnic minority cultural development, the Party and State have defined that the preservation and promotion of ethnic minority culture is both an urgent and strategic task that requires persistent, long-term implementation.

Implementing cultural preservation policies, the promotion of ethnic languages and scripts has been carried out in various ways ranging from teaching to official broadcast media in Vietnam. Statistics indicate that 27 out of 53 ethnic minority groups have their own written scripts, such as the Tay, Thai, Hoa, Khmer, Nung, Hmong, Gia-rai, Ba-na, Cham, and Mnong, which have been widely taught within communities. Several languages are utilized on mainstream mass media platforms such as Voice of Vietnam, Vietnam Television, and local radio and television stations, including Tay, Khmer, E-de, Gia-rai, Cham, Thai, Ha Nhi, and Co Tu. Certain ethnic languages have been used to publish traditional folk literary works as well as new compositions. In addition, policies regarding the teaching and learning of ethnic minority languages have been implemented across general education schools and continuing education centers in ethnic minority areas nationwide.

Many cultural preservation programs have been executed during the 2021–2025 period. Project 6 under the National Target Program for Socio-Economic Development in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas was deployed, achieving significant results in preserving and promoting traditional cultural values in social life. The preservation and promotion of traditional cultural values attached to tourism development have been accelerated in almost all localities in Vietnam, consistently centering on the community. Along with tourism growth, many cultural values have been preserved and promoted far more effectively in daily social life. Projects have supported the construction and preservation of 48 traditional villages and 69 typical tourism destinations of ethnic minorities; 4,409 community cultural houses/sports areas in villages across ethnic minority and mountainous regions were constructed, equipped, renovated, or restored (Nguyen Thi Song Ha, 2024). Furthermore, 124 traditional festivals of ethnic minorities were preserved and promoted, such as the New Rice Festival of the Giay people in Sa Pa Town (Lao Cai Province); the Fire-Jumping Festival of the Pa Then people in Quang Binh District (Ha Giang Province); the New Rice Festival of the Muong people in Thanh Son District (Phu Tho Province); and the Water Wharf Worshipping Ceremony of ethnic minority communities along the Krong No River in the Central Highlands.

Activities connecting intangible cultural heritage have received significant focus across many provinces and ethnic groups, such as the "New Rice Celebration of the Bru Van Kieu people" in the Quang Binh - Quang Tri heritage tourism itinerary; the heritage connection model for the "Khen Art of the Mong people" in the Ha Giang - Lao Cai heritage route; the "Cultural Space of Gong Culture in the Central Highlands" in the Ea Tu heritage journey; and

the "Chol Chnam Thmay Festival of the Khmer people" in the Tan Bien - Tan Chau heritage route, Tay Ninh Province.

Numerous folklore cultural clubs have been established and maintained to revive, preserve, and develop the traditional cultural identity of ethnic minorities, including support for 695 folklore clubs and 5,760 traditional performing arts teams in villages across ethnic minority and mountainous regions. Additionally, regional and national festivals and showcases highlighting traditional ethnic art forms have been held in accordance with the Scheme on "Periodically organizing regional and national Ethnic Cultural, Sports, and Tourism Festivals and Exchanges during 2021–2030". These state directives have guided and developed cultural preservation work among ethnic minorities, bringing both spiritual and material values to local communities.

In cultural preservation, activities concerning inventorying, collecting, preserving, displaying, and promoting typical traditional cultural heritage of Vietnamese ethnic minorities have been actively implemented. Preservation efforts are reflected through guidelines and regular actions in communication, preservation, synthesis, sharing, and replication. Vietnam has numerous heritages recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, such as "Practices of Then by Tày, Nùng and Thái ethnic groups in Viet Nam" (2019) and "Art of Xòe dance of the Thái people" (2021). Many traditional festivals, ethnic costumes, and traditional cuisines of ethnic minorities have been preserved and effectively leveraged.

Preserving ethnic minority culture is a core task aimed at maintaining identity diversity and the spiritual heritage of ethnic communities. In the context of integration, preservation cannot be detached from real life; rather, it must be closely bound to sustainable socio-economic development. The most effective current trend is dynamic preservation, bringing living culture into the community through ecotourism, indigenous livelihoods, and digital transformation. This approach empowers ethnic people to take pride in increasing their income while transforming heritage into long-term development assets.

3.2. Relationship Between Traditional Culture and Sustainable Tourism Development

Developing community-based tourism tied to ethnic minority cultural preservation must be grounded in a "dynamic preservation" mechanism, establishing indigenous people as primary beneficiaries and controllers of resources to avoid risks of "stage-managed performance" or distorted commercialization.

Vietnam's ethnic minorities consist of 53 ethnic groups, excluding the majority Kinh people. Ethnic groups such as Tay, Nung, Hoa, Muong, Dao, Thai, and Hmong are distributed mainly in Northern provinces. For instance, the Tay people are concentrated in Lang Son, Cao Bang, Tuyen Quang, Ha Giang, Bac Kan, Yen Bai, Thai Nguyen, etc. The Muong people are situated predominantly in Hoa Binh, Thanh Hoa, Phu Tho, Son La, Hanoi, Ninh Binh, Yen Bai, Dak Lak, Dong Nai, etc. The Nung people inhabit provinces under former administrative names such as Lang Son, Cao Bang, Bac Giang, Ha Giang, Thai Nguyen, Bac Kan, Lam Dong, Binh Phuoc, Yen Bai, etc. The Hmong people reside in Ha Giang, Dien Bien, Son La, Lao Cai, Nghe An, Dak Lak, among others.

These ethnic groups mostly reside in remote, isolated, extremely disadvantaged, and border regions of the country. These areas face severe socio-economic development conditions, limited infrastructure, harsh climate, and rugged terrain; they hold exceptionally vital roles in

national politics, socioeconomics, security, defense, and ecological environment, while possessing diverse potential for tourism development. Culture has always held an important role in the history of national formation and development. Culture is not merely the private property of a specific land or local community, but a profoundly valuable national asset that succinctly and characteristically reflects the people's tradition of nation-building and national defense.

Cultural and tourism development activities share an organic relationship. Tourism is an economic sector intimately linked with natural and cultural resources. Tourism can only thrive on the foundation of exploiting national cultural values. Cultural values are viewed as tourism resources to be tapped for creating attractive, unique, and competitive tourism products—not only between domestic regions and localities, but also against countries in the region and worldwide. Relying on cultural values, the tourism sector extracts and shapes products to supply customers. Concurrently, tourism serves as the most effective medium to promote cultural values, particularly international friends. It is no coincidence that tourism is regarded as a "bridge" connecting nations and cultures globally. Through guided tour activities, visitors not only observe firsthand but also gain a deeper understanding of cultural heritage values at the destination. Via tourism activities, tourists obtain unique and vivid experiences, appreciating cultural values within the authentic context of nature and traditional community lifestyles, something no other method can deliver. It can be asserted that tourism plays a vital role in showcasing image and cultural values to humanity. Furthermore, tourism contributes to the preservation of traditional cultural values. Preserving cultural values requires funding for specialized activities like collecting and researching heritage; however, state budget and cooperative funding dedicated to heritage preservation remain quite limited in practice. This situation significantly impacts the efficacy of cultural preservation efforts. Therefore, during operational processes, revenue generated from tourism—if effectively managed and regulated—can be partially reinvested into restoring, renovating, conserving, and promoting new tourism destinations of traditional cultural value. Preserving traditional culture plays an imperative role in sustainable tourism development, as it serves as an essential resource for developing all tourism types, especially cultural tourism, culinary tourism, and tourism tied to ethnic cultures.

Research on traditional cultural preservation linked to tourism development has attracted various authors. For instance, the article "Preserving the traditional culture of Hmong and Ha Nhi ethnic groups associated with tourism development", published on the web portal of the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs, discussed the deployment of cultural preservation and promotion models tied to tourism in Ha Giang and Lao Cai provinces. In addition, the article "Developing tourism associated with preserving traditional cultural values in Lam Binh", published on dangconsan.vn, addressed tourism development alongside cultural heritage conservation, helping tourism truly become a spearhead economic sector in Lam Binh district.

The integration of tourism and ethnic minority culture yields deep-seated values extending far beyond pure livelihood solutions. First, the appreciation of tourists acts as a spiritual catalyst, awakening national pride and self-directed heritage preservation among local people, inspiring the younger generation to proactively learn traditional crafts and indigenous knowledge from senior artisans to prevent cultural disruption. Second, community-based tourism models require close coordination among households in sharing benefits, thereby strengthening neighborhood bonds and enhancing self-governance capacity through local

conventions regulating architecture and landscape protection. Finally, tourism fosters an equal cultural dialogue space, helping tourists erase biased perspectives while elevating social status and respect toward indigenous knowledge in the era of integration.

From 2017 to 2020, the Department of Grassroots Culture, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism implemented 14 models for preserving and promoting traditional cultural values of ethnic minorities across several localities. Alongside these efforts, a series of economic and tourism development activities tied to cultural preservation for very small ethnic groups—such as the Co Lao, Pu Peo, and Lo Lo in Ha Giang; the Cong in Dien Bien; the Si La in Lai Chau; the Chut in Quảng Bình and Hà Tĩnh and the O Du in Nghe An brought tangible socio-economic value to these regions. Numerous traditional cultural preservation models were launched, such as "Preserving and promoting the traditional brocade weaving and embroidery craft of the Pa Then people associated with tourism development" in Lam Binh District, Tuyen Quang Province, where training classes on Pa Then brocade weaving and embroidery were organized for conservation and tourism product development. The locality provided raw materials, looms, and tools to participating households to demonstrate, display, and introduce traditional handmade textiles for local community tourism. This model has significantly contributed to preserving the traditional attire of this ethnic group while becoming an attractive destination that generates economic benefits and improves the local population's quality of life.

Linking cultural preservation with community tourism development has delivered clear results. Many ethnic minority tourism spots have been renovated and upgraded to form sustainable community-based tourism models combining cultural preservation with livelihood development, exemplary cases being Na Hang village (Tuyen Quang), Lac cultural village (Phu Tho), and Sin Suoi Ho (Lai Chau). Consequently, the proportion of villages equipped with community cultural houses reached 93.8%, and the proportion of villages maintaining regular traditional performing arts teams reached 66.1%, exceeding targets set by the National Assembly (80% and 50% respectively).

According to evaluations by the Department of Ethnic Cultures of Vietnam, during the 2021–2025 period, traditional cultural preservation and promotion among ethnic minorities created a distinct transformation, helping consolidate national unity, raise cultural enjoyment levels, and advance sustainable community-based tourism that enabled many households to escape poverty. Entering the 2026–2030 period, cultural preservation continues to aim at sustainably restoring and leveraging traditional values, building a healthy and creative cultural environment tied to community tourism development (Trung Hung, 2026).

Many localities have effectively executed projects conserving and leveraging traditional craft villages of ethnic minorities tied to sustainable tourism development in remote, isolated, and ethnic regions. Through these, practical cultural preservation models combined with tourism have been constructed, yielding multi-dimensional socio-economic benefits. In provinces such as former Ha Giang, Lai Châu, Điện Biên, and Lào Cai, classes have been opened to teach intangible traditional culture to ethnic minority youth, directly instructed by master artisans. This represents one of the most effective cultural preservation forms, creating a strong ripple effect in raising voluntary awareness to safeguard and promote fine traditional cultural values.

Recently, the preservation and promotion of ethnic minorities' traditional cultural values have achieved noteworthy results. Many tangible and intangible cultural values that were

once degraded or at risk of fading have been restored and preserved. Numerous cultural values have exerted their role in becoming "resources and commodities" for tourism development, forming an "ethnic minority regional tourism market" featuring unique, attractive products for domestic and foreign tourists.

Decision No. 3222/QĐ-BVHTTDL approving the Scheme on Community-Based Tourism Development in Vietnam, issued on October 31, 2024, provided specific orientations on leveraging cultural, natural, and historical advantages, prioritizing investment in ethnic minority and mountainous areas, and diversifying occupations for residents. This serves as a vital foundation promoting poverty reduction in ethnic minority and mountainous regions. Recently, numerous localities nationwide have intensified cultural preservation and promotion activities, creating tourism products associated with natural landscapes, ecological environments, and community culture to bolster tourism attractions in ethnic minority and mountainous regions. With the objective of developing tourism tied to cultural heritage and festival organization under the principle of preserving national identity while selectively assimilating human cultural essence, many localities have treated distinct ethnic cultural values as resources to form unique tourism products.

Community-based tourism is identified as the best model to preserve, promote cultural values, and create community-linked tourism products, such as community cultural tourism, craft village tourism, homestay experience tourism, ecotourism, and resort tourism. Several implemented community tourism models have yielded high efficiency in economic development and cultural conservation, including Dao community tourism in Nam Dam village, Quan Ba district, Tuyen Quang province, Lo Lo community tourism in Lo Lo Chai village, Lung Cu commune, Tuyen Quang province, Hmong community tourism in Sin Suoi Ho, Dao community tourism in Si Thau Chai, Lai Chau province, and Hmong community tourism in Ta So village, Moc Chau ward, Son La province.

Thanks to tourism development, many localities nationwide have revived community cultural heritages that were once forgotten or neglected, such as traditional herbal medicine making of the Dao, brocade weaving and embroidery of the Thai, Muong, Dao, Pa Then, Ta Oi, Co Tu, Cham, and Hmong. Currently, from traditional handicraft crafts, ethnic minority communities create unique products of material and spiritual value, such as ao dai and evening gowns featuring brocade patterns showcased on domestic and international fashion runways. During cultural activities and festivals, ethnic costumes are worn and demonstrated regularly, and gift items such as handbags, scarves, and dolls are creatively produced for sale to tourists. Certain faded traditional festivals have been reconstructed for conservation and tourism purposes, such as the Hair Washing Festival of Thai girls in Quynh Nhai district, Son La province and the Fire-Jumping Festival of the Pa Then people in Nguyen Binh district, Ha Giang province.

Organizing events linking agricultural products with tourism through promotional activities, branding, and agricultural experiences—such as the Fruit Harvesting Festival, Plateau Tea Festival, Mango Festival, Longan Festival, and Coffee Festival—has brought significant benefits. Thanks to tourism, particularly community tourism, local living standards have improved. Many households transition from pure farming to tourism service provision through homestays, food supply, cultural performances, souvenir sales, and tourism service supply, motorcycle/bicycle rental, driving combined with interpreting, handmade craft gifts.

This transition has helped ethnic minority households transform livelihoods, reduce poverty, diversify local occupations, and foster regional socio-economic development.

3.3. Shortcomings and Challenges in Cultural Preservation and Tourism Development

Thanks to Vietnam's directives and policies on cultural preservation, the socio-economic status of ethnic minorities has witnessed clear progress, while ethnic cultures are preserved and promoted. Localities have paid significant attention to preserving and leveraging traditional cultural identities alongside tourism development. Many healthy traditional festivals have been restored and developed, attracting numerous domestic and international tourists, thereby contributing to safeguarding national identity and driving local socio-economic growth. Alongside these accomplishments, ethnic minority cultural preservation still faces challenges. Due to the small population size of certain ethnic groups, limited cultural practice scope, and the lack of written scripts in many groups, preservation work encounters obstacles. Investment in traditional cultural preservation tied to sustainable tourism development among ethnic minorities remains constrained. In some places, preservation efforts are not closely integrated with local tourism development, leading to ineffective leverage of ethnic cultural identities.

In pursuit of economic goals, several localities have experienced overly rapid tourism growth resulting in adverse consequences, where commercialization trends erode cultural beauty and hinder the original preservation of community values. The study "Preservation of culture of ethnic minorities with populations under 10,000: Current situation and cultural issues" (To Ngoc Thanh, 2017) highlighted challenges across economic, social, linguistic, cultural, and demographic dimensions. In particular, the erosion and gradual loss of cultural identity are occurring visibly in various aspects of life among ethnic minorities, especially very small groups.

To achieve effective and sustainable community-based tourism, it is crucial to establish a community tourism management board run directly by residents who manage preservation and tourism development. Ensuring local people receive skill training in tourism development, indigenous cultural preservation awareness, local living product development, market connection, and green infrastructure completion is essential, alongside cultural preservation guidance from state managers during tourism expansion.

Distorted commercialization and the threat of authenticity erosion are prominent, as commercial trends in tourism activities cause cultural features to lose their original forms. For instance, traditional ethnic clothing originally handcrafted from self-woven fabric and meticulously hand-embroidered is increasingly replaced by imported fabrics or ready-made garments; numerous souvenirs labeled as regional specialties are imported from elsewhere. This represents a worrisome negative effect of tourism expansion within local communities.

Another existing obstacle is the generational rift in heritage transmission and continuity, driven by urbanization and labor migration that creates a severe heritage inheritance gap in ethnic minority communities. An empirical survey by Dinh Dieu Anh et al. (2021) across a sample of 1,200 households in Lao Cai and Ha Giang revealed that 68.5% of youth aged 18–30 were not proficient in writing scripts or memorizing ancient folk songs and dances of their ethnic group, and 74.2% among them preferred freelance urban labor over learning traditional crafts. More alarmingly, statistical data from the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (2023) recorded an average annual decline of 4.5% in the artisan force holding folk knowledge due to old age. The passing of artisans before transmitting knowledge to younger generations

leaves many intangible heritages in a state of "subject lessness". The team of artisans knowledgeable in traditional customs and values is aging, whereas younger generations willing to learn and inherit cultural practice values are shrinking.

Conflicts of interest and deep inequality in value distribution represent limitations affecting cultural preservation and tourism growth. Although indigenous people serve as creators and guardians of culture, they suffer the greatest vulnerability in the commercial tourism value chain. Value chain analysis results by Le Van Hung (2022) in the Northwest and Central Highlands showed that local communities receive only 12%–15% of total revenue generated from community tourism, while tour operators and external investors capture up to 71.5% of profits. This unequal distribution leaves 53.2% of tourism-participating households below the regional average income threshold. The situation of "culture being exploited without residents benefiting adequately" eliminates preservation incentives, causing 38% of households to shift toward spontaneous commercial services or abandon traditional cultural activities altogether.

Cultural preservation and tourism development are also encountering trends of ecological space concretization and infrastructure overload beyond carrying capacity. Unplanned, rapid tourism development has broken indigenous cultural spatial structures—the "ecological home" holding heritage. Field assessments by Tran Thi Mai et al. (2022) indicated that in key tourism villages such as Sa Pa, Lao Cai, Lac, Hoa Binh, or Jun, Dak Lak, over 35.6% of traditional stilt and rammed-earth house architectures were demolished or concretized to expand homestay rooms spontaneously. During peak seasons, plastic waste and domestic wastewater volumes increase by 250%–310%, exceeding local infrastructure capacity by 3 to 4 times. This overload causes severe environmental degradation and reduces international tourist satisfaction regarding village authenticity and tranquility by 32.4%.

Furthermore, shortcomings in community governance capacity and institutional policies obstruct tourism expansion and cultural preservation. Cultural resource management capacity at the grassroots level remains a major bottleneck toward sustainable development goals. Research by Nguyen Thi Song Ha (2022) indicated that 74.1% of commune-level managers and village heads in ethnic minority areas had never received formal training in Community-Based Resource Management skills. Additionally, up to 82.5% of current tourism villages completely lack mechanisms to set aside a Heritage Preservation Fund from tourism revenues. Institutional self-governance deficits leave heritage restoration, inventorying, and youth training passively reliant on limited state budget sources, leading to fragmented, short-term, and trend-driven development lacking long-term strategy.

Preservation work in some locations lacks systematic and sustainable execution, operating as temporary movements. Specialized preservation personnel at the local level remain limited, failing to meet requirements, alongside a lack of long-term strategies for cultural preservation, especially a shortage of human resources equipped with both cultural preservation expertise and scientific technology application capabilities.

Despite extensive efforts in cultural preservation, cultural documentation has not been fully or systematically digitized, partly due to inadequate funding or lack of personnel. Promoting ethnic minority traditional cultural values faces shortcomings and challenges, particularly in balancing preservation and development. In many places, economic profits are prioritized over cultural values, giving rise to cultural commercialization and copycat cultural

products. Certain preservation and promotional activities linked to cultural industries and creative products suffer from operators' incomplete or inaccurate understanding of ethnic cultural life, resulting in distorted or altered traditional cultural values during creative processes.

Digital technology applications in preserving and promoting cultural values remain constrained. The risk of cultural disruption is accelerating, particularly among ethnic minority youth who engage more with social networks, Internet, TikTok, and YouTube than with traditional culture. In the context of digital technology acceleration, without proactive management, ethnic minority cultural images can easily be misrepresented on digital platforms.

Certain traditional customs containing long-standing cultural beauty are undergoing offensive distortions incompatible with traditional identity, such as the "wife catching" custom among the Hmong. For several ethnic groups, only elderly generations retain knowledge of their ethnic languages, while traditional festivals and fine customs often persist solely in the memories of a few village elders and master artisans.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Culture plays an exceptionally vital role in development, defined as the spiritual foundation of society and the driving force behind socio-economic progress. Therefore, culture is both the goal and the driving force of development processes. In the current context, ethnic minorities face numerous opportunities to select and absorb new cultural values suited to modern living conditions; however, this also entails the risk of eroding and altering traditional cultural values. Consequently, identifying cultural transformation trends while harmonizing the relationship between ethnic minority traditional cultural preservation/promotion and sustainable community-based tourism development holds a key role. Resolving state management issues concerning culture to preserve and leverage ethnic minority cultural heritage meeting modern integration demands is an urgent imperative.

Vietnamese ethnic minority cultures can only be preserved sustainably through the harmonious combination of traditional heritage preservation and community-based tourism development. Preserving and promoting cultural values is not the task of a single entity, but requires joint connectivity among communities, master artisans, businesses, and the younger generation. Linking culture with sustainable community tourism development is of paramount importance in awakening soft power, elevating culture to permeate deeply and spread strongly as a sustainable endogenous resource for economic, political, and social activities. In the coming time, to enhance the effectiveness of preserving and promoting ethnic minority cultural values tied to sustainable community-based tourism development, efforts should focus on the following key solutions:

First, concentrate resources on traditional cultural preservation tied to sustainable tourism development. Continue innovating mindsets and awareness in formulating, building, and executing cultural preservation policies; complete mechanisms, policies, and appropriate resource allocations to meet preservation requirements in the new context, ensuring compatibility with local cultural characteristics and the national political system.

Second, alongside capital investment in cultural preservation and tourism infrastructure in ethnic minority areas, special attention must be paid to developing local human resources. Regularly organize training classes to enhance communication skills, civilized behavior, and

tourism professional skills for grassroots managers and residents at tourist destinations, traditional craft villages, and community cultural product facilities.

Third, strengthen the promotion of distinctive ethnic cultural values on mass media and digital platforms. Accelerate ethnic culture dissemination through community activities, artistic showcases, schools, and social networks; concurrently establish strict content governance mechanisms in cyberspace to prevent commercialization, misrepresentation, or distortion of traditional cultural values.

Fourth, implement cultural preservation and value promotion based on indigenous social structures. The preservation process should be carried out sequentially, with focus, key priorities, and choices tailored to community aspirations, avoiding mass, piecemeal preservation, achievement-chasing, or passive reliance on disbursements and sponsorships.

Fifth, closely connect cultural heritage preservation with community tourism development through selecting representative heritages to build experiential and research tour itineraries involving linkages among residents, travel enterprises, and managers. Simultaneously, promote education to raise heritage protection awareness and behavioral standards for both tourists and local communities to minimize negative tourism impacts on traditional cultural spaces.

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