



Cultural Identity Preservation in Association with Tourism Development of the H'Mong People in Si Ma Cai District and Bac Ha, Lao Cai Province, Vietnam

Dr. Hoang Van Duong¹, Ly Xuan Thanh², Tran Thi Hien³, Dr. Dang Thi Oanh⁴

¹People's Committee of Si Ma Cai District, Lao Cai Province

²Si Ma Cai District Party Committee, Lao Cai Province

^{3,4}Thai Nguyen University – Lao Cai Campus

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Published Online: 27 January 2025	The H'Mong people in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha districts, located in Lao Cai Province, Vietnam, possess a rich cultural heritage and profound humanistic values. This heritage serves as a distinctive tourism resource that draws numerous visitors. Through a SWOT analysis and an evaluation of achievements, challenges, and their underlying causes, this article presents ten solutions to strengthen cultural preservation while promoting sustainable tourism development.
Corresponding Author: Dr. Dang Thi Oanh	These proposed solutions aim to assist local communities and authorities in advancing economic, cultural, and social progress.
KEYWORDS: Cultural preservation, H'Mong culture, tourism, Si Ma Cai, Bac Ha.	

1. General Introduction to H'Mong Culture in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha Districts

Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha are mountainous districts in the Northwest Region of Vietnam. These districts boast diverse cultural landscapes and a rich heritage, contributing significantly to Lao Cai Province's economic growth and playing a vital role in safeguarding the unique cultural values of ethnic minorities. Among these, the H'Mong culture stands out as particularly remarkable.

The H'Mong people in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha districts primarily engage in mountainous agricultural activities. They hold a rich and distinctive cultural heritage that encompasses their language, traditional costumes, customs, festivals, and community practices, reflecting the lifestyle of highland agricultural societies. Their primary livelihoods revolve around cultivating rice, corn, and potatoes, alongside livestock and poultry farming.

Comprising over 90% of the population, the H'Mong people exert a profound influence on the cultural traditions of other ethnic groups in the region.

1.1. The H'Mong People's Housing

The housing of the H'Mong people in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha is characterized by remarkable diversity, reflecting their adaptation to the harsh climates and rugged terrains of the region. Traditionally, their homes are built using rammed-earth and wooden materials, designed to endure

severe weather conditions. These structures are typically constructed on elevated ground to prevent dampness during the rainy season, combining simplicity with functionality to optimize space for living and storage.

Furthermore, the H'Mong people place significant emphasis on building barns for livestock and poultry, such as cows, goats, and pigs. These barns are usually located close to the house to facilitate care and protect the animals effectively.

1.2. Traditional Handicrafts and Costumes of the H'Mong People

1.2. Traditional Handicrafts and Costumes of the H'Mong People

The H'Mong people in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha are renowned for their traditional handicrafts, particularly brocade weaving. H'Mong brocade is crafted from natural fibers such as cotton or linen and features intricate geometric designs and unique hand-embroidered patterns. These brocade products serve various purposes, including costumes, handbags, blankets, and household decorations.

H'Mong women's traditional costumes are especially striking, characterized by vibrant colors and meticulous designs. Their shirts and skirts are carefully tailored, featuring elaborate embroidery and seams. Women's shirts are form-fitting with slits on both sides, complemented by brocade belts. Bright colors such as red, blue, and yellow,

“Cultural Identity Preservation in Association with Tourism Development of the H’Mong People in Si Ma Cai District and Bac Ha, Lao Cai Province, Vietnam”

combined with geometric patterns, enhance the visual appeal of their attire. Additionally, H’Mong women often wear distinctive headscarves adorned with embroidered motifs.

H’Mong men typically wear brocade shirts, long pants, and hats, which, like women’s clothing, reflect their cultural identity. Beyond their aesthetic value, these traditional garments convey important social meanings, signifying age, family roles, and social status within the community. While such garments are now mostly worn during festivals, weddings, and other cultural events, their significance remains integral to H’Mong identity.

In addition to brocade weaving, the H’Mong people excel in crafting household items and silver jewelry. Silverware, often elaborately carved, holds both decorative and symbolic importance, especially during festivals and weddings, where it represents power and social prestige.

1.3. Language

The H’Mong people in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha communicate using the Mong-Dao language group, which encompasses a rich array of dialects. While variations in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar exist among different regions, these dialects share common linguistic features that enable mutual understanding within the community.

Additionally, many H’Mong individuals have developed proficiency in their traditional writing system, preserving their linguistic heritage. This writing system plays a significant role in documenting cultural practices, oral traditions, and community knowledge, contributing to the transmission of cultural identity across generations.

1.4. Beliefs and Religions

The beliefs of the H’Mong people in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha are deeply rooted in polytheism, with a strong focus on ancestor worship, nature spirits, and guardian deities. Guardian deities are often honored in private homes or at community temples located in sacred areas. The H’Mong people also maintain a profound connection to supernatural forces, believing in their ability to bring prosperity, ensure good harvests, and protect families from misfortunes. To express their gratitude and seek blessings, the H’Mong people frequently organize ceremonies that involve offerings and rituals. These ceremonies reflect their close relationship with nature and their efforts to maintain harmony between the physical and spiritual realms. In recent years, some H’Mong communities in these districts have adopted Protestantism, integrating new religious practices while still preserving aspects of their traditional beliefs.

1.5. Festivals and Rituals

Festivals and rituals hold a central place in the spiritual and cultural life of the H’Mong people in Si Ma Cai and

Bac Ha. Key rituals include ancestor worship ceremonies and nature deity worship, which are performed during important occasions such as the New Year, crop festivals, and weddings. One of the most prominent festivals is the Gau Tao Festival, celebrated to pray for health, prosperity, and good fortune.

These festivals and rituals are not only opportunities for the H’Mong people to honor their ancestors and deities but also serve as vital social events. They strengthen community bonds, promote solidarity, and allow for the exchange of cultural practices. Through vibrant dances, traditional music, and ceremonial activities, the H’Mong people express their gratitude, joy, and unity, showcasing their rich cultural heritage.

2. Assessment of the Current Status of H’Mong Cultural Preservation in Association with Tourism Development in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha

2.1. SWOT Assessment

Strengths (S):

- S1: The diverse and uniquely distinctive H’Mong culture in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha serves as a valuable tourism resource. Key attractions include rammed-earth houses, traditional handicrafts (sewing and embroidering costumes), H’Mong cuisine (e.g., Sin Cheng duck and duck eggs, seven-color sticky rice, Chung cake, and corn wine with special yeast), vibrant festivals, worship ceremonies, and folk arts.
- S2: The majority of H’Mong people in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha possess a strong awareness of their cultural values. They express pride and affection for their ethnic identity, coupled with a strong commitment to preserving and protecting their cultural heritage.
- S3: Within the H’Mong community, artists, shamans, and cultural custodians play an essential role in safeguarding traditional culture. These individuals hold in-depth knowledge of cultural traditions and actively pass them down to younger generations.
- S4: Sacred cultural rituals, such as ancestor worship and forest-worship ceremonies, remain integral to the H’Mong worldview. These practices contribute significantly to preserving and perpetuating ritualistic cultural elements within the community.
- S5: Many traditional cultural practices continue to hold relevance in modern life. These include cultural expressions in education, labor practices, entertainment, and social customs, which remain deeply ingrained in daily activities.
- S6: Most H’Mong households express interest in utilizing their cultural heritage as a foundation for

“Cultural Identity Preservation in Association with Tourism Development of the H’Mong People in Si Ma Cai District and Bac Ha, Lao Cai Province, Vietnam”

developing tourism products. This interest fosters job creation, household economic development, and the broader integration of culture with economic opportunities.

Weaknesses (W):

- W1: The promotion of H’Mong cultural values and tourism in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha remains limited due to inadequate infrastructure, including transportation, accommodation, and other essential services, which fail to meet the needs of tourists effectively.
- W2: The lack of systematic documentation and preservation of H’Mong cultural practices has resulted in some traditional values and practices being lost or distorted over time.
- W3: While the majority of H’Mong people express pride in their culture, a portion of the younger generation shows diminishing interest in traditional customs, influenced by external cultural trends and modernization.
- W4: Tourism activities in the area often focus heavily on economic development without adequate emphasis on cultural preservation, leading to the commercialization and potential loss of authenticity in certain cultural practices.
- W5: Limited access to financial resources and training for local people hinders the development of community-based tourism initiatives, which could otherwise strengthen cultural preservation efforts and improve economic conditions.

Opportunities (O):

- O1: Increasing global and domestic interest in cultural tourism provides a significant opportunity for the H’Mong people in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha to showcase their unique cultural heritage to a wider audience.
- O2: Support from local authorities and non-governmental organizations for cultural preservation and sustainable tourism development has created favorable conditions for promoting H’Mong culture.
- O3: The growing trend of ecotourism and community-based tourism aligns well with the cultural and natural assets of Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha, offering potential for integrating tourism with cultural preservation.
- O4: Advances in technology and digital platforms enable the H’Mong community to document, promote, and market their cultural heritage more effectively to tourists and researchers.
- O5: Collaboration with neighboring regions and ethnic groups in Lao Cai Province offers opportunities to develop comprehensive cultural

and tourism networks, enhancing the overall appeal of the area.

Threats (T):

- T1: The rapid development of tourism in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha, if not properly managed, risks leading to over-commercialization and the degradation of authentic cultural values.
- T2: Environmental challenges such as deforestation, land erosion, and climate change pose significant threats to the sustainability of agricultural and cultural practices in the region.
- T3: External cultural influences, driven by globalization and modern lifestyles, could erode the traditional values and identity of the H’Mong community.
- T4: Competition from other ethnic minority groups and tourist destinations in Vietnam presents challenges in attracting and retaining visitor interest.
- T5: A lack of comprehensive policies and long-term planning for cultural preservation and tourism development may result in fragmented and ineffective efforts to address the region’s challenges.

2.2. General Assessment Achievements:

The cultural heritage of the H’Mong people in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha is remarkably rich, diverse, and unique, embodying profound humanistic values. This heritage has become a distinctive tourism resource capable of attracting visitors.

The H’Mong people in these areas demonstrate strong awareness of the importance of their cultural heritage and actively engage in its preservation. Many cultural elements remain well-conserved and are seamlessly integrated into their daily lives.

Local authorities have prioritized the preservation and promotion of H’Mong cultural heritage through supportive policies, infrastructure development, and financial assistance. Various programs and projects have been implemented, yielding significant and encouraging outcomes.

Numerous cultural heritages have been restored and preserved through collaboration between the H’Mong people and local authorities. Some of these heritages have been developed into tourism products, contributing to job creation, income generation, and improved household economies.

Additionally, certain cultural heritages have been digitized to ensure their long-term preservation and broader promotion.

Existing Limitations:

A large proportion of H’Mong people, particularly among the younger generation, possess only a superficial understanding of their cultural heritage. The knowledge of

“Cultural Identity Preservation in Association with Tourism Development of the H’Mong People in Si Ma Cai District and Bac Ha, Lao Cai Province, Vietnam”

origins and meanings behind cultural elements is largely confined to a few elders, artists, and shamans, putting the heritage at risk of being lost.

Cultural heritages restored through state-supported projects are often neglected or abandoned once the projects conclude.

Some restored cultural heritages have become overly formalized, disregarding their core values or the environmental contexts in which they originated. This has resulted in hybridization and a loss of authenticity.

Traditional practices, such as brocade weaving, are increasingly replaced by foreign products like Chinese and Thai brocade, as well as modern cultural practices.

Certain cultural heritages leveraged for tourism lack effective marketing strategies or fail to attract sufficient visitors, resulting in underutilized local tourism resources.

Tourism infrastructure in H’Mong areas remains underdeveloped, hindering sustainable tourism growth.

Efforts to digitize cultural heritage face significant challenges due to limited budgets, insufficient equipment, and technical difficulties.

Causes of Shortcomings and Limitations:

Objective Causes:

- Policies aimed at preserving cultural heritage are not always well-adapted to local realities, leaving many issues unresolved.
- The mountainous terrain of Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha poses challenges for infrastructure development, particularly in transportation and tourism facilities.
- The H’Mong economy, predominantly reliant on agriculture and livestock farming, is characterized by high poverty rates. Many households lack the financial resources to invest in tourism services.
- Difficult living conditions force families to focus on immediate survival, often at the expense of preserving cultural traditions.
- Cultural heritage preservation is inherently complex, as it involves interrelated elements that evolve alongside societal and historical trends.

Subjective Causes:

- Some local officials lack the necessary experience and expertise in managing cultural heritage preservation, resulting in ineffective guidance and strategies.
- Dependence on state support has discouraged proactive efforts among the H’Mong people to independently preserve their cultural heritage.
- A lack of awareness regarding the long-term value of cultural heritage has led to improper exploitation and distortion of traditions.

- Insufficient training in heritage preservation for tourism development has limited the effectiveness of local initiatives.
- Unsuccessful attempts to monetize cultural heritage have discouraged further preservation efforts.
- Younger generations often show a preference for foreign cultures, which undermines traditional practices.
- Some H’Mong individuals are reluctant to digitize their cultural heritage due to sacred beliefs surrounding its preservation.

3. Solutions for Preserving the Cultural Heritage of the Mong People in Si Ma Cai, Bac Ha, in Association with Tourism Development

	Solution Group	Key Points
1	Policies and Mechanisms	Develop regulations, preferential policies for investment, and low-interest loans for communities.
2	Digitizing Cultural Heritage	Record and store H’Mong cultural elements; use VR/AR technologies; develop digital platforms.
3	Environmental Protection	Preserve ecosystems, construct green infrastructure, and manage waste at tourist sites.
4	Human Resource Training	Train locals in tourism services, including guiding, hospitality, and cultural product development.
5	Tourism Promotion	Use social media, organize events, and hold press conferences to market H’Mong culture effectively.
6	Infrastructure Development	Attract ODA, local budgets, and other resources to improve transportation and tourism facilities.
7	Regional Connectivity	Strengthen connections with

“Cultural Identity Preservation in Association with Tourism Development of the H’Mong People in Si Ma Cai District and Bac Ha, Lao Cai Province, Vietnam”

		major tourist hubs like Hanoi, Quang Ninh, and Sa Pa.
8	Exploiting Cultural Heritage	Develop unique tourism products based on H’Mong cultural heritage; create commercialized items like brocade handbags, wallets, or eco-friendly souvenirs
9	Investment Mobilization	Mobilize state capital, enterprise capital, and cultural resources from the community to develop tourism infrastructure and services
10	Propaganda and Education	Use traditional and modern communication channels to raise awareness about H’Mong cultural preservation and tourism development; build a team of influencers to support digital campaigns

3.1. Group of Solutions on Specific Institutions and Policies

3.1.1. Institutions

Institutions play a pivotal role in disseminating laws and regulations related to culture, sports, and tourism. Both formal institutions—such as laws, policies, and regulations—and informal institutions significantly contribute to preserving the cultural heritage of the H’Mong people in Bac Ha and Si Ma Cai. Among informal institutions, the village covenant serves as a critical tool; however, its application has not been fully leveraged in the daily lives of the H’Mong people in these districts.

To enhance its effectiveness, the village covenant should be revised and supplemented to function as a guiding framework for the community. It establishes community standards and sanctions, formulated with input from village elders and household heads. Key issues addressed in village covenants include dispute resolution, ensuring public security, forest conservation, and managing other communal matters.

These covenants are traditionally established through oral agreements during sacred ceremonies, where the entire village pledges adherence in the presence of witnesses,

including the village gods. The sacred nature of these covenants ensures strict compliance, as they represent the collective commitment and unified voice of the community. Sanctions for violations reinforce the authority of these covenants, but their true strength lies in the unity and collective agreement they foster among community members.

3.1.2. Policies and Mechanisms

The proposed solutions for policies and mechanisms include:

Develop and implement policies for the digitalization of cultural heritage conservation. Focus on establishing projects and community-based models for cultural heritage preservation, with particular attention to support from ministries and provincial resources. Additionally, policies should be created to support artists and cultural practitioners.

Introduce banking policies for low-interest loans to households. These loans should enable families and villages to establish experimental models for cultural heritage preservation and tourism development.

Provide preferential tax and credit policies to encourage businesses to bring tourists to community tourism areas. This includes tax reductions and preferential loan options.

Create policies to attract direct investment (FDI), joint ventures with foreign countries, and sponsorship capital for tourism development. Prioritize the upgrading of transportation systems, electricity supply, clean water systems, waste treatment, sanitation, and communication infrastructure.

Encourage domestic investment through increased joint ventures and incentives under investment law to develop hotels, restaurants, eco-tourism areas, and other facilities.

Permit diverse investment types, including 100% foreign-owned projects, particularly for infrastructure development.

Offer time-limited tax exemptions or reductions for investment projects focused on high-quality tourism products with on-site export potential.

Establish mechanisms to support training and coaching in tourism skills, information dissemination, and promotion. Develop a comprehensive tourism development strategy to attract businesses to invest in Bac Ha and Si Ma Cai districts.

3.2. Group of Solutions for Mobilizing Resources from Stakeholders in Preserving Cultural Heritage Associated with Tourism Development

3.2.1. State Capital

The People's Committees of Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha districts should lead efforts to integrate various projects into a comprehensive tourism development program. This program should aim for diverse goals with a unified objective: improving the livelihoods of the H’Mong people.

State capital allocation should adhere to the principle of "teaching people to fish, not giving them fish," prioritizing areas such as infrastructure development, planning, tourism product design, brand building, promotion, implementation of tourism models, and evaluation of their effectiveness.

Experience from other localities highlights the risks of dependency when funds are allocated to communities without proper guidance. Communities often abandon tourism models once projects conclude, undermining long-term sustainability.

3.2.2. Enterprise Capital

Enterprise investment is critical; however, the involvement of businesses in community tourism should be limited to roles such as guest reception and tourism promotion. Over-involvement risks diminishing local income, as it may turn the H’Mong people, who are the rightful stewards of cultural resources, into mere employees for external entities.

Effective land management is crucial to prevent unchecked land sales that might lead to the H’Mong people losing their land and homes. Such practices could trigger social conflicts and force community members into dependency on external businesses, jeopardizing the long-term sustainability of tourism development.

3.2.3. Cultural Resources of the Community

Cultural resources are the most valuable assets of the H’Mong people, possessing both functional and intrinsic value. These resources form the foundation for sustainable tourism development. Recognizing the H’Mong community as both the rightful owners and stewards of these cultural assets is essential.

In addition to cultural heritage, the community can contribute other valuable resources, such as human capital and land, to effectively support tourism development while maintaining their ownership and control.

3.2.4. Consulting Knowledge Capital of Scientists

Preserving cultural identity while utilizing it for tourism development in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha requires innovative, market-oriented strategies. These include effective planning, product development, promotion, brand positioning, and sales. Expert consultations are essential for successfully implementing these stages, as demonstrated by other successful community tourism models in Vietnam.

3.2.5. Scientific and Technological Resources, Especially Digital Technology

The mobilization of scientific and technological resources, particularly green and clean technologies, is increasingly vital for sustainable tourism development. The application of digital technology in marketing and tourism promotion has grown significantly in Vietnam, utilizing online platforms, electronic information pages, and digital tourism publications.

Many businesses now employ e-marketing strategies to streamline operations, enhancing efficiency and expanding reach in the tourism sector. This approach is widely adopted in Vietnam and has proven effective in boosting the visibility and appeal of tourism destinations.

3.3. Group of Solutions to Protect the Environment in Preserving H’Mong Cultural Heritage Associated with Tourism Development

3.3.1. Protecting the Ecological Environment

Protecting the ecological environment of H’Mong villages involves preserving the natural landscape, maintaining ecological systems, and minimizing the negative impacts of economic and tourism development. Efforts should focus on:

Developing tourist landscapes that highlight typical regional flora, such as Tam Hoa plum, Tai Nung pear, peach blossoms, and buckwheat flowers.

Ensuring that construction projects (e.g., roads, civil works, houses) respect the traditional landscape of H’Mong villages by establishing strict regulations and reward-punishment mechanisms.

Promoting hygiene and landscape improvements in families, villages, and along village pathways. Integrating national rural development programs to build septic tanks, biogas pits, and implement composting processes for organic fertilizer production, thus utilizing livestock waste effectively.

It is essential to plan and designate areas that retain the traditional cultural features of the H’Mong people, with specific policies to support environmental and biodiversity protection. Investments should be made to establish waste and wastewater collection and treatment facilities at tourist sites within H’Mong villages.

Additionally, attention should be given to forest, land, and water protection, preserving local natural resources for tourism. Environmental protection tasks must be integrated into tourism development planning, including conducting environmental impact assessments for new projects.

3.3.2. Protecting the Social and Tourism Environment

Efforts to protect the social and tourism environment should include:

Establishing stations and wharves equipped with modern, safe, and suitable facilities; developing safety plans and first-aid measures for emergencies.

Strengthening inspection and supervision to maintain security and sanitation at tourist attractions in H’Mong villages. This includes ensuring order, combating social evils, and strictly addressing activities that endanger tourists.

Coordinating with local military agencies when organizing tours, especially for foreign tourists, to prevent

issues related to political security, social order, and national defense in border areas.

Creating a department dedicated to monitoring tourism safety and security, operating either full-time or part-time.

Key Investments:

Prioritize programs to preserve the cultural heritage of H’Mong villages in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha. This includes upgrading infrastructure, building a H’Mong cultural center associated with a tourism information hub, and improving access to villages through clean water systems, roads, and landscaping.

Organize training programs to enhance the professional skills of guides, coaches, and technical staff for adventure tourism activities such as caving, waterfall exploration, and mountain climbing. Implement a comprehensive warning and guidance system for tourists engaging in adventure activities, ensuring 100% of adventure tours include safety training.

Community Support and Incentives:

Develop policies to support local residents in creating and running community and cultural tourism training courses, focusing on skills for integrating ecological and agricultural tourism.

Establish initial funding to create foundational tourism models. Once tourism products attract visitors, residents can collect fees to maintain the heritage and contribute to family economic growth.

Implement reward and punishment mechanisms to encourage activities that protect the ecological environment and biodiversity.

3.4. Group of Solutions to Exploit the Cultural Heritage of the H’Mong People in SMC&BH to Build Tourism Products

3.4.1. Choosing the Cultural Heritage of the H’Mong People to Build Tourism Products Suitable for the Needs of Tourists

Designing and building cultural tourism products for the H’Mong people requires a specific process. First, it is essential to study the cultural tourism resources and natural conditions of Bac Ha and Si Ma Cai districts. Research tourist attractions and develop ideas based on tourists' needs. These ideas should be transformed into tourism products that highlight H’Mong cultural tourism.

The products must meet modern requirements, attract tourists, and, most importantly, be unique. Their distinctiveness should stem from the tourism resources and the "soul" of H’Mong culture. The process includes trial productions, tourist surveys, and collaboration with consultants, artists, and tourism businesses.

Products must target specific markets to cater to different tourist segments, such as domestic visitors, Chinese tourists, or European tourists.

They should adhere to principles of environmental protection, cultural preservation, and community benefit.

3.4.2. Expanding the Space for Experiencing the Cultural Heritage of Local Ethnic Groups

H’Mong cultural tourism products in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha can be connected to cultural heritages in neighboring areas, such as Ha Giang, Sa Pa, and Mu Cang Chai, to create appealing tourist routes.

The role of travel agencies in building and promoting these routes is crucial. Collaboration with agencies specializing in tours to the Northern regions can enhance the visibility and attractiveness of H’Mong cultural tourism.

3.4.3. Creating H’Mong Cultural Tourism Products with High Commercial Value

Diversifying H’Mong cultural tourism products is essential. For instance, in brocade making:

Move beyond traditional items like dresses, shirts, or scarves to create handbags, wallets, laptop covers, home decor, and souvenirs.

Combine traditional weaving techniques with modern designs to appeal to broader audiences.

Use natural materials (linen, cotton) and eco-friendly dyeing methods to align with global “green” consumption trends.

3.4.4. Building Community Cultural Tourism Spots in H’Mong Villages/Hamlets

Planning H’Mong villages as community cultural tourism spots is an effective way to preserve cultural heritage and stimulate local economic development.

These villages can offer visitors an authentic experience of H’Mong cultural life, customs, and practices. Highlights include:

Traditional rammed-earth houses.

Handicrafts and artists’ working spaces.

Additional services such as homestays, local cuisine, and folk art performances, providing visitors with a more comprehensive understanding of H’Mong culture.

Training residents in tourism service skills is essential to ensure they can confidently serve as hosts and promote their culture to international visitors.

3.5. Group of Solutions to Promote and Advertise Tourism

Tourism promotion involves market research, understanding tourist needs, and forecasting the potential for visits to villages and hamlets. It also includes analyzing customer behavior, competitor strategies, and implementing effective propaganda, promotion, and mobilization to attract tourists and encourage businesses to invest in local tourism activities.

3.5.1. Planning for Digitalization, Promotion, and Advertising of Tourism

Digitalization Plan: Digitalization is a complex task requiring significant investment. Therefore, the district

should develop a comprehensive project for digitizing H’Mong culture to support tourism development.

Promotion and Advertising: These are essential measures to attract tourists to villages and hamlets and support tourism activities.

Survey and Evaluation: Conduct surveys to assess the strengths and weaknesses of tourism activities. Use this information to highlight strengths, address limitations, and improve the quality of tourism products for both residents and tourists.

Developing Promotion Goals: Set objectives based on service capabilities, facilities, tourist capacities, and the needs of both domestic and international tourists. Define expected visitor numbers and establish appropriate promotional strategies.

Choosing Promotion Channels: Identify suitable channels for promotion, such as television, social networks, and other media platforms.

3.5.2. Promoting H’Mong Cultural Tourism

Develop Marketing Slogans: Create a slogan based on survey results that highlights the strengths and uniqueness of tourism activities.

Building Promotional Tools: Leverage both traditional and modern information channels, including newspapers, magazines, television, radio, websites, and social media platforms.

Organize press conferences 15–30 days before major tourism events. These conferences can provide journalists and businesses with the necessary information to attract tourists. For example, Bac Ha and Si Ma Cai districts could hold annual press conferences in Hanoi or online at the start of the tourism season.

Event-Based Promotion: Use local cultural festivals and fairs as key opportunities to showcase and promote H’Mong cultural tourism products.

Expanding Online Presence: Promote H’Mong cultural tourism products through online platforms, combining traditional methods with modern technology to reach wider markets, both domestically and internationally.

International Outreach: Invite H’Mong artists to participate in international handicraft fairs or cultural exhibitions to introduce products to global audiences.

E-Commerce Platforms: Utilize e-commerce platforms to sell tourism products derived from H’Mong cultural heritage. These could include platforms such as Shopee, Lazada, Etsy, or Amazon to access broader markets.

3.6. Solutions for Training and Managing Human Resources

3.6.1. Solutions for Training and Fostering Human Resources

Training Objectives:

The goal is to train farmers to become proficient in tourism services. This includes developing skills in visitor

reception, room arrangement, tourism service execution, culinary preparation, and souvenir and gift production.

Training Methods:

Organizing training classes with practical, hands-on content linked directly to tourism activities.

Facilitating visits and experiential learning programs, which are highly effective and easy for participants to absorb.

Collaborating with universities and colleges in Lao Cai province, non-governmental organizations, and consulting firms to offer specialized training courses for the community.

3.6.2. Group of Solutions to Strengthen the Management System

Establishing a robust tourism management board capable of coordinating tourism activities at the local level.

This board should play a pivotal role, especially in areas with adventure tourism, to:

Provide direction and orientation for sustainable tourism development.

Act as a bridge connecting local communities, government agencies, businesses, and tourists.

3.7. Group of Solutions on Investment for Tourism Infrastructure Development

Continue implementing tourism development projects, programs, and plans aligned with the orientation outlined in the Party Congress resolutions of the districts.

Attract high-quality tourism investment projects, including entertainment areas, restaurants, luxury hotels, and innovative tourism types such as adventure tourism and ecological research tourism.

Promote socialization to develop infrastructure in tourist areas and attractions, prioritizing public facilities such as toilets, electricity systems, clean water, food and beverage services, and shopping centers.

Focus on preparing and submitting documents to authorities to recognize local tourist areas, routes, and attractions once all conditions are met.

Increase state capital allocation for tourism infrastructure development based on priority.

Regularly review and monitor the progress of tourism investment projects, addressing obstacles, and expediting implementation.

Propose the withdrawal or transfer of tourism projects that fail to meet progress requirements.

Strengthen the socialization of tourism investment by implementing policies and mechanisms that encourage high-end and innovative tourism product development.

Mobilize investment capital from various sources, including:

State budget allocations for tourism infrastructure.

ODA funding.

Provincial budgets.

Other legally mobilized resources to finance traffic works, cultural and sports facilities, and the restoration of cultural and historical relics.

Effectively implement state policies and provincial resolutions that support tourism development for ethnic minorities, enabling them to participate in tourism services.

Encourage businesses and households to access bank loans and state credit capital to upgrade and expand tourism projects and infrastructure.

Promote contributions from tourism income toward preserving and restoring ecological and cultural values, as well as fostering "green" tourism initiatives that adapt to climate change.

3.8. Solutions for Local, Regional, and Inter-Regional Connection

3.8.1. Raising Awareness of Connection and Tourism Development in Si Ma Cai, Bac Ha

Local authorities in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha should establish close cooperation and clearly define the scope of tourism connection within the region and subregion. Key areas for cooperation include:

Developing regional tourism planning.

Unifying mechanisms and policies for managing tourism development.

Creating specific tourism products at both regional and local levels.

Developing new tourism products and exploring tourism markets.

Establishing programs for human resource development in tourism.

Promoting tourism through advertising and marketing.

Attracting investment for building tourism infrastructure.

3.8.2. Connection Content

Strengthening cooperation with major tourist centers across the country, such as Hanoi, Quang Ninh, Da Nang, and Ho Chi Minh City, as well as key tourist hubs in the Northwest region, including Sa Pa, Moc Chau, Dien Bien Phu, and neighboring localities like Mu Cang Chai, Lai Chau, and Ha Giang. Collaboration should also align with the model of the 8 Northwest provinces to enhance tourism competitiveness and sustainability. Particular attention should be paid to connections that highlight the cultural heritage of the H’Mong people.

Enhancing connections with the tourist route linking Sa Pa, Bac Ha, Si Ma Cai, and Muong Khuong.

Building and promoting tours and tourist routes based on the unique roles and responsibilities of each locality while creating recognizable brands for destinations.

Ensuring high levels of consensus and practicality in cooperation. This requires moving beyond formal agreements to establish tangible models, specific programs, and a clear roadmap for tourism connectivity.

3.9. Group of Solutions for Propaganda and Education

3.9.1. Research on the Specific Characteristics of Traditional Communication in the H’Mong Ethnic Group in Si Ma Cai, Bac Ha

Direct communication through village chiefs, elders, and other respected community members plays a vital role in quickly shaping public opinion and influencing collective decision-making.

3.9.2. Research on Communication Channels via Social Networks

Innovating communication methods in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha involves the following approaches:

Shifting Communication Methods: Transition from direct tourism propaganda and mass media channels to indirect communication, with a primary focus on social networks.

Building a Team of Influencers: Identify and cultivate a team of bloggers from Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha. Each ethnic community or district should establish influential bloggers who can serve as collaborators for district and city cultural centers and cultural offices.

Transforming Cultural Office Functions: Redefine the roles of cultural offices and centers in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha. The Cultural Center-District Radio Station should transition from being a direct propaganda unit to functioning as a service provider that supports communication and tourism promotion.

3.10. Digitizing the Cultural Heritage of the H’Mong People in Si Ma Cai, Bac Ha

3.10.1. Helping the H’Mong People Understand the Role of Digitizing Cultural Heritage

The entire collection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the H’Mong people should be photographed, recorded, and archived by specific topics, including houses, villages, costumes, music, dance, customs, folk songs, cuisine, and handicrafts. This digitization enables long-term storage and facilitates its use in promotion, propaganda, and the commercialization of tourism products.

3.10.2. Steps in Digitizing H’Mong Cultural Heritage for Preservation and Tourism Development

Digitizing cultural heritage involves recording and storing documentation on H’Mong culture in Si Ma Cai and Bac Ha. This includes high-resolution photographs, detailed videos, and written records of traditional practices. Furthermore, employing technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) can enhance interactive experiences for both preservation and tourism. Developing a comprehensive digital platform to archive and showcase H’Mong cultural heritage will facilitate access for researchers, tourists, and educators. Lastly, tourism products derived from these digital archives can be created, aligning with modern trends in cultural tourism.

3.10.3. Addressing Difficulties and Challenges in Digitizing Cultural Heritage

The digitization process faces numerous challenges, such as high investment costs, limited resources, and a shortage of experts in cultural heritage digitization.

To overcome these obstacles, particularly in remote areas like Bac Ha and Si Ma Cai, it is necessary to:

Establish a team of highly qualified experts in information technology, heritage conservation, and data management.

Provide training programs to develop expertise in these areas, despite the logistical and financial obstacles involved.

Address community resistance to change by raising awareness of the benefits of digitization. While digitizing cultural heritage is an effective solution for preservation and tourism development, not all communities readily accept these transformations.

CONCLUSION

H’Mong culture serves as a crucial resource for tourism development, playing a key role in establishing destination branding. The revenue generated from tourism not only supports the restoration and promotion of cultural heritage but also fosters sustainable practices. Proper utilization of cultural heritage mitigates adverse effects and maximizes positive impacts, thereby driving economic development, preserving cultural identity, improving social security, and safeguarding the environment.

The 10 groups of proposed solutions encompass mechanisms and policies, product development, heritage and environmental protection, resource coordination, capacity-building for cultural managers and the H’Mong people, propaganda and education, infrastructure improvement, and the application of digitization. If these solutions are implemented synchronously and comprehensively, they will be practical, feasible, and significantly enhance the effectiveness of heritage preservation and tourism development.

REFERENCES

1. Tran Huu Son (2004). *Building a Model of Cultural Tourism Villages*. In the book *Building Cultural Life*

- in the *Highlands*, National Culture Publishing House.
2. Nguyen Quoc Su (2007). *Developing Craft Village Tourism: A Case Study of Ha Tay Province*, Hanoi National University Publishing House.
3. Tran Thi Mai (2005). *Community Tourism and Ecotourism: Definition, Characteristics, and Development Features*.
4. Tran Huu Son (2021). *Preserving and Promoting the Value of Cultural Heritage in Developing Heritage Tourism in Ethnic Minority Areas*, Communist Magazine, August.
5. Ha Van Thang (Ed.) (2016). *Folk Culture of Ethnic Groups in Lao Cai*, National Culture Publishing House.
6. Do Thuy Binh (1992). *The Family of the H’Mong People in the Current Socio-Economic Context*, Journal of Ethnology, No. 2.
7. Vuong Duy Quang (2005). *Spiritual Culture of the H’Mong People in Vietnam: Tradition and Present*, Culture and Information Publishing House, Hanoi.
8. General Department of Tourism, Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (2012). *Vietnam Tourism Development Strategy to 2020, Vision to 2030*, Hanoi.
9. Dr. Dang Thi Oanh, Dr. Nong Viet Yen, Dr. Tran Huu Son, Dr. Dang Ngoc Hung, B.E. Bui Quynh Trang (2023): *Mu Cang Chai Terraced Fields with Sustainable Tourism Development*. RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS JOURNAL OF APPLIED RESEARCH. ISSN: 2394-6709. DOI:10.47191/rajar/v9i10.03, Volume: 09 Issue: 10 October-2023, International Open Access. Impact Factor: 8.174, Page no. 513-526.
10. PhD. Tran Huu Son, PhD. Dang Thi Oanh , MSc. Bach Kim Chi (2024): *Sacred Space in the Cap Sac Ritual of the Dao Lan Ten People in Vietnam*. RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS JOURNAL OF APPLIED RESEARCH, ISSN: 2394-6709, DOI:10.47191/rajar/v10i01.03, Volume: 10 Issue: 01 January -2024. International Open Access. Impact Factor: 8.174, Page no.12-20.