



<https://www.abrj.org/>

Impact Factor 2.30

Role of Marketing in Identifying Traditional Costumes of Ethnic Minorities in Northern Vietnam

Author's Details:

⁽¹⁾Cong Thanh Le-Thai Binh University

⁽²⁾Le Nguyen Bao Long-Foreign Language Specialized School

Email: lenguyenbaolong.work@gmail.com

Abstract:

The goal of the article is to evaluate the role of marketing in identifying, preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of Vietnamese ethnic groups. The article summarizes the traditional costumes of typical ethnic groups of Vietnam through the periods. At the same time, the article also analyzes the role of marketing in promoting and maintaining indigenous culture through traditional costumes of Vietnamese ethnic groups.

Keywords: *Marketing, Traditional costumes, Vietnamese ethnicity.*

1. Introduction

The Vietnamese population consists of 54 ethnic groups scattered across the nation (Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the United States, n.d.), the traditional costume of each of which embodies the unique heritage, identity, and artistic craftsmanship of its people (Pham, 2022). At the same time, these garments have significantly contributed to people's income and promoted tourism, thus improving the lives of ethnic minorities (quochoitv.vn, 2023).

According to the American Marketing Association (AMA) (n.d.), Marketing entails creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society as a whole. Marketers understand customer needs, develop products or services, determine pricing strategies, promote offerings, and manage distribution channels, thus facilitating exchanges in the marketplace.

Marketing plays a crucial role in identifying traditional products, providing marketers with insights about consumer preferences, market trends, and product demand. Research on marketing helps shape effective strategies, ensuring that products align with consumer needs and expectations (Apooyin, 2024). In the case of Northern Vietnamese traditional costumes, this research helps explore the effects of marketing on promoting the recognition of these garments.

2. Literature review

2.1. The concept of Marketing

2.1.1. Concept of Marketing

Adapting to a variety of environmental and historical factors in a constantly evolving business world, the discipline of marketing witnesses ongoing changes. This has, accordingly, prompted mixed views and revisions over time regarding the definition of marketing.

Between 1910 and 1920, marketing was defined as undertaken by the producers, referring to how the product is distributed by means of various channels of trade. Meanwhile, merchandising, undertaken by jobbers and

retailers, assumed both the distribution and acquisition of the commodities. Marketing paralleled merchandising: "Manufacturers market their products and jobbers and retailers merchandise their stocks of these products" (Brunswick, 2014).

The mid-twentieth century saw mixed opinions on the definition of marketing. McCarthy (1960) defined marketing as "the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producer to consumer or user in order to best satisfy consumers and accomplish the firm's objectives". However, this definition, according to Brunswick (2014) gave rise to significant uncertainty regarding which business activities fell within the scope of marketing. Holloway and Handcock (1973) defined marketing as "a set of activities necessary and incidental to bringing about exchange relationships in our economic system". They classified these activities as (i) marketing research; (ii) product; (iii) distribution; (iv) pricing; (v) marketing communications.

The author has decided to base this research on a definition devised by the AMA (n.d.) (approved in 2017): "Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large". In this definition, there are four constituent parts of marketing - creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging - which help clear the vagueness in McCarthy's definitions in 1960, optimally generalize and improve the marketing components proposed by Holloway and Handcock, and inherit the simplicity of the marketing mix (also known as the 4 Ps (Kenton, 2024)). According to Kotler et al. (1980), these activities can be interpreted as:

- Creating. The process of collaborating with suppliers and customers to create offerings that have value.
- Communicating. Broadly, describing those offerings, as well as learning from customers.
- Delivering. Getting those offerings to the consumer in a way that optimizes value.
- Exchanging. Trading value for those offerings.

2.1.2. Role of Marketing

Marketing facilitates the exchange of different values among different parties for the mutual benefit of every party and the society as a whole. Therefore, it plays a pivotal role in both business success and societal improvement.

Marketing fuels trade and drives economic growth. By communicating and delivering values from the firms' offerings to customers, marketing helps promote their products and services, thus increasing sales. This generates more demand and purchases, thereby, contributes to tax revenue while also creating more employment opportunities (itzfizz.com, 2023).

Marketing fosters a better informed consumer base. Marketing educates customers on the products and services, influence their purchasing decisions, and optimize their purchases (Kotler et al., 1980). Therefore, the public will gain more transparency and better insights into the commodities they are to purchase, make better choices and enjoy higher life quality.

Marketing facilitates healthy competition and innovation in the market. A well-informed consumer base, as mentioned, has higher requirements accordingly. This drives competition among businesses to attract and retain customers, which is a "catalyst for innovation", prompting better products and services with competitive prices for the market (itzfizz.com, 2023).

2.2. The concept of traditional costumes (folk costumes)

2.2.1. Concept of traditional costumes (folk costumes)

Traditional Costumes, also known as folk costumes, refer to clothing and attire that hold cultural, historical, or regional significance. These costumes are deeply rooted in specific communities, reflecting their customs, rituals, and identity, which are often associated with "a geographic area or a period in history" (folklife.wisc.edu, n.d.). Different cultures incorporate distinctive fabrics, colors, patterns, and accessories, embodying cultural heritage and social norms into their traditional garments (blog.daisie.com, 2023). In Vietnam, along with languages, traditional customs, traditional festivals, traditional art forms, the folk costume

is a fundamental sign of identification, and the most distinct expression of the ethnic minorities' identity (dangcongsan.vn, n.d.).

Differentiating traditional costumes of Northern Vietnam's ethnic minorities involves examining different aesthetic aspects like colors, materials, accessories, composition, and so on. For instance, materials such as linen (used in the Hmong's costumes (dangcongsan.vn, 2018)), unique accessories like silver jewelry (used in the Nung's costume (tuyengiao.hagiang.gov.vn, 2023)), and varied outfit layers distinguish each minorities' cultural identity.

2.2.2. Role of ethnic minorities' traditional costumes in Vietnam

Different ethnic groups' identities reflected in their traditional clothing creates richness, diversity, and distinctiveness for the peoples of Vietnam. Apart from expressing ethnic groups' identities, traditional garments also contain artistic and historical values, serving as a message from the past to the present and future (dangcongsan.vn, n.d.).

At the same time, these traditional garments act as a catalyst for ethnic minorities' economy and Vietnam's economy as a whole.

3. Research method

3.1. Context

3.1.1. Ethnic minorities' traditional clothing in Lang Son, Quang Ninh



**the Dao Thanh Phan traditional clothing*

With remarkable differences in geographical conditions and customs, the Dao people observe the birth of many ethnic groups within the same Dao culture whose names originate from the distinct characteristics of their traditional clothing.

On the one hand, some key features proved to be universally adopted by the majority of Dao groups. The Dao people pay high attention to embroidery, which is believed to showcase the Dao women's excellence and resourcefulness. Their meticulous pieces of embroidery often imitate nature or human labor life, symbolizing the Dao people's hope for harmony with nature as well as abundance and happiness.

On the other hand, there are some distinctions among the Dao groups, particularly regarding colors and accessories. In the mountainous part of Quang Ninh, where Dao Thanh Phan, Dao Thanh Y, and Dao Lo Gang are the three dominant Dao groups, for instance, the colors yellow or orange are used the most by the Dao Lo Gang, whereas the two other groups use mostly red in their costumes. Furthermore, the Dao Thanh Phan women in Binh Lieu, Quang Ninh usually wear a rectangular hat while those in Ba Che, Quang Ninh only wear a rectangular piece of fabric on their heads.



**the Tay traditional clothing*

In contrast with the Dao people, the Tay people seem to embrace more minimalism in their traditional garments. The dominant color evident in most Tay garments is a dark indigo blue for both men and women. For important events like Lau Then, however, the Tay people use red, pink or green in the garments worn by women who carry out spiritual rituals.

There are two kinds of traditional costume for Tay women: *slu ly* (a four-panel dress without sleeves) and *slu ten* (a shorter traditional top which better suits the Tay women's need for daily lives).

To complement the minimalism of their traditional costume, The Tay people often use jewelries made of silver, among which, the necklace is the most important feature according to the Tay people's belief.

3.1.2. Ethnic minorities' traditional clothing in Lai Chau, Dien Bien, Lao Cai



**the H'Mong traditional clothing*

Similar to the Dao people, there are many H'Mong groups scattered all across the North West and North East of Vietnam (particularly in Lai Chau, Lao Cai, etc..). Nevertheless, some staple features are common among these

groups' clothing, especially for women: head scarf, belt, apron, skirt, xa cap (tight-fitting trouser legs), jewelries, and their traditional tops.

For women, kick pleats with detailed embroideries and vibrant, warm colors are popular. Coupled with the H'Mong women traditional costumes are jewelries which complement the whole outfit by their delicate gold tint. While women's clothing are flamboyant and diverse in colors and details, men's clothing is more uniform and minimal. Most H'Mong men wear dark-colored garments with small embroideries on them. Both men and women use head scarfs.

The H'Mong people showcase remarkable craftsmanship while also implementing many sophisticated techniques in the making of their clothing. One remarkable technique, in particular, is indigo dyeing. The dye the H'Mong people use originates from the Cham trees, which will provide a beautiful indigo tint while not producing any toxins that irritate human skin. This process can span months, requiring high virtuosity and patience as well.



**Chinese traditional clothing*



**Chinese embroidered shoes (two in a row)*

The Hoa people immigrated to the North of Vietnam from China. Their traditional clothing is now mostly seen in the elderly or in important traditional events like weddings or ceremonies.

Women typically wear high-collared tops, buttoned on one side, high slit or a long qipao. For men, their traditional attire includes a dark blue top, buttoned on one side with a collar continuous to the shoulder or a four-panel shirt, slit in the middle.

One notable feature of the traditional clothing is their lien hai - traditional shoes with sophisticated embroideries. These shoes can take up to ten to twelve days to make and often showcase six-leaved and four-leaved flower patterns along with vine patterns and geometric shapes.

3.1.3. Ethnic minorities' traditional clothing in Cao Bang



**the Lo Lo Den traditional clothing*

A branch of the Lo Lo people, the Lo Lo Den resides in the mountainous parts of Cao Bang. The Lo Lo Den traditional attire can be recognized with colorful details on a black foundation - the major color of their garments.

Women typically wear a black top that exposes their midriff with a front slit on their chest. The midriff is covered with a thin undershirt in white, pink, or sky blue. The sleeves extend from the shoulders to the wrists, adorned with rings of fabric in nine different colors. Two front panels of the shirt are decorated with a red floral trim and round brass buttons. On their back are triangular patches of colored fabric forming squares with different patterns. They wear loose fitting pants, over which they wrap a piece of fabric from the back to the front helping to tighten the waist. The Lo Lo Den men usually wear a plain black top, slit on both sides, buttoned on the right.

3.1.4. Ethnic minorities' traditional clothing in Ha Giang



**the Lo Lo traditional clothing*

A branch of the Lo Lo people, the Lo Lo groups' clothing in Ha Giang can be differed from the Lo Lo Den's clothing on account of their women's attire while that of men are the same for both groups. At first glance, the Lo Lo groups' garments in Ha Giang already showcase more colorful patches and patterns.

In Dong Van, Ha Giang, the Lo Lo women wear square-neck tops adorned with patterns relating to nature or their agricultural life. The hems of these tops are quite wide, made from several vibrant fabric bands. These tops are often paired with skirts and a long rectangular piece of fabric on the back. At the same time, the Lo Lo Hoa women wear round-neck tops with an outer open jacket with no buttons. The sleeves are also made from various colored bands of fabric.

3.1.5. Ethnic minorities' traditional clothing in Son La, Hoa Binh



**the Thai traditional clothing*

The Thai people in Son La typically reside in lowland areas.

For Thai women, the "ao com" - a form-fitting top with silver buttons shaped like insects - is a fundamental part of their outfit. This top is usually paired with a black, long skirt and a waistband, made of silk or cotton in blue, pink, or dark purple. The women of the two Thai branches in Son La can be distinguished on account of their clothing. The Thai Trang women wear a low V-neck top and have their hair bun at the nape of the neck. The Thai Den women wear a high-collared blouse and a "khan Pieu" on their head, with their hair bun on top of the head once married. Regarding the "khan Pieu", a square piece of fabric with intricate patterns worn by the Thai women on their head, it represents the fidelity, the passionate love and the virtuosity of Thai women. Men usually wear a traditional top, pants, belt, and various scarves. There are two types of men's shirts: short and long. On special occasions, the Thai men will wear a new short shirt.



**the Muong traditional clothing*

The Muong traditional attire embraces simplicity and elegance.

The traditional outfit of the Muong women consists of "bit trooc" (a white scarf tied to the head); a short top; a long tunic similar to the short top but reaches the knees, flaring slightly at the bottom, with free-flowing front panels; an "yem" (undergarment); and a skirt with a colorful waistband, which is usually considered the main part of their whole outfit. Regarding the art of adorning the waistband, the Muong waistband are characterized by their unique composition, geometric patterns and stylized natural elements such as animals or trees, etc.. The colors are carefully selected to be vibrant yet harmonious with the overall outfit. When it comes to the "bit trooc", its white color symbolizes purity and nobility. To the Mùòng people, white represents the sky, a realm of bliss and transcendence. Thus, Mùòng women wear a white scarf on their heads to express respect and honor.

4. Results

To evaluate the role of marketing to identify the traditional costumes of ethnic minorities of Vietnam. We conducted a survey of 138 ethnic minorities in the Northern region of Vietnam for 3 months from March to June 2024, to examine the role of marketing in identifying the traditional costumes of ethnic minorities of Vietnam.

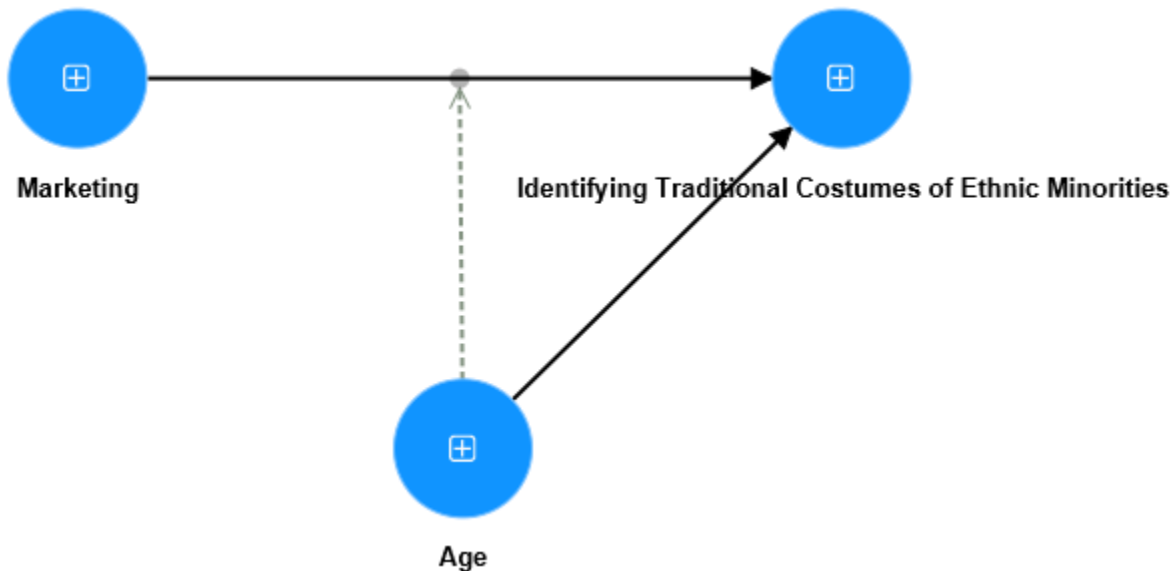


Fig. Research Model

The PLS evaluation results show that the variables in the model are satisfactory to test the hypothesis.

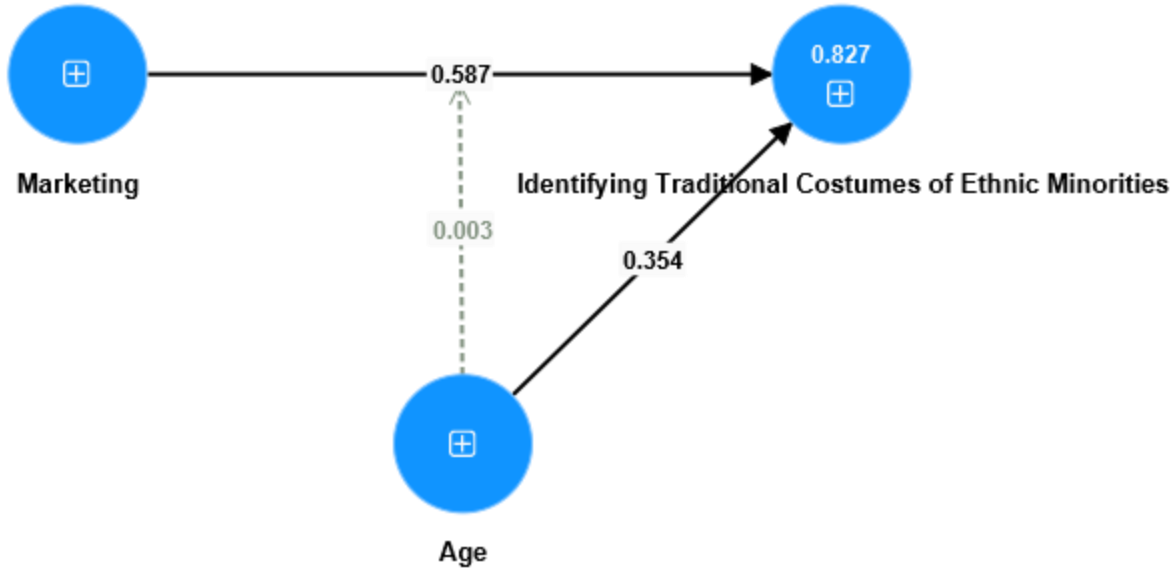


Fig. PLS results

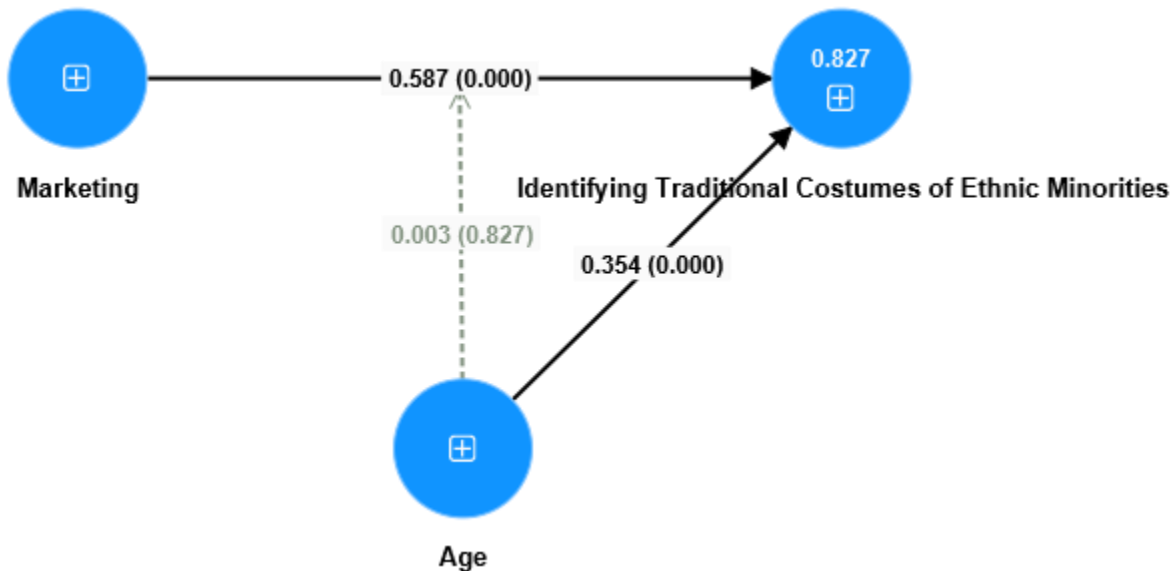


Fig. Bootstrapping results

The results of the model test through the Bootstrapping test showed that Marketing had a positive impact on Identifying Traditional Costumes of Ethnic Minorities at an impact level of 0.587 at a meaningful level of 1% (P_value = 0.000). This means that the

5. Conclusion

Vietnam is a multi-ethnic country, in addition to 85.4% of Kinh people, the remaining 53 ethnic minorities (ethnic minorities) account for 14.6% of the country's population with rich and unique cultural identities, contributing to the creation of Vietnamese cultural identity. In which, an important and recognizable cultural element is indispensable, which is the traditional costume. Along with voices, writings, cultural festivals, customs, and traditional art forms, costumes are the means of constituting, the most obvious sign of identification and expression of national identity. Traditional costumes have the role of a separate cultural marker for each ethnic group, creating richness, diversity and uniqueness for Vietnamese ethnic groups.

Traditional costumes are the essence and soul of each ethnic group, a unique feature to distinguish one ethnic group from another. The traditional costumes of ethnic groups are not only imbued with cultural identity but also contain artistic and historical values, which are the messages of the past left for the present and the future.

The Mong and Dao women with colorful color combinations combined with metal decorations to effectively create color and sound. Thai and Muong costumes with original colors, there is a contrast between the color of the skirt and the shirt. The costumes of the Tay and Nung people with indigo colors show the discreteness and tenderness of the woman. The Lo Lo people with brilliant costumes, very sophisticated and elaborate handmade... Through traditional costumes, ethnic minorities not only show their aesthetic "taste" but also reflect their beliefs, religion, outlook on life, worldview, and even the roots of the formation and development of their nation. It can be said that each costume is a work that synthesizes shaping elements, craft techniques, colors and folk knowledge, contains many stories about culture, history, art, and is the expression and crystallization of the quintessence of ethnic culture.

Traditional costumes of ethnic minorities were also soon formed, including costumes for normal working life, costumes for festivals, in important events of human life such as weddings, mourning; costumes for shamans and shamans when they practice rituals of communication with supernatural forces; costumes for women, men, the elderly, children... Many ethnic groups have clearly stipulated the wearing of clothes suitable to their social position, age, gender, and specific circumstances when communicating and behaving; including elements of religion, belief, cultural and artistic activities. Therefore, the costumes of each ethnic group in different regions and different ethnic groups are also different.

Because of that richness, diversity, and expressive nuances, costumes are one of the typical values that contribute to the cultural identity of the Vietnamese nation. Through historical periods, ethnic minorities in our country have created their own cultural identity through costumes.

References

- i. Philip Kotler (2018). Principle of marketing, edit 18th, chapter 1, chapter 16.
- ii. Christy Belden, Paid (2013). Convergence in social media; Journal of Digital & Social Media Marketing.
- iii. Pinaki Mandal, Nitin Joshi (2013). Understanding Digital Marketing Strategy - International Journal of Scientific research and management <https://www.henrystewartpublications.com/jdsm/convergenceinsocialmedia>
- iv. Cynthia D. Fisher (2010). Happiness at work - International Journal of Management Reviews https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227533694_Happiness_at_Work
- v. Nishi Misra and Shobhna Srivastava (2022). Happiness at work: A psychological perspective. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/365327590_Happiness_at_Work_A_Psychological_Perspective
- vi. Alexander Santo (2021). Five internal marketing strategies to supercharge employee engagement (Infographic) <https://www.brafton.com/blog/content-marketing/internal-marketing/>
- vii. Knowledge Management Institute - KMi (2022). Applied research project "Survey of happiness index" in some small and medium enterprises, November 2021 - November 2022.
- viii. Lam Thanh Huy (2022). Analysis of factors affecting happiness at work of employees in enterprises in Can Tho, Master's thesis.
- ix. Truong Chau Bao Thoa, Bui Van Trinh (2021), Factors affecting the work motivation of employees of Vietnam Joint Stock Commercial Bank for Investment and Development in Can Tho city. Industry and Trade Magazine, accessed at: <https://tapchicongthuong.vn/bai-viet/cac-nhan-to-anh-huong-den-dong->

luc-lam-viec-cua-nhan-vien-ngan-hang -thuong-mai-co-phan-dau-tu-va-phat-trien-viet-nam-tai-tp-can-tho-85141.htm

- x. Ngo Thi My Hanh (2020), The role of internal marketing for organizations, businesses. Industry and Trade Magazine, access at: <https://tapchicongthuong.vn/bai-viet/vai-tro-cua-marketing-noi-bo-doi-voi-cac-to-chuc-business-73583.htm>