

Exploring the Cultural Narrative of Batik Decorative Motifs in Miao Costumes from the Perspective of Pragmatism Aesthetics

Yang Yang^{1,2}, Siti Mastura Md Ishak^{1*}

¹Department of Industrial Design, Faculty of Design & Architecture, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia, ²School of Fashion Art, Hubei Institute of Fine Arts, 430205 Jiangxia District, Wuhan, China
Corresponding Author Email: ct_mastura@upm.edu.my

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Abstract

Under the background of globalization and cross-cultural communication, Miao batik decorative motifs, as an important part of China's intangible cultural heritage, are facing the dual challenges of inheritance and development. However, the existing research is only limited to the visual analysis of batik motifs, ignoring the social and cultural context of batik, the concrete creative process and the localized aesthetic philosophy, resulting in fragmented interpretations of batik motifs. This study, through existing literature, conducts a systematic analysis and integration of academic literature on Miao batik decorative motifs, pragmatic aesthetics, and cultural narratives, and constructs a new interdisciplinary theoretical framework to assist fashion designers in the innovative design and application of Miao batik decorative motifs. Research shows that this theoretical framework maximizes the understanding of the cultural narrative of Miao batik decorative motifs, simplifies the research process, improves research efficiency, and provides strong support for the protection and innovation of Miao batik culture.

Keywords: Batik Decorative Motifs, Pragmatism Aesthetics, Cultural Narrative, Miao Costume

Introduction

Under the background of globalization and cross-cultural interaction, Miao batik decorative motifs are confronted with the dual challenges of inheritance and development, and at the same time play an important role in the protection of China's intangible cultural heritage. Yan Jingqun(2025) pointed out that cultural symbols in intangible cultural heritage are important Bridges connecting tradition and modernity. Designers have achieved innovative expressions of traditional culture in modern fashion by extracting cultural symbols from intangible cultural heritage and endowing them with new contemporary connotations. Meanwhile, the rapid changes in modern lifestyles have also restricted the application of traditional batik motifs in modern clothing.

Miao batik is not only a traditional handicraft, but also a cultural symbol of a regional ethnic group and a resource for developing the local economy. Its unique pattern design and exquisite craftsmanship have attracted a large number of domestic and foreign tourists and scholars to visit, study and research. However, as the conflict between traditional and modern lifestyles intensifies, the profound cultural connotations contained in the batik decorative motifs of Miao ethnic costumes and their unique expressions of physical experience are gradually being marginalized, fragmented, and even at risk of being lost.



Figure 1. Making Miao batik by pragmatic experience (Source: He yang, 2017)

Despite a series of protective measures taken by the Chinese government, Miao batik still faces some difficulties and challenges. The biggest problem among them is how to pass on traditional handicrafts to young people, so that this skill can be passed down from generation to generation (He Feng & Chen Shouwei, 2024). Miao batiks decorative motifs of clothing is not only a kind of visual art, but also a cultural practice, their costumes, wax printing drawing and application process involves the participation of the body, embodies the miao people and nature, social interaction. However, current research mostly focuses on the study of the isolated language forms of Miao embroidery and batik motifs. There is insufficient research on the context and behavior of batik decorative techniques in Miao women's costumes, and its cultural and aesthetic implications have not been fully explored (Yongfa, 2004). This research status leads to limitations in the overall understanding of Miao batik decorative motifs by fashion designers, which is not conducive to its inheritance and development in modern society.

A closer look at the published research substantiates this concern. Empirical studies of Miao batik have predominantly approached its motifs as visual objects to be described, classified, and reproduced: their artistic features have been analysed in terms of motif types, structural organisation, and colour schemes (Lyu & Yahaya, 2021; Si, 2025), their compositional regularities have been modelled through mathematical frieze-group analysis (Lyu, Yahaya, et al., 2025), and the botanical knowledge underlying indigo dyeing has been documented from an ethnobotanical perspective (Zhang et al., 2019). Other studies have examined batik through the lenses of rural economic development and digital preservation, centring on production organisation, knowledge-graph construction, and automated pattern recognition (Chen et al., 2021; Quan et al., 2024). A recent bibliometric analysis of 1,438 Chinese-language batik studies published between 1959 and 2024 confirms the rapid growth of this literature while highlighting persistent structural weaknesses, including limited scholarly collaboration and a pressing need for more interdisciplinary engagement (Lyu, Guo, et al., 2025). Notably, across these diverse research streams, batik motifs are consistently treated as patterns on fabric, whereas the embodied experience of the Miao women who make and wear them, and the cultural narratives these motifs carry in lived practice, remain insufficiently examined.



Figure 2. Body narrative of Miao women (Source:www.biftmuseum.com)

Li Chaode (2021), the project leader of the Major Project of Philosophy and Social Sciences (Art Studies) in China, pointed out that Schusterman's pragmatist aesthetics, in order to consider how today's design aesthetics emphasizes experience and experience, and to improve concepts such as "life is art" and "the aestheticization of daily life", And the research on design aesthetics elaborates in depth on the essential aesthetic characteristics of design, providing new academic perspectives and thinking directions. It fully responds to the emphasis of pragmatist aesthetics on the close integration of art and life, and regards aesthetic experience as a dynamic process closely linked to the social and cultural background. Within international scholarship, somaesthetic theory has begun to inform studies of dress and fashion, in which garments are examined as lived, embodied relations between body and world rather than as static visual objects (Marino, 2020); however, such perspectives have seldom been extended to the traditional costumes of ethnic minority communities such as the Miao.

This viewpoint provides an important theoretical basis for understanding the cultural narrative of batik decorative motifs in Miao ethnic costumes. However, in practical research, there are still challenges. The main difficulty lies in that the study of Miao batik decorative motifs requires the integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines, including sociology, ethnology, art studies, aesthetics, etc., which puts forward higher requirements for the interdisciplinary ability of batik costume designers. The emergence of this phenomenon also reflects the current lack of academic reflection on the inward and outward issues of China's intangible cultural heritage. In this regard, Mr. Xiang Yunju(2023), Vice Chairman of the China Association of Literary and Art Critics , has made a positive response. Therefore, constructing a new interdisciplinary theoretical framework is of vital importance for the study of batik decorative motifs in Miao ethnic costumes, to assist fashion designers in the innovative design and application of Miao batik decorative motifs. Therefore, exploring the cultural narrative of batik decorative motifs in Miao ethnic costumes from the perspective of pragmatist aesthetics not only helps to reveal the cultural connotations and social functions behind them, but also provides new theoretical support for the protection and innovation of this traditional art form.

This study adopts the "literature review synthesis process" to analyze and integrate the information collected on topics such as the existing research on batik decorative motifs in Miao ethnic costumes, the current status of cultural narrative research, and the research on pragmatic aesthetics, seeking the best solutions to help researchers better exert the advantages of pragmatic aesthetics in the research of Miao ethnic batik. Through this method, this study is dedicated to developing an easy-to-use interdisciplinary theoretical research framework, building Cultural Aesthetic Identity, enabling researchers to maximize their understanding of the cultural narrative of Miao batik decorative motifs with limited

interdisciplinary knowledge. Simplify the research process, improve research efficiency, and provide strong support for the protection and innovation of Miao batik culture.

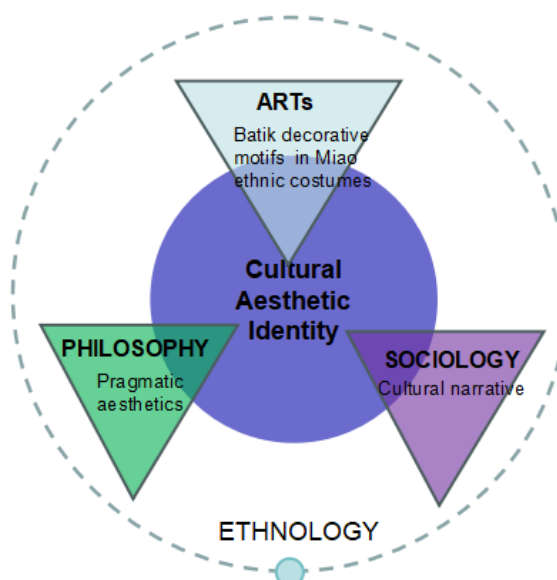


Figure 3. Interdisciplinary theoretical research framework-Building Cultural Aesthetic Identity

Method

In this study, the "literature review synthesis method" (Ibrahim, 2018) was adopted to create the original writing materials for the theme of batik decorative patterns in Miao ethnic costumes. This literature review typology is helpful for understanding the selected literature and for determining the relevant theoretical framework at the beginning of the research project.

To conduct a comprehensive literature review, this study collected publications related to Miao ethnic costumes and Miao batik decorative motifs from four major academic databases: Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, and CNKI. A total of 220 relevant articles were initially screened and determined, laying a foundation for further analysis. The selection of articles follows the following criteria: (1) Time frame: To capture the latest advancements and trace the historical development of this field, this study focuses on publications from 2010 to 2026. Although research over the past five years is usually more innovative, the extended time frame provides a broader academic background and a comprehensive understanding of the knowledge related to Miao batik. (2) Keyword selection: The research objective guides the theme of batik decorative motifs in Miao ethnic costumes to be divided into three sub-themes: existing research on batik decorative patterns in Miao ethnic costumes, current status of cultural narrative research, and research on pragmatic aesthetics. Database retrieval uses keywords closely related to these sub-themes, including narrative basic structure, cultural identity, craftsmanship characteristics of batik decorative motifs, pattern types, application of batik in Miao ethnic costumes, core concepts of pragmatist aesthetics, development history, and application status. The Boolean operators "OR" and "AND" are used to combine these keywords to ensure extensive coverage of multiple research fields. This method promotes multi-faceted theoretical and practical analysis and is consistent with the research objectives. (3) Title

screening: Conduct an initial screening based on the article title to eliminate obviously irrelevant works and ensure that the selected research directly aligns with the research topic. Duplicates found in multiple search results are deleted, thereby generating a refined collection of high-quality related articles.

In the subsequent screening stage, each article was thoroughly reviewed to evaluate its relevance to the three sub-themes. Each study was evaluated in accordance with the research framework, and the evaluation criteria revolved around the core aspects of each sub-theme: (1) The evolution, theoretical basis and application of batik decorative motifs in Miao ethnic costumes; (2) Case studies of cultural narrative in traditional handicrafts, emphasizing narrative structure and cultural identity recognition; (3) Core concepts of Pragmatist Aesthetics and its application in art, design and cultural studies.

Finally, the author selected 51 articles from the initial 220 articles that were most likely to solve the research problem, including 16 articles on Miao batik decorative motifs, 19 articles on cultural narratives, and 16 articles on pragmatic aesthetics. This carefully selected collection forms the basis of the literature review and provides the necessary insights for addressing the research objectives.

In this section, each topic was comprehensively summarized. Subsequently, the priority, possibility integration and comprehensive summary of cross-analysis were proposed. Finally, this study explores the comprehensive theoretical framework for creating interdisciplinary Miao batik decorative motifs, aiming to meet the specific needs of designers.

Result

Batik decorative motifs in Miao costumes

In this section, important articles that scholars from different backgrounds consider valid are reviewed. The concepts related to Miao batik, the technological process, characteristics and pattern types of batik patterns were discussed, and the application of batik decorative patterns in Miao ethnic costumes was also discussed.

Process characteristics of decorative motifs in Miao batik printing

The process of making decorative motifs of the Miao batik is a complex craft, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the Miao people in China. This traditional art form is characterized by its unique techniques and vibrant designs, which are deeply rooted in the cultural identity of the Miao people. The batik process documented in the Qing Dynasty's Guizhou Tongzhi involves first drawing patterns on white cloth with melted wax, dipping it into an indigo VAT, and then removing the wax to display flowers. As can be seen from the above literature records, although these batik methods are different, their basic principle is wax anti-dyeing (He & Yang, 2009). The Miao batik process is divided into six steps, including fabric preparation, motif design, waxing, dyeing process, wax removal, and final decoration, as shown in the table (Chen et al., 2021; Quan, n.d.2024; Chia, 2013) :

Table 1

Process Steps of Miao Batik Printing (Yang Yang, 2025)

Steps	What to do	Tools/materials	Key points
Fabric preparation	Select and prepare fabrics, usually made of cotton or silk. Wash and dry the fabric to make sure it is clean and ready to apply wax and dye.	Cotton or silk fabric, water, cleaning equipment	The quality and cleanliness of the fabric directly affect the final quality of the batik pattern.
Pattern Design	Sketch the design on paper and then transfer it to the fabric. Design inspiration comes from nature, folklore, and traditional Miao motifs.	Paper, pencil, ruler, drawing tools	Design patterns that are symbolic and reflect Miao's cultural narratives and beliefs.
Wax	Use a "tattoo" tool or brush to apply hot wax to the fabric as a resist.	Wax, wax knife or brush, wax pot	The temperature of the wax and the evenness of the spread are crucial to prevent bleeding color and add texture.
Dyeing Process	The fabric is dipped in a dye bath using natural dyes, and the dyeing process involves multiple stages to achieve the desired pattern with different colors.	Natural dye (plant extract), dye bucket, stirring tool	Layer dyeing techniques enhance color depth and richness, making the design more visually striking.
Wax removal	The wax is removed by boiling the fabric to make the pattern appear.	Skillet, water	Boil for a moderate time and temperature to avoid fabric damage and make sure the pattern is clear.
Final Touches	Wash, dry, iron the fabric, add extra embellishments, or sew to enhance the overall appearance of the piece.	Detergents, irons, decorative materials (e.g., beads, embroidery)	The fineness of the finishing can enhance the artistic value of the piece and ensure a beautiful, finished product.

The characteristics of Miao batik are understood from the perspective of cultural significance, Miao batik motifs often carry profound cultural connotations and represent the identity, beliefs, and traditions of the Miao community. The themes used in the design can tell stories or symbolize important aspects of Miao's life, such as natural, spiritual, and social values (Chen et al., 2021; Quan, n.d., 2024); Choosing from natural dyes, the use of natural dyes from local plants not only contributes to the vibrant colors of Miao batik but also reflects the community's connection to the environment. This practice emphasizes the importance of sustainability and preserving traditional knowledge (Quan, n.d., 2024; L. Zhang et al., 2019); From the Miao batik decorative pattern craft skills, the production of Miao batik requires high craft and artistic skills. Each piece is unique, as artisans often incorporate personal styles and variations into their designs, making each batik a unique work of art (Chen et al., 2021).

Although existing studies have conducted in-depth discussions on the technological process, cultural significance and artistic value of Miao batik decorative motifs, there are still some deficiencies. First of all, most studies focus on the description of traditional craftsmanship and the interpretation of cultural connotations, lacking systematic research on the application and innovation of modern design. Then, interdisciplinary research is relatively weak and has not fully integrated multiple disciplinary perspectives such as sociology, ethnology, art studies and aesthetics, making it difficult to comprehensively reveal the complex role of batik patterns in cultural inheritance and social structure. Future research should enhance the exploration in these aspects to promote the protection and innovation of Miao batik culture.

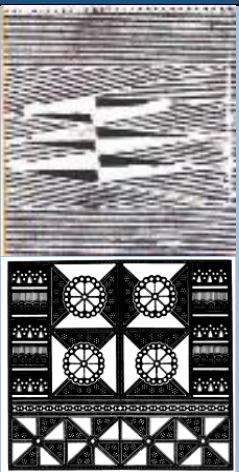
In conclusion, the process of making decorative motifs with Miao batik is a rich cultural heritage, artistic expression and traditional craft. Conduct cross-regional and cross-cultural comparative studies to explore the evolution and innovation of batik motifs under different cultural backgrounds. Integrate multidisciplinary perspectives such as sociology, ethnology, art studies, and aesthetics to reveal the complex role of batik motifs in cultural inheritance and social structure. Each stage of this process contributes to the creation of unique and meaningful textile art. It reflects the identity and values of the Miao people.

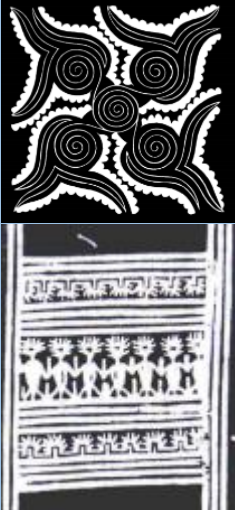
Miao batik decorative motif types

Miao batik decorative motifs are a vivid expression of Miao cultural heritage, characterized by complex patterns and rich symbolic meanings. Through the induction and collation of literature, the classification of Miao batik motifs can be roughly divided into several common types, including geometric motifs, animal motifs, and plant motifs. Each category reflects the unique cultural significance and aesthetic value inherent in the Miao tradition (Chen et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2015; Ma, 1995).

Table 2

Type analysis of decorative patterns in Miao batik (Yang Yang, 2025)

Pattern types	Features and symbolism	Examples of Common patterns	Cultural significance and context	Cultural symbolic dimension	Motif style
Geometric motifs	Features: Repetitive shapes such as triangles, squares, and circles. Symbolic meaning: symbolizing harmony, balance, and interconnectedness of life; Precise symmetry, reflecting artisan skills and understanding of mathematical	Triangles, squares, circles	Reflecting the Miao worldview and symbolizes the order and harmony of the universe.	Historical memory and cultural inheritance	

	principles; Representing a view of the universe,				
Animal Patterns	Features: Depictions of culturally significant animals such as birds, fish, and mythical creatures. Symbolism meaning: symbolizing change, beauty, power, and protection; Rooting in folklore.	Butterflies (Change and beauty), dragons (strength and protection)	Convey stories and cultural values reflecting Miao folklore and beliefs.	Religious beliefs and totemism	
Plant Patterns	Features: Featuring flowers and foliage, inspired by the natural environment. Symbolic meaning: symbolizing purity, spiritual enlightenment, etc.; And showing the connection between artisans and nature.	Lotus (purity and spiritual enlightenment), peony, various leaves	Reflect the relationship between the Miao people and nature, emphasizing the combination of environment and art.	View of nature and ecological awe	
Symbolic Patterns	Features: Includes traditional symbols such as the sun, moon, and stars. Symbolic meaning: To express the themes of life, death, rebirth, etc. Tell stories and convey messages through patterns.	Sun, moon, stars and so on	Convey deep cultural and philosophical significance, reflecting the Miao people's understanding of life and the universe.	Social function and ethnic identity	

The uniqueness of Miao batik patterns: From a cultural sense, each pattern is not only decorative but also a carrier of cultural narrative and tradition, reflecting the beliefs and values of the Miao people; In terms of the selection of natural dyes, the use of natural dyes extracted from local plants enhances the vitality and authenticity of the color, linking batik to the environmental background of the Miao people (Mulyanto et al., 2022; Quan, n.d., 2024). From the application of artisan techniques, the process of making Miao batik is a testament to skills passed down from generation to generation, with each artisan incorporating their unique touch into the patterns they create (Quan, n.d., 2024; Damayanti et al., 2021).

To sum up, Miao batik decorative patterns can be divided into geometric patterns, animal patterns, plant patterns, and symbolic patterns. Each category not only showcases the artistic talents of the Miao people but also serves as a rich medium for cultural expression and storytelling.

Application of batik decorative motifs in Miao costumes

Miao traditional batik is widely used in the costumes of southeast Guizhou. Each branch of the costume is unique. The decoration techniques are mainly embroidery, batik, and brocade, with rich patterns and exquisite craftsmanship. However, most of the current research focuses on Miao embroidery, and the research on the decorative technology of batik in Miao women's clothing is insufficient, and its cultural aesthetic significance has not been fully explored. Batik decorative motifs not only have an independent artistic style, but also contain rich cultural value, so it is necessary to pay more attention to their role as multiple decorative media in clothing.

The way to discover Miao costume through research is related to the structure of Miao clothing and is subdivided into different representative views. One view holds that the Miao costume is a traditional flat making-pattern in China (Li et al., 2019), following the local traditional cutting method, the entire edge of the garment is cut in a straight line, and the cutting pieces are spliced with the square cloth. Examples show that although the layers of Miao clothing are complex, the structure and mode of clothing follow the principle of symmetry and balance "cross, unity, and plane" (Song, 2021; Cui, 2006). At the same time, batik is used as the main decorative technique, supplemented by needle embroidery, and batik spiral motifs are mainly used in the main decorative parts such as the collar, shoulder, and sleeve, emphasizing the relationship between the clothing making-pattern and the Miao female body, reflecting the aesthetic image of batik and clothing structure (Zhang, 2004). From another perspective, the way the Miao dress is worn reflects the Miao people's unique aesthetic preference for colors, patterns, and patterns (Wu, 2000).

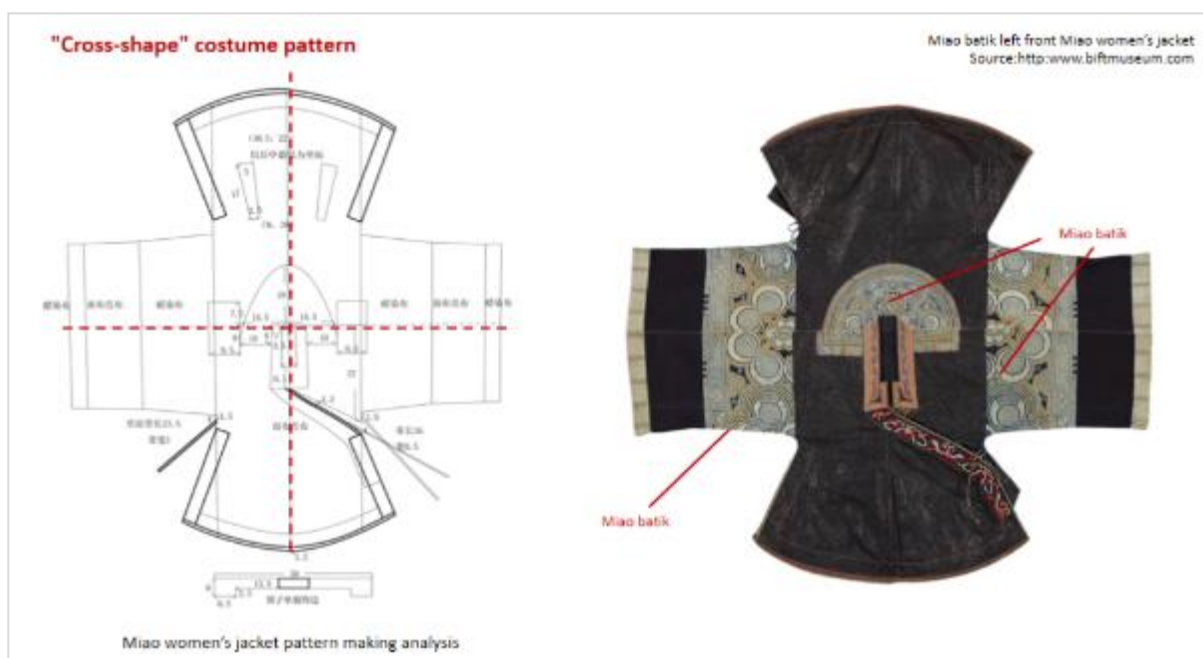


Figure 4. Miao women's jacket-making-pattern analysis (Yang Yang, 2023)

In addition, some scholars explain the style of Miao costumes from the perspective of costume evolution, pointing out that the way of Miao costumes has changed with the evolution of history. The most common hem of the right front skirt in the Qing Dynasty was fat clothes with wide sleeves, while today's right front skirt is tight and narrow sleeves, which has changed a lot. In Qian Miao Tu Shuo, there is no trace of the right front dress. This style is common in Miao clothing today. Another view holds that the Miao way of dress is closely related to the local climate and lifestyle (Chen, 2023; Chen, 2021). Li Yan (2006) points out that the dress styles of each ethnic group have their specific cultural backgrounds and ecological reasons. The clothing style of the same group is highly unified, and their clothing habits can often reflect their life experience. They apply the material, structure, style, color, and way of wearing clothing to the clothing that ADAPTS to the natural environment.

The costume style of the Miao nationality is closely related to culture and aesthetics, which reflects the unique talent of the Miao nationality in clothing design and manufacturing. The above research puts forward important suggestions on the way of wearing Miao clothing, and further improves the interpretation of Miao clothing culture and art. However, the existing research has not paid attention to the research on the body size of Miao clothing.

Cultural narrative

In this section, important articles that scholars from different backgrounds consider valid are reviewed. The knowledge of cultural narrative related to the content, including the basic structure, basic components and context construction of cultural narrative, was discussed. The current research status of traditional handicrafts and cultural identity was discussed.

Basic structure of cultural narrative

As an important cultural research tool, cultural narration has attracted wide attention in academic circles in recent years. It is not only a product of culture, but also a reflection and shape of social structure. It conveys specific cultural meanings and values through the form

of signs and symbols (Chandler, 2007). The basic components of a cultural narrative include themes, plots, characters, and various other elements that together form a coherent story, in which the central building blocks of a story's thematic type are the plot and characters and their associated imagery (Polletta et al., 2011; Jia Yu, 2012). Understanding these components is crucial to analyzing the role of narrative in different cultural contexts.

A theme is a central element of any narrative that represents the underlying message or morality of the story. Themes often reflect social values or cultural norms, providing insight into cultural priorities. For example, Polletta et al discuss how themes can be constructed to align with mainstream cultural narratives, suggesting that narratives gain credibility when they resonate with familiar stories in the culture (Polletta et al., 2011). This point also echoes scholar Orosz's (2000) emphasis on narratives being constructed around themes that reflect societal expectations and shifts. In cultural storytelling, the plot refers to the sequence of events that make up the narrative. Scholar Roesler(2006) emphasizes that narratives often follow archetypal patterns, and this structural approach can give us a deeper understanding of how narratives are constructed and how they convey cultural meaning. In addition, scholars Breen et al. (2017) further elaborate and point out that the characters involved in the plot are intricately connected, arguing that personal identity narratives are full of relationships that shape the plot. On this basis, the scholar Celine Ska (2015) pointed out that the construction of different cultural backgrounds will also lead to changes in narrative style.

In addition, Jones(2002) pointed out that in the construction of narrative structure and context, the role of social interaction between the narrator and the audience has an important impact on the process of storytelling. Building on this, Guo and Li further emphasize that storytelling is not only a process of sociocultural interaction but that stories transmitted through various media can profoundly influence the development of individual identities. Diao and Lu(2022), on the other hand, propose from the perspective of place narration that through the intervention of external environment, multiple expressions can reflect cultural history and community identity. These two scholars' views complement each other, revealing the complexity and diversity of narrative from the dimensions of social interaction, cultural transmission, and cultural history.

In short, the cultural narrative has a complex structure, and the analysis of its components provides multiple perspectives for the study of batik decorative patterns in Miao costumes. The researchers found that through the study of cultural narrative, we can deeply reveal how the cultural narrative behind the batik patterns reflects and shapes the Miao people's cultural identity and values.

Research status of traditional handicraft and cultural identity under cultural narration

As important expressions of different social and cultural identities and heritages, traditional crafts and arts not only carry the unique history, values, and practices of the community but also shape the cultural identity and cultural narrative of the community through the transmission of technical skills from generation to generation.

In China, traditional crafts are regarded as an important part of the intangible cultural heritage, and their sustainability has attracted wide attention. Bo et al.(2021) points out that these crafts are not only functional, but also contain rich cultural value and ideological

wisdom, and are necessary for the protection of cultural identity. Elsamanoudy et al.(2024) further emphasized the contribution of traditional crafts to the local economy and their important role in fostering a sense of community and belonging, highlighting the multiple values of traditional crafts in modern society.

In Europe, traditional crafts have similarly played an important role in shaping cultural and historical identities. Partarakis & Zabulis(2023) notes that these crafts are closely tied to local traditions and personal memories, allowing them to resonate with a wider audience. Yang et al.(2022), for their part, stresses that the preservation of such artifacts is not only about preserving artistic expression but also about preserving the collective memory and identity of the community. This view echoes the research of Bo et al.(2021) and Elsamanoudy(2024), which together reveal the common value of traditional crafts in different cultural contexts around the world.

However, traditional crafts also face many challenges in modern society. Aman(2024) points out that political and economic factors pose a threat to the inheritance and development of traditional crafts, hence the need to maintain their relevance through modernization and innovation. This view sheds new light on the conservation of traditional crafts. Upadhyay(2019) uses Nepal as an example to explore how craft tourism, as an innovative way to connect tourists with local artisans, not only supports the local economy but also plays an important role in preserving cultural heritage. This practice provides a useful reference for the modernization of traditional crafts.

In addition, digital technology has played an important role in promoting the inheritance and protection of traditional handicrafts. Zhang(A. Zhang, 2024) noted that digital platforms have made it easier for global audiences to access and participate in traditional handicrafts, promoting community engagement and stimulating the interest of the younger generation. This innovative way of engaging in the arts not only contributes to the preservation and inheritance of traditional crafts but also ensures their sustainable development and transmission from generation to generation, providing a new path for the modern development of traditional crafts.

Table 3

Research on Traditional handicraft and Cultural Identity under Cultural Narrative: A Comparative Analysis between East and West (Yang Yang, 2025)

Dimensions	The East (taking China as an example)	The West (using Europe as an example)	Common values and challenges
Cultural identity umbrella with history	1. Traditional crafts are treated as immaterial an important part of cultural heritage. 2. to carry the unique history, values, and practices of the community. 3. Shaping cultural identity through the transmission	1. Traditional crafts are closely linked to local traditions and personal memories. 2. Shaping cultural and historical identities resonates with a wider audience.	1. Traditional crafts are important careers of cultural identity. 2. Maintain collective memory and identity through craft inheritance.

	of technical skills from generation to generation.		
Cultural values and intellectual hui	1. Traditional craft is an important carrier of cultural identity. 2. Maintain collective memory and identity through craft inheritance.	1. Arts and crafts contain rich cultural value and ideological wisdom. 2. They are necessary for the protection of cultural identity.	1. Traditional crafts have profound cultural value; 2. It is an important medium for cultural narrative and identity.
Economic and social functions	1. Traditional crafts are important to the local economy Contribution. 2. Foster a sense of community and belonging.	1. Combining traditional crafts with local economy and cultural tourism. 2. Support the local economy through handicraft tourism.	1. Traditional crafts have economic potential. 2. Social functions enhance community cohesion and cultural identity.
Modernization and Innovation	1. Facing political and economic factors Threats. 2. The need to maintain its relevance through modernization and innovation.	1. Promote the transmission and preservation of traditional crafts through digital technology. 2. Digital platforms engage a global audience in traditional crafts.	1. Traditional crafts are challenged by modernization. 2. Innovative means (such as digital technology, and cultural tourism) provide new paths for inheritance.
Conservation and sustainability Sustainable development	1. The sustainability of traditional crafts has received widespread attention. 2. Promote cultural inheritance and economic development through innovative means.	1. Protect traditional crafts to preserve artistic expression and collective memory. 2. To ensure sustainable development through modernization.	1. Traditional craftsmanship needs to be combined with protection and innovation. Sustainable development is the common goal of the East and the West.

To sum up, traditional handicrafts have important cultural, economic, and social values in different cultural backgrounds around the world. Despite the many challenges, new opportunities are emerging for the inheritance and protection of traditional crafts through modern and innovative means. These studies not only reveal the multiple values of traditional crafts but also provide useful references for future protection and development.

Progress in the research of pragmatic aesthetics

In this section, important articles that scholars from different backgrounds consider valid are reviewed. The concept, theoretical characteristics and development process of pragmatist aesthetics were interpreted, and the current application status of pragmatist aesthetics in art, design and cultural studies was discussed.

The Core Concept of Pragmatist Aesthetics and Its Development Process

Pragmatist aesthetics, as a significant aesthetic school since the 20th century, centers around the core concepts of "experience," "language," and "body." These concepts have evolved

through distinct theoretical stages, reflecting shifts in philosophical discourse and cultural context.

John Dewey, the founder of pragmatist aesthetics, introduced the notion of "experiential naturalism" in his seminal work *Art as Experience* (1934). Dewey emphasized that experience is a dynamic process wherein organisms interact with their environment, thereby repositioning the relationship between art and life. Rejecting the traditional binary opposition between art and life, he argued that art should be understood as an integral part of lived experience—what he termed "art in the bud" (Dewey, 1934). This view laid the foundation for the "experiential turn" in pragmatist aesthetics (Leder & Nadal, 2014), advocating for participation and interaction as essential to aesthetic experience.

By the mid-20th century, with the rise of analytic philosophy, pragmatist aesthetics was largely overshadowed by analytical aesthetics. During this phase, "language" supplanted "experience" as the primary focus of aesthetic inquiry, leading to the marginalization of experiential aesthetics (Zhou Zedong, 2014). Influential figures such as Nelson Goodman emphasized the symbolic nature of art within an analytic framework, yet his work also hinted at an eventual reconciliation between language and experience, laying the groundwork for the later emergence of "new analytic pragmatism" (Guczalski, 2021).

By the late 20th century, the revival of pragmatism saw Richard Shusterman reinvigorate the role of "experience" in aesthetic discussions through his concept of "somaesthetics"—a focus on bodily experience as a key dimension of aesthetic engagement. Shusterman posited that the body is not merely an instrument but the primary subject of experience, with bodily responses forming the essence of aesthetic perception (Shusterman, 1997). This shift from language to corporeality redefined aesthetic theory by emphasizing the sensory and perceptual significance of bodily engagement (Shusterman, 2014).

Each of these theoretical shifts has contributed significantly to the development of pragmatist aesthetics. Dewey's experiential turn provided a democratic and inclusive perspective on art, breaking down rigid separations between artistic practice and everyday life. Goodman's emphasis on symbols enriched the discussion of meaning in art, bridging semiotics and aesthetics. Shusterman's somaesthetics expanded aesthetic discourse by highlighting the role of the body in perception, moving beyond cognitive or linguistic interpretations to a more embodied, lived experience. Moreover, pragmatist aesthetics has found applications across multiple fields. Korpelainen (2023) highlights its role in fostering environmental sustainability by demonstrating how aesthetic experiences encourage deeper engagement with socio-ecological contexts. In the realm of digital interaction and design, Bardzell (2009) underscores the importance of aesthetic experiences in interactive systems, advocating for user-centric engagement approaches. These interdisciplinary applications showcase the adaptability of pragmatist aesthetics in addressing contemporary issues.

Despite their contributions, each theoretical approach has faced criticism. Dewey's notion of experiential aesthetics has been critiqued for its broad definition of experience, which some argue lacks specificity in distinguishing between aesthetic and non-aesthetic engagements. Goodman's analytic framework, while offering a systematic approach to aesthetics, has been criticized for being overly intellectualized and abstract, distancing aesthetics from lived,

emotional, and sensory experiences. Shusterman's somaesthetics, though influential, has faced criticism for overemphasizing the body, potentially reversing the traditional mind-body hierarchy and distancing itself from classical aesthetic theories (Hu, 2018). Some critics argue that his approach excessively deconstructs traditional aesthetics rather than integrating them into a more cohesive framework.

This study applies pragmatist aesthetics to examine Miao batik motifs as dynamic expressions of cultural heritage, shaped by historical continuity and social transformation. By integrating Deweyan experience to explore how these designs emerge from environmental and cultural interactions, incorporating linguistic perspectives to analyze their symbolic meanings, and embracing somaesthetic insights to recognize the embodied experience of wearing and creating these garments, this research reframes Miao batik motifs as lived experiences that influence and reflect cultural identity. This approach not only deepens the understanding of Miao textile art but also broadens the discourse on pragmatist aesthetics in non-Western cultural contexts.

Application status of pragmatic aesthetics in art, design, and cultural research

Since its rise in the early 20th century, pragmatic aesthetics has gradually become an important theoretical resource in the field of art, design, and cultural studies. Its core point of view is to emphasize the close combination of aesthetics and living practice, to regard art and aesthetic experience as part of human experience, and to pay attention to their practical utility in social practice. This theoretical perspective provides a new methodological framework for the creation, criticism, and cultural studies of art and design.

In the field of art, pragmatism aesthetics promotes the expansion and rethinking of the definition of art. Nelson Goodman, following in the pragmatic tradition of John Dewey, argues that art should not be viewed simply as a static aesthetic object, but as a dynamic experiential process (An, 2017). This view breaks the binary opposition between traditional art and daily life, unifies the aesthetic value of art with its cognitive function, and emphasizes the role of art in shaping the cognitive world of human beings. In addition, Shusterman (2008) further develops pragmatic aesthetics by proposing the concept of "somaesthetics", which focuses on the physicality and practicality of artistic creation and aesthetic experience.

In the field of design, the application of pragmatic aesthetics is particularly widespread. Drawing on the concept of pragmatic aesthetics, designers emphasize the functionality and user experience of design works, and regard design as a process to interact with users and improve their lives. For example, academic Siti Mastura's research into the key elements of a person's practical experience when doing something is expected to guide the future development of the proposed Behavioral Information System (BIS) for Memory System Design (MeSD), Which could help extend the independence of older people who will continue to live in smart cities (Ishak & Ibrahim, 2022).

In cultural studies, the aesthetic of pragmatism offers a unique perspective for understanding cultural phenomena. It focuses on the interaction between cultural products and social practices, emphasizing the role of cultural forms in shaping social perceptions and values. For example, through the study of popular culture, pragmatic aesthetics reveals how cultural products influence public cognition and behavior through symbols and narratives (An, 2017).

In addition, pragmatic aesthetics also provides theoretical support for cross-cultural studies, emphasizing the communication and integration of different cultures and the value of cultural diversity in human experience.

In recent years, the application of pragmatic aesthetics to cultural studies has also made remarkable progress. Lavik(2022), for example, traces the evolution of pragmatic aesthetics from classical pragmatism to the application of contemporary art theory, highlighting the continuing relevance of pragmatic ideas in addressing the complexity of aesthetic experience. In addition, Brieber et al. (2014) discuss how the physical environment of a work of art, such as authenticity in a museum setting, regulates the relationship between art experience and viewing time. These studies further confirm the importance of pragmatic aesthetics in cultural studies, emphasizing the contextualization and interactivity of cultural phenomena.

Although the application of pragmatic aesthetics in art, design, and cultural studies has achieved remarkable results, it also faces some challenges in the practical application process. On the one hand, its practical emphasis on artistic and aesthetic experience may lead to the neglect of the purity of art. On the other hand, pragmatist aesthetics needs to be further integrated and perfected in its interdisciplinary application to meet the specific needs of different fields.

To sum up, the application of pragmatic aesthetics in art, design, and cultural studies provides rich theoretical and practical resources (An, 2017). At the same time, Shusterman's theory of "body aesthetics" provides theoretical support for studying the physicality of batik patterns (Richard Shusterman, 1997). The process of making and wearing batik patterns involves the participation of the body, which reflects the interactive relationship between the Miao people and nature and society. Through the perspective of body aesthetics, we can better understand how batik patterns transmit cultural information through physical experience and play their social functions in Miao society (Hu, 2018). Finally, pragmatic aesthetics' emphasis on the contextualization and interactivity of cultural phenomena provides methodological guidance for studying the cultural narratives of batik patterns (Lavik, 2022a).

Discussion

This study analyzed and summarized the relevant literature on batik decorative motifs, cultural narratives, and pragmatic aesthetics in Miao costumes. It also attempts to evaluate the advantages of combining different viewpoints and put forward suggestions for further research.

Figure 5 shows the overall review of the literature, the results of the study provides a feasible theory to solve the research target. In order to describe the comprehensive process of batik decorative patterns, cultural narratives and pragmatic aesthetics in Miao ethnic costumes, this study provides a final Point of Departure (POD) tree diagram (Ibrahim, 2018) . In this section, the author provides integrated options for further research and describes how to combine early data to put forward the final theoretical recommendations.

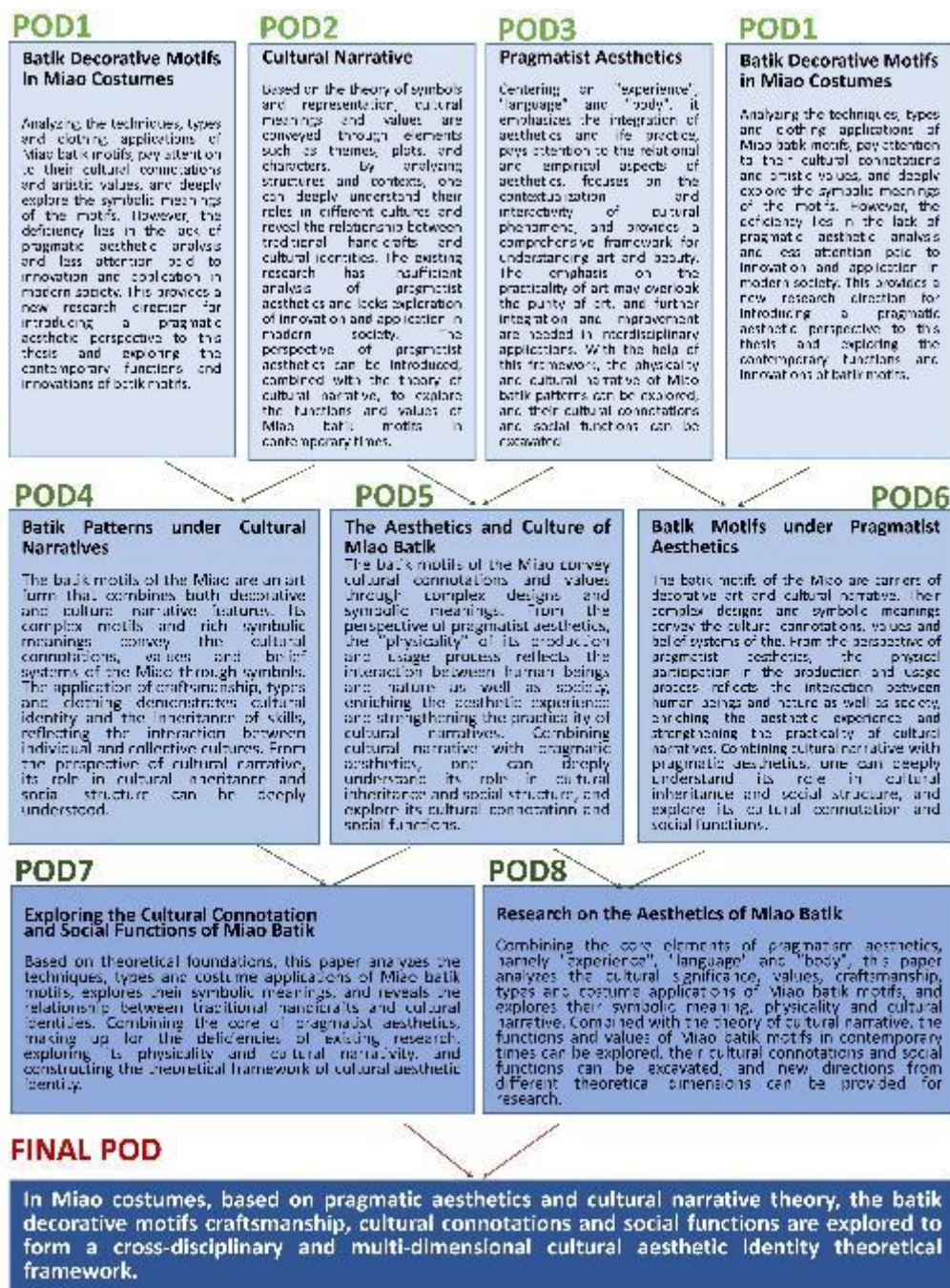


Figure 5. Theoretical development through batik decorative motifs, cultural narratives, and pragmatic aesthetics in Miao costumes.

After reviewing the results of the first discussion, the author proposed POD1: analyzing the techniques, types and costume applications of Miao batik motifs, emphasizing their cultural connotations and artistic values, and deeply exploring the symbolic meanings of the motifs. However, the deficiency lies in the lack of pragmatic aesthetic analysis and less attention paid to innovation and application in modern society. This provides a new research direction for introducing a pragmatic aesthetic perspective to this thesis and exploring the contemporary functions and innovations of batik motifs. POD2: Based on the theory of symbols and representation, it conveys cultural significance and values through elements such as themes, plots, and characters, analyzes structure and context, and can deeply understand its role in

different cultures, revealing the relationship between traditional handicrafts and cultural identity. The existing research has insufficient analysis of pragmatist aesthetics and lacks exploration of innovation and application in modern society. The practical aesthetic perspective can be introduced and combined with the cultural narrative theory to explore the functions and values of Miao batik motifs in contemporary times. And POD3: Centered on "experience", "language", and "body", it emphasizes the integration of aesthetics and life practice, pays attention to the relational and empirical aspects of aesthetics, focuses on the contextualization and interactivity of cultural phenomena, and provides a comprehensive framework for understanding art and beauty. The emphasis on the practicality of art may overlook the purity of art, and further integration and improvement are needed in interdisciplinary applications. With the help of this framework, the physicality and cultural narrative of Miao batik motifs can be explored, and their cultural connotations and social functions can be excavated. (Figure 6).

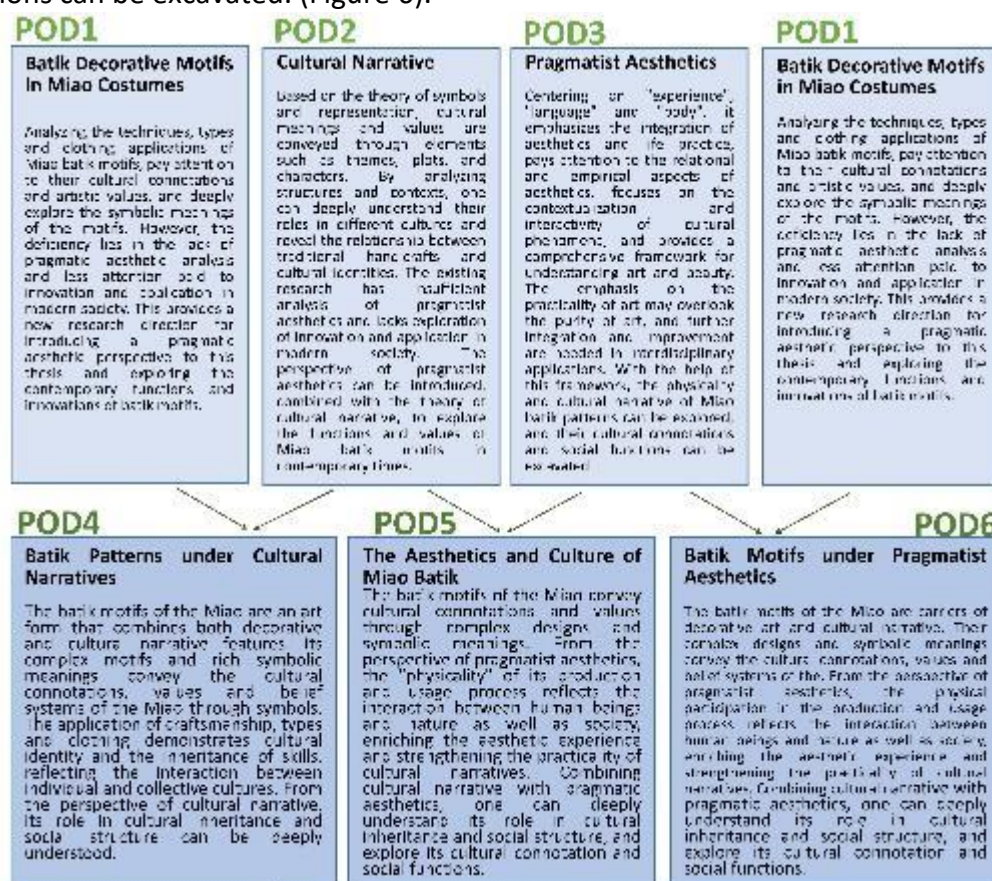


Figure 6. From Level 1 to Level 2, the crossing and synthesizing the contents evolution diagram

By crossing and synthesizing the contents of POD1 and POD2, the author found that in the study of batik decorative motifs in Miao costumes, combined with the theoretical framework of "cultural narrative", new theoretical viewpoints could be formed. Cultural narrative emphasizes conveying cultural significance and values through the forms of symbols and signs. Its basic structure includes elements such as themes, plots and characters (Chandler, 2007). Miao batik motifs, as a carrier of cultural narrative, their complex pattern designs and rich symbolic meanings are not only the products of culture, but also the reflection and shaper of social structure (Jia Yu, 2012). Meanwhile, from the perspective of symbol and representation theory, the craftsmanship, types and clothing application of Miao batik motifs are not only decorative art forms, but also an important part of cultural narratives. Its motifs

express the cultural connotations and artistic values of the Miao people through themes (such as nature, beliefs, and social values) and plots (such as the arrangement and combination of patterns) (Polletta et al., 2011). Meanwhile, the design and production process of batik motifs also reflect the cultural identity of the Miao people and the inheritance of traditional skills (Quan, 2024). Furthermore, the character elements in cultural narratives are also reflected in Miao batik. Intangible cultural heritage inheritors, crafter or Miao women, as narrative "characters", through the integration of personal style and skills, make each batik work a unique work of art (Chen et al., 2021). This interaction between individual and collective cultures further reinforces the position of batik patterns in cultural narratives. This led to the formation of POD4: Miao batik motifs are not only a decorative art form but also an important carrier of cultural narratives. Its complex pattern design and rich symbolic meaning convey the cultural connotation, social values and belief system of the Miao group through the forms of symbols and symbols. The craftsmanship, types and costumes application of batik motifs reflect the cultural identity of the Miao people and the inheritance of traditional skills, and also demonstrate the interactive relationship between individual artisans and collective culture (Figure 7). From the perspective of cultural narrative, one can have a deeper understanding of the role of Miao batik motifs in cultural inheritance and social structure.

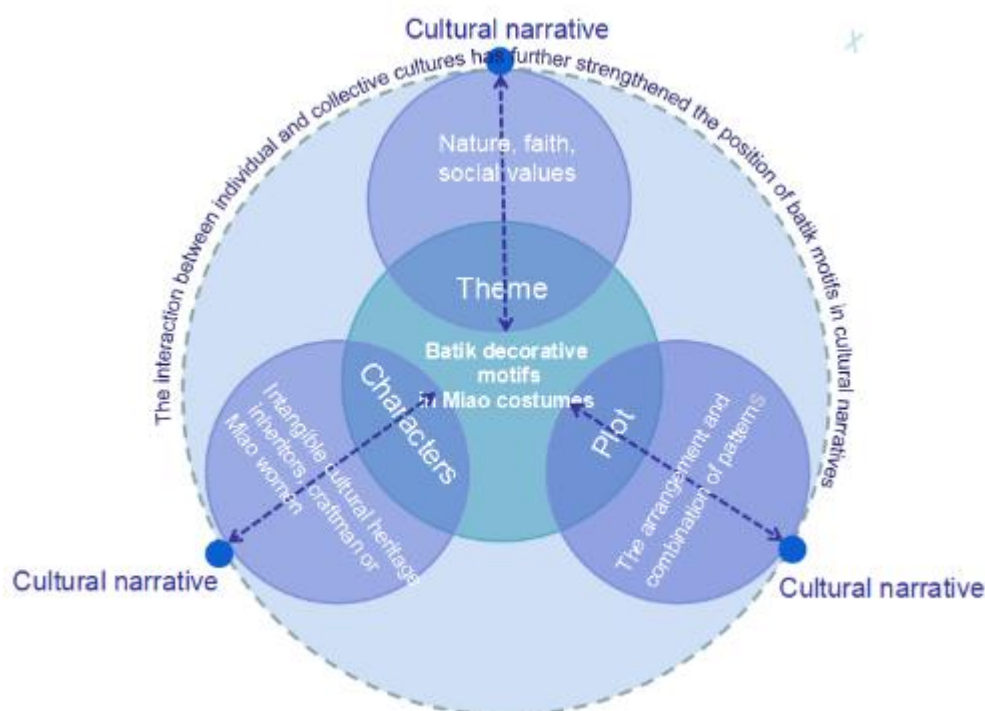


Figure 7 POD4 content generation logical mind map

Similarly, by crossing and integrating the contents of POD2 and POD3, the author found that when studying the decorative patterns of Miao batik, combining the theoretical frameworks of "cultural narrative" and "pragmatic aesthetics" can form new theoretical viewpoints. Cultural narratives convey cultural meanings and values in the form of symbols and signs. Their structure includes elements such as themes, plots and characters, reflecting social structures and cultural identities (Chandler, 2007; Jia Yu, 2012). Pragmatism aesthetics takes "experience", "language" and "body" as its core, emphasizes the combination of aesthetics and life practice, and pays attention to the practical utility of art and aesthetic experience in social practice (Dewey, 1934;) Schusterman, 1997. Miao batik motifs, as the carrier of cultural

narratives, convey the cultural connotations of the Miao group through symbols in their themes and plots. Artisans, as narrative "characters", integrate their personal styles, making each work unique (Chen et al., 2021). From the perspective of pragmatic aesthetics, the process of making and using batik motifs involves the direct participation of the body, reflecting the interactive relationship between the Miao people and nature and society, and enriching the aesthetic experience (Schusterman, 1997). This physicality enhances the practicality and interactivity of cultural narratives. This led to POD5: Miao Batik Decorative motifs, whose complex pattern design and rich symbolic meanings convey the cultural connotations and social values of the Miao people through symbolic forms. From the perspective of pragmatic aesthetics, the process of making and using batik motifs involves the direct participation of the body, reflecting the interactive relationship between the Miao people and nature and society. This physicality not only enriches the aesthetic experience, but also strengthens the practicality and interactivity of cultural narratives. By combining the cultural narrative perspective with the core of pragmatic aesthetics, one can have a deeper understanding of the role of Miao batik patterns in cultural inheritance and social structure, and explore their cultural connotations and social functions (Figure 8).

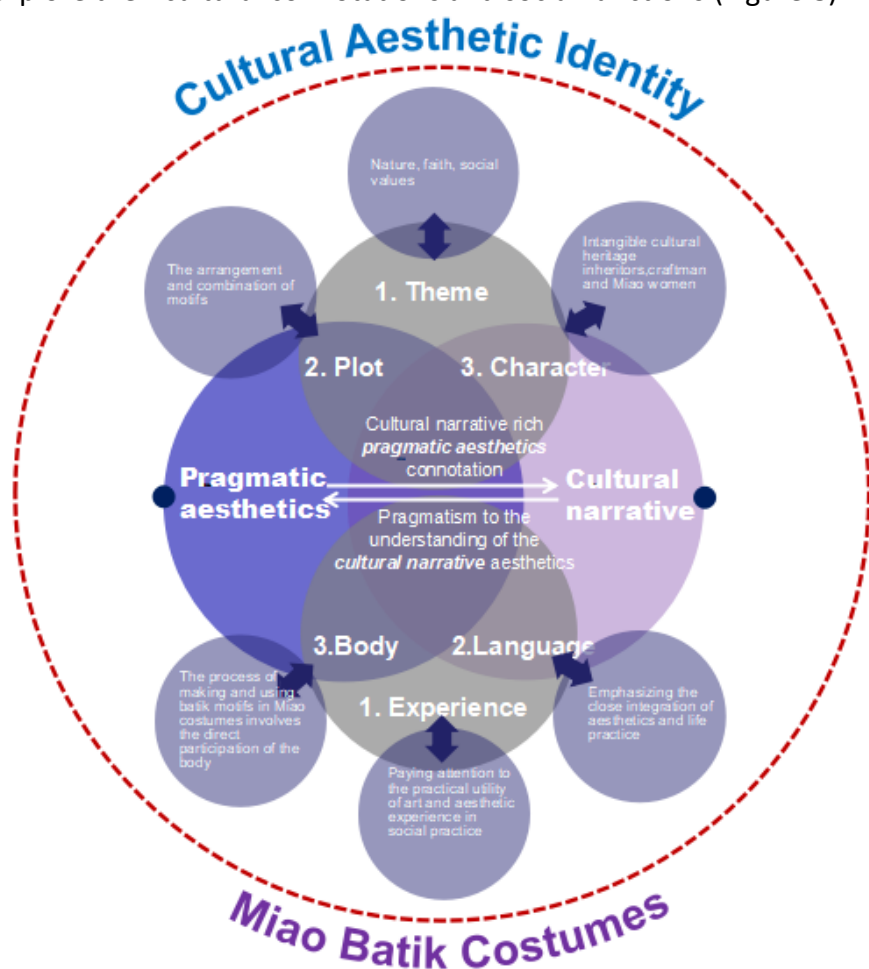


Figure 8 POD5 content generation logical mind map

Next, by combining POD3 and POD1, the author discovered that by integrating the relevant contents of "pragmatic aesthetics" and "batik decorative patterns in Miao ethnic costumes", a new theoretical perspective could be formed. Miao batik motifs, as a traditional handicraft, not only have rich cultural connotations and artistic values, but also carry the identity

recognition and cultural narrative of the Miao people (Quan, 2024; Chen et al., 2021). From the perspective of pragmatist aesthetics, the process of making and using batik motifs involves the direct participation of the body, reflecting the interactive relationship between the Miao people and nature and society (Dewey, 1934; Schusterman, 1997). This physicality not only enriches the aesthetic experience, but also strengthens the practicality and interactivity of cultural narratives. Pragmatism aesthetics emphasizes the core concepts of "experience", "language" and "body", and focuses on the close integration of aesthetics and life practice (Leder & Nadal, 2014). The craftsmanship process, types and clothing application of Miao batik motifs are not only decorative art forms, but also important carriers of cultural narratives. Through the forms of symbols and signs, batik motifs convey the cultural significance, social values and belief system of the Miao people (Polletta et al., 2011).

Meanwhile, the production process of batik motifs reflects the personal style and skills of the artisans, making each piece unique (Chen et al., 2021). Furthermore, the emphasis of pragmatic aesthetics on the contextualization and interactivity of cultural phenomena provides methodological guidance for the study of cultural narratives of batik motifs (Palumbo et al., 2023; Lavik, 2022). By analyzing the structure and context of batik motifs, one can deeply understand their role in different cultures and reveal the relationship between traditional handicrafts and cultural identity (Chandler, 2007). This gave rise to POD6: Miao batik patterns are not only a decorative art form but also an important carrier of cultural narrative. Its complex motif design and rich symbolic meaning convey the cultural connotation, social values and belief system of the Miao group through the forms of symbols. From the perspective of pragmatic aesthetics, the process of making and using batik motifs involves the direct participation of the body, reflecting the interactive relationship between the Miao people and nature and society (Figure 9). This physicality not only enriches the aesthetic experience, but also strengthens the practicality and interactivity of cultural narratives. By combining the cultural narrative perspective with the core of pragmatic aesthetics, one can have a deeper understanding of the role of Miao batik motifs in cultural inheritance and social structure, and explore their cultural connotations and social functions.

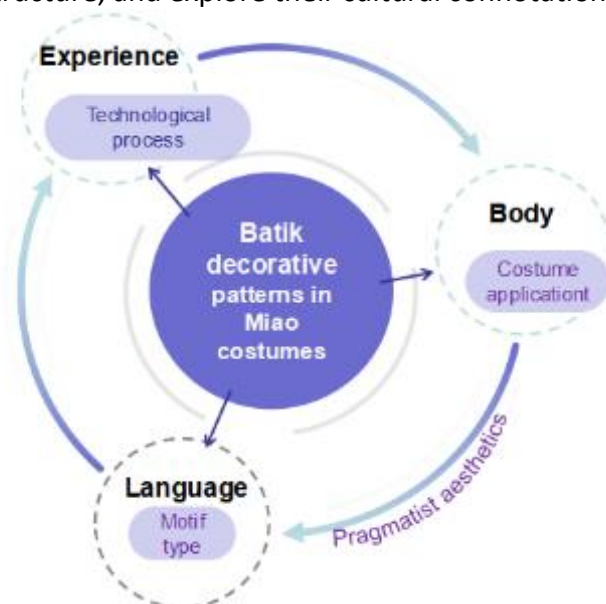


Figure 9 POD6 content generation logical mind map

At the following level, by cross and synthesizing the contents of POD4 and POD5, the author, based on the existing research on symbol and representation theory, combined with the core of pragmatist aesthetics of "experience", "language" and "body", analyzed the cultural significance, values, physicality and cultural narrative of Miao batik motifs. This gave rise to POD7: Based on the above theoretical foundation, it analyzes the craftsmanship, types and clothing applications of Miao batik motifs, emphasizing cultural connotations and artistic values. Through elements such as themes, plots and characters, it explores their symbolic meanings and reveals the relationship between traditional handicrafts and cultural identities. Combining the core of "experience", "language" and "body" in pragmatist aesthetics, it can make up for the deficiency of insufficient analysis of pragmatist aesthetics in existing studies, deeply explore the physicality and cultural narrativity of batik motifs, explore their cultural connotations and social functions, and construct the theoretical framework of cultural aesthetic identity.

Next, by cross and synthesizing the contents of POD5 and POD6, the author emphasized the physicality and cultural narrative nature of batik motifs, explored their cultural connotations and social functions, providing a new direction for research and laying a foundation for further exploration and innovation. This gave rise to POD8: Combining the core elements of pragmatism aesthetics such as "experience", "language", and "body", it analyzes the cultural significance, values, craftsmanship, types, and costume applications of Miao batik motifs, and explores their symbolic meaning, physicality, and cultural narrative. The existing research has insufficient analysis of pragmatist aesthetics and lacks exploration of innovation and application in modern society. The perspective of pragmatism aesthetics can be introduced, combined with the theory of cultural narrative, to explore the functions and values of Miao batik motifs in contemporary times, explore their cultural connotations and social functions, and provide new directions for research from different theoretical dimensions.

Finally, by cross and synthesizing the contents of POD7 and POD8, the author developed POD9: Combining the core elements of pragmatism aesthetics such as "experience", "language", and "body", it analyzes the craftsmanship, types, costume applications, cultural significance, and values of Miao batik decorative motifs, and explores their symbolic meanings, physicality, and cultural narrative. Introducing the perspective of pragmatist aesthetics, this paper explores the functions and values of batik motifs in contemporary times, uncovers their cultural connotations and social functions, provides a new direction for research, and forms a cross-disciplinary and multi-dimensional theoretical framework of "cultural aesthetic identity" (Figure 10) .

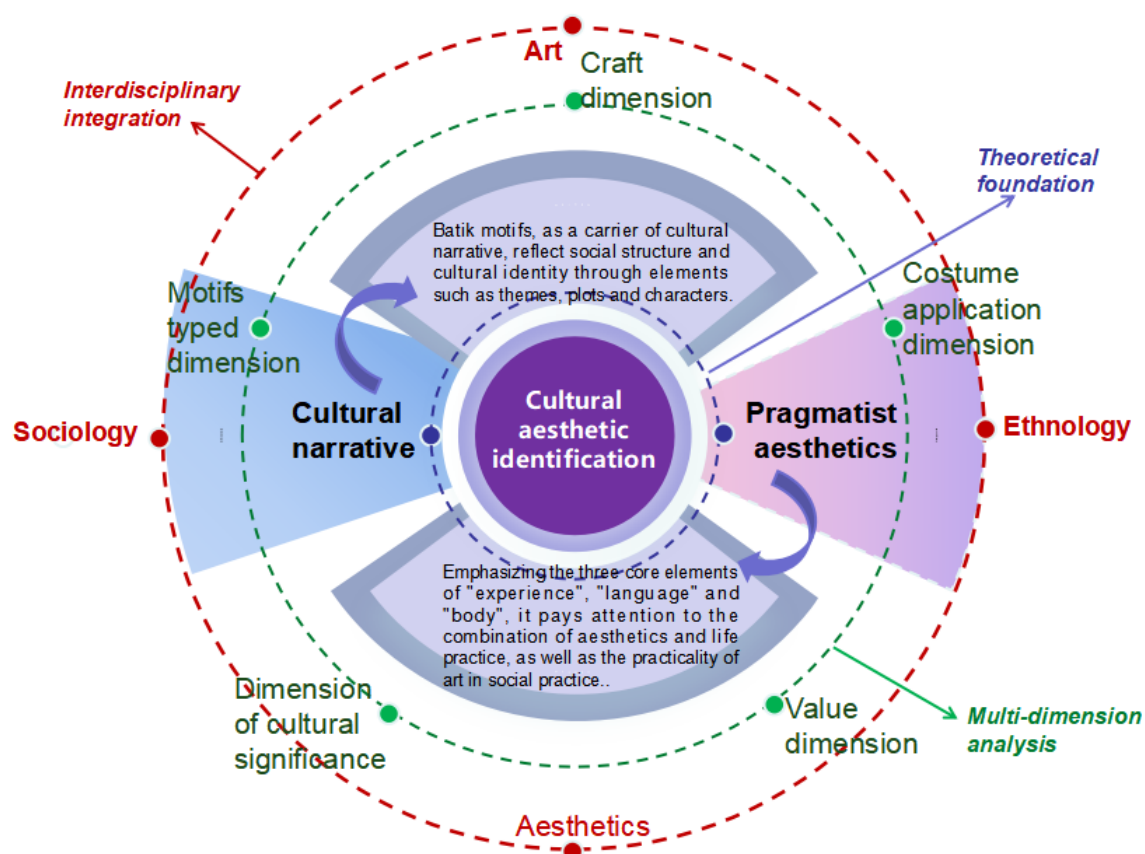


Figure 10 Crossing-disciplinary and multi-dimensional theoretical framework of "cultural aesthetic identity"

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research method of batik decorative motifs in Miao costumes proposed in this study provides an interdisciplinary innovative theoretical framework for inheritors and fashion designers to address the demands of inheritance and innovation in the context of globalization. By taking advantage of the theoretical strengths of pragmatic aesthetics, it emphasizes the close integration of culture and life, and focuses on experience and knowledge. Strengthening the narrative nature of culture, the proposed method not only deepens the understanding of the cultural connotation of Miao batik motifs, but also provides new ideas for the identity recognition of national character and makes up for the deficiencies of existing research. These advantages have promoted the sustainability of cultural inheritance, while balancing the academic demands, cultural values and social functions of batik motif research, ultimately facilitating the wide application of Miao batik in modern society.

This study suggests that the research on batik decorative motifs in Miao costumes should combine pragmatic aesthetic theory and cultural narrative theory. From different dimensions such as art studies, ethnology, sociology, and philosophy, and by integrating different theoretical perspectives, it should deeply explore the cultural connotations, social functions, and artistic values of batik motifs. Through an interdisciplinary theoretical framework, Create innovative designs that not only conform to modern aesthetics but also possess profound cultural connotations.

However, this study also has certain limitations. Firstly, the proposed interdisciplinary and multi-dimensional theoretical framework of "cultural aesthetic identity" has not yet been widely tested in the application of batik decorative motifs in actual Miao costumes, such as the application effects under different cultural backgrounds, modern Miao batik costume designs, or the demands of specific consumer groups. Secondly, the existing research has not fully focused on the physical behavior and wearing experience of Miao costumes, which is particularly important for the application of batik decorative motifs in Miao ethnic costumes. Thirdly, this study lacks cooperation with traditional batik inheritors and Miao costume enterprises, which limits the in-depth understanding and practical application of the integration of traditional skills and costume enterprises. Strengthening such cooperation is conducive to validate the balance problem among the inheritance of batik skills, the innovation of costume design and market demand of this theory, and at the same time provides new ideas and opportunities for the sustainable development of Miao batik.

Furthermore, the findings of this study are of great value for the future research perspective of Miao batik decorative motifs, especially in the context of interdisciplinary research. By leveraging the insights gained in this paper, researchers can enhance the depth and breadth of their studies by using these results as fundamental components of interdisciplinary research. This theoretical framework not only enriches the theoretical framework of cultural studies, but also provides a verified knowledge base that can guide the innovative design and application research of Miao batik decorative motifs in modern society. Furthermore, integrating these findings into interdisciplinary research can help identify new research directions, improve research perspectives, and ensure that subsequent research is both academically forward-looking and rigorous, while also promoting cultural inheritance and innovation.

This paper deeply explores the cultural narrative of batik decorative motifs in Miao costumes and its interpretation from the perspective of pragmatic aesthetics, and proposes future research directions. Future research should focus on the following four aspects: First, conduct comparative studies across cultures; Second, through field research and oral history studies, go deep into Miao communities to collect the oral history of artisans, observation records of the production process, as well as the cognition and evaluation of batik motifs by community members, to understand the user experience of Miao batik motifs. Thirdly, the integration of quantitative analysis and multidisciplinary methods is introduced. Through methods such as statistical analysis and questionnaire surveys, the usage frequency, acceptance and cultural identity of different batik motifs in different regions and social groups are evaluated. Fourth, focus on cultural inheritance and innovation in the context of globalization, analyze the impact of globalization on Miao batik decorative motifs, study how to protect and inherit Miao batik culture in the context of globalization, promote its innovative development at the same time, and explore the role of the government and all sectors of society in the protection and inheritance of Miao batik culture. Through policy support, educational promotion, community participation and other means, Realize the sustainable development of Miao batik culture.

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