

THE TRADITIONAL WEDDING ATTIRE OF VIETNAMESE PEOPLE IN HO CHI MINH CITY NOWADAYS

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Abstract: In today's era, science and technology are crucial keys to innovation and creativity, connecting all fields such as technology, engineering, commerce, and art, as well as connecting artists, researchers, educators, and technologists to create a development era with many changes, new forms, and more choices. In Vietnam in general and Ho Chi Minh City in particular, innovation and technological development have drastically changed almost every aspect, especially the fashion industry, in which the most prominent influences and changes have been in traditional wedding attire. Science and technology have brought many conveniences and innovations to traditional wedding attire, such as accelerating the production process, mass production, and precision cutting and sewing equipment; Vietnamese wedding attire undergoes changes in diverse styles, colors, and artistic decorations in line with global fashion trends or changes in accompanying accessories, meeting all consumer needs. However, alongside these advantages, many elements could affect artistic and humanitarian values, ethics towards society and individuals, and even cultural identity in traditional wedding attire. This trend is particularly evident in the current aesthetic preferences for wedding attire, such as scanty, overly thin, or see-through styles. Traditional attire is an invaluable asset, the core of national identity, and the foundation for creating new values and cultural exchanges. Therefore, research through data collection, information synthesis, and analysis is necessary to highlight the key issues that have shaped the mainstream of traditional wedding fashion in Vietnam, specifically in Ho Chi Minh City, under the influence of science and technology. This research gives comments and determines aesthetic directions to build, develop, and still preserve the cultural identities of traditional wedding attire in Ho Chi Minh City and the country as a whole.

Keywords: Ao Dai, Graceful Ao Dai wedding dress, Traditional wedding customs in Vietnam, Vietnamese brides on the wedding day, Cultural value of traditional attire

Introduction

The social context in the current period

Ho Chi Minh City is known for its historical importance in terms of administration and economics, cultures and education which is located in the South side and is the largest economic city of Vietnam. It has been a focal point of interest for many powerful nations. Due to its favorable geographical location, urbanization in Ho Chi Minh City has occurred early and rapidly. As science and technology have advanced, the world has become more interconnected through modern means such as Technology devices. Ho Chi Minh City has gradually transformed into a metropolis with its own distinctive features, serving as a cultural for various ethnicities and international communities. It

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provides a conducive environment for us to absorb and appreciate the humane and progressive cultural values of the world. Learning and imitating also originate from this environment. Global fashion trends are quickly transmitted with just a click, easily influencing the needs, artistic tastes, and aesthetic preferences of the Vietnamese people in general and traditional wedding attire in particular.

Traditional attire is an invaluable asset, the essence of the national identity, and the representative image of the country to the world. Traditional Vietnamese wedding attire, known as the “Ao Dai”, has long been considered a symbol of the Vietnamese. The Ao Dai is a long dress with straight front and back flaps, side slits from the waist down, a typically high neckline, and long sleeves, often worn with wide-legged pants. Even when using in other languages, it is still referred to as “Ao Dai” to preserve the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the Vietnamese culture. Given the challenge of globalization, clarifying the characteristics of traditional wedding attire in Vietnamese culture and the impact of science and technology on it which is practically significant in establishing cultural values and standards in my country nowadays. When integrating with the world, following the trends of the times, traditional beauty may easily be lost “Initially, there is internationalization in terms of economics, technology, and technique, acknowledging the outstanding achievements of each society, gradually converging and merging according to the "strawberry-eating" policy, which could lead to the loss of national identity and cultural diversity of nations” (Truong Luu, 2006, p.293, [1]). In that case, “integration” may easily lead to “assimilation”. Various styles and colors of traditional wedding attire have emerged, and even wedding Ao Dai with cut-out or sheer elements have broken the notion of being “modest” as in the past.

Thus, in the social context of a country integrating with the world, in an era of robust scientific and technological development and all-encompassing influence, many changes have occurred in the realm of clothing culture, specifically in the traditional wedding attire of the Vietnamese women in Ho Chi Minh City. This can be seen as a significant opportunity for the country, but it also presents numerous challenges that we must confront.

Traditional Vietnamese Wedding Ao Dai in Ho Chi Minh City in the Current Era of Science and Technology

Traditional Vietnamese wedding attire must firstly and foremost be the traditional attire of the Vietnamese people, a wedding costume that has been used by the nation for a long time, coexisting with the history of the country. It is an important representation image for distinguishing the differences between the Vietnamese people and other ethnic groups around the world, and therefore, it must be the Ao Dai.

In the consciousness of the Vietnamese people, traditional Vietnamese wedding attire for brides and grooms is still the elegant Ao Dai, accompanied by a headdress or turban. The era of technological advancement has brought about positive developments in the economy, media, commerce, and more. Consequently, many designers, stores, and wedding fashion brands are now better known. In Ho Chi Minh City, some remarkable brands: Khai Vinh Bridal, Ao Dai Hoa Vi, Quyen Nguyen Bridal, Kim Tuyen Bridal, and Tai Loc Bridal have gained recognition, offering a wide range of unique or industrial designs. These are easily accessible to consumers through websites and social media platforms such as Facebook and TikTok. Science and technology have become supportive and creative activities that play a crucial role in the development of buying methods. They have also given

traditional Vietnamese wedding attire in Ho Chi Minh City its own distinctive features, a rich variety of styles, and continuous expansion and diversification.

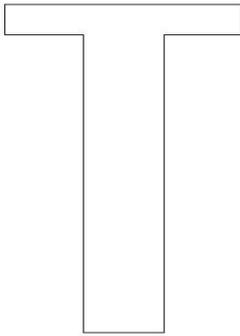
Style Characteristics Silhouette

To possess unique characteristics, wedding attire requires designers and creators to combine various elements such as style, color, decorative layout, patterns, materials, accessories, etc., in a harmonious and “manner while adhering to fundamental design principles” (Huu Duc, 2023, p.95, [2]).

Silhouette is the first aspect of clothing that captures the viewer's attention. In Sue Jenkyn Jones's Fashion Design document, "Silhouette" is defined as "the overall outline and shape of the worn garment as its silhouette" (Sue Jenkyn Jones, 2022, p.76, [3]).

The basic structure of traditional Vietnamese wedding attire for brides and grooms is primarily characterized by a straight, floor-length tunic, creating an I-silhouette. The sleeves and side flaps of the tunic form a horizontal crossbar (-) relative to the body. Combining the details of the I- silhouette and the horizontal crossbar (-) creates a simple T- silhouette. This T- silhouette is used to model the long, flowing split tunic, sometimes reaching the ground, with long sleeves that cover the arms. The tunic fits snugly or wraps around the body, emphasize the female figure/body shape. The headdress is worn highly on the neck, combined with wide-legged pants that extend to the ankles. This basic style serves as our initial identification of the traditional attire that bears the distinctive features of the Vietnamese people and is instantly recognizable worldwide as the Ao Dai – the traditional Vietnamese dress.

Today, while the T- silhouette remains, the Ao Dai has undergone various changes in terms of form, sleeves, neckline, and more, yet it still ensures that traditional wedding attire retains its distinctive features: "modesty" while revealing the curves of the body and the seductive charms of women.

	
<p><i>Figure 1: Ao Dai Hanh Phuc, 2023, Traditional Vietnamese wedding attire, Source:[4]</i></p>	<p><i>Figure 2: Traditional Silhouette - Style Ao Dai, Source: Huynh Nguyen</i></p>

Outer lines combined with inner structural lines create the framework of an outfit.



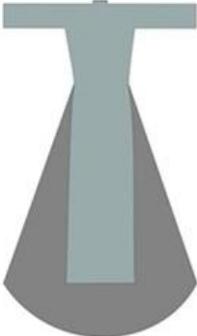
Figure 3: Description of Traditional Ao Dai's Style and Structure, Source: Huynh Nguyen

Body-Hugging Styles and Modernized Tunic

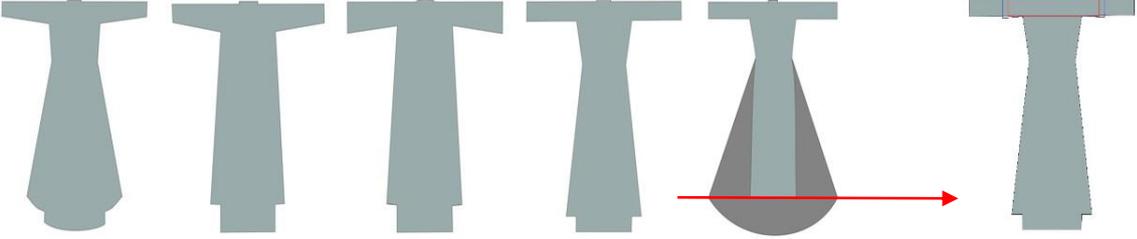
In the current technological context, cultural cross-pollination in clothing is inevitable. The Ao Dai with a long trailing hem that touches the ground is evidence of the fusion between Eastern and Western influences, originating from Western-style wedding gowns. These designs, with their long hemlines or extended overcoats, create an elegant and ceremonial appearance. Vietnamese designers have taken note of these features and incorporated them into traditional Ao Dai, offering a modern yet modest interpretation of the traditional attire. This blend results in a contemporary but still graceful and modest appearance, adding a touch of splendor to the bride on her special day.

<p>Figure 4: Source: Huynh Linh, 2000 Traditional Vietnamese wedding attire</p>	<p>Figure 5: Source: Huynh Kieu, 2004</p>	<p>Figure 6: Swedish Princess Wedding Gown, 2010, Source [5]</p>	<p>Figure 7: Modern Vietnamese wedding attire, Source: Khanh Vy, 2023 Traditional Vietnamese wedding attire nowadays</p>

The East-West fusion

		
<p>Figure 8, 9: The bride's Ao Dai has a close-fitting form that contours the body's curves, with a wide trailing hem and a large bow, similar to Western bridal soiree dresses, Source: Khanh Vy.</p>		<p>Figure 10: Modernized Silhouette - style Ao Dai, Source: Huynh Nguyen</p>

Noticeable Changes in the Silhouette of the Traditional Vietnamese wedding attire

F.11, [6]	F.12, [6]	F.13, [7]	F.14, Huynh Linh	F.15, Huynh Khanh	F.16, Ao Dai Hanh Phuc [8]	F.17, Quyen Nguyen, [9]
						
						
F.18	F.19	F.20	F.21	F.22	F.23	
<p>A Brief Overview of Vietnamese Wedding Attire Through Different Eras: During the period from 1900 to nowadays</p>						

Modernized Neckline Stylesz

No longer confined to the concept of a "high-walled fortress", symbolizing modesty, especially on the auspicious day when a woman stands before the gaze of her family and the groom's family, women today tend to choose traditional wedding attire with much more breathable and open designs, particularly in the neckline area. A series of changes and innovations have led to necklines that can be square, heart-shaped, and round, creating a sense of comfort and openness, much like the nature of individuals in the technological age: always open, dynamic, embracing development and innovation.



In fact, many modern brides opt for gowns with plunging necklines, exposing their shoulders. The exposed shoulder area can be boldly open or adorned with a sheer layer of chiffon or delicate mesh to maintain the dress's shape as the bride moves during the ceremony, creating a sense of security while preserving the allure of the modern bride.

	
<p>Figure 25: Off-the-shoulder dress, Source: Hoa Vi</p>	<p>Figure 26: Deep V-neck cut, 2022, Source: [10]</p>

Modernized Sleeve Styles

Within the overall design of the Ao Dai, the sleeve area is also one of the aspects that designers have focused on modernizing. Breaking away from the previous concept of being overly conservative and restrictive to women, which concealed many parts of the body, sleeves are no longer required to be long. Nowadays, in Ho Chi Minh City, it is not difficult to find traditional wedding Ao Dai with elbow-length sleeves, short sleeves, or even sleeveless designs.

		
<p>Figure 27: Quyên Nguyen, Ao Dai with Square collar, and puff sleeves, Source: [9]</p>	<p>Figure 28, 29: Wedding Ao Dai with short sleeves but still discreet and shy for Brides, Source: Hoa vi</p>	

Traditional Áo Dài with Alluring Cut-Outs

Still a modern and youthful mainstream, many latter-day brides aspire to maintain the traditional Áo Dài style while infusing a sense of youthfulness, boldness, creativity, and personal flair. This results in elegantly cut and intricate designs, featuring alluring cut-outs in areas such as the shoulders, waist, or even a yoke-style top that strikes a balance between modesty and allure. These variations enhance the charm of the modern bride while keeping the essence of tradition intact.

		
<p><i>Figure 30: Kim Tuyen, Based on the traditional Áo Dài design but cut-out at the neck and waist to create charm, Source: [11]</i></p>	<p><i>Figure 31: Khai Vinh, Wedding Áo Dài with delicate cutouts at the shoulders to create a sweetheart neckline, Source: [12]</i></p>	<p><i>Figure 32: Lavaha, 2021, The cut out waist and deep chest are replaced with lace, making the shirt more attractive, Source: [13]</i></p>

Distinctive Color Characteristics

In addition to the clothing's style, color is also a visual element that attracts attention and affects the human senses when looking at a garment. Color combinations also define the style of clothing.

Majestic Colors of Gold and Red

Red and gold are the two "Classic" colors of Vietnamese wedding attire. Moreover, in the Eastern and Vietnamese cultural context, these colors are symbolic of the regal authority of the ruling class in ancient times. In Han characters, the word for "royal" is homonymous with "yellow". According to author Tran Đuc Anh Son, people in ancient times associated the five colors (white, blue, yellow, red, black) with the five directions (west, east, central, south, north). Among these, yellow corresponded to the central direction and was thus considered the most precious color. Consequently, yellow symbolizes strength and power. During the feudal dynasties from the Le Trung Hung period (1533 - 1789) to the Nguyen dynasty (1802 - 1945), there were strict regulations regarding colors for each social stratum: "Only the emperor and members of the royal family were allowed to use the color yellow" (Tran Duc Anh Son, 2011, p.120, [14]). With its status as the most esteemed and important color in one's life, people also chose colors that resembled "Emperor" and "Empress," leading to the presence of yellow in traditional wedding attire. Today, yellow in wedding ceremonies conveys warmth and elegance. In folk beliefs, the color yellow or gold signifies loyalty and trust between

spouses, signifying a desire for a strong and enduring marriage where the couple stands united and overcomes life's challenges together.



Red is the color of “The sunrise in the East”, symbolizing the strength of the earth and sky, and it represents a source of energy. In the beliefs of the Vietnamese people, red has been a symbol of good fortune since ancient times, signifying prosperity, happiness, and warmth. Additionally, during the Nguyen dynasty, “The color red was also present in the robes of royal consorts, princes, and the attire of princesses on festive occasions” (Tran Duc Anh Son, 2011, p.70, [15]), with the significance of wishing for happiness and longevity. This is why, even today, although no longer the sole choice, the colors red and gold remain popular and preferred.



Traditional Wedding Attire in Pastel Colors

Many young people have shown a preference for softer, warmer, muted, and neutral color tones such as light green, blush pink, and white. However, the art of color coordination still manages to infuse these subtle hues with vibrancy, elegance, and compatibility with the aesthetic preferences of the public.



Figure 35: Quyên Nguyen, 2023, Light Pink color, Source: [16]



Figure 36: Light Emerald green color which is simple and gentle, 2023, Source: [17]

Characteristics in Decorative Art

Decorative Patterns

Decorative patterns on traditional wedding attire can be roughly categorized into three main groups. The first group consists of floral and leafy patterns, including lotus flowers, plum blossoms, peonies, chrysanthemums, and roses. The second group draws inspiration from court patterns, featuring dragon motifs, phoenixes, peacocks, the "four blessings" symbols, clouds, fire wheels, waves, the "double happiness" character, and coins. The third group comprises free-form patterns created spontaneously without adhering to any specific themes.

Floral and Leafy Patterns

In contemporary wedding dress designs, the use of floral and leafy patterns on traditional wedding attire is highly diverse, featuring lotus flowers, plum blossoms, roses, orchids, chrysanthemums, and more. These patterns are often creatively stylized and modified, with the lotus flower pattern being the most easily recognizable. As the national flower of Vietnam, combined with the ao dai, a symbol and

tradition of the Vietnamese people, these designs create works of art that are more culturally profound and representative than ever before. Due to their realistic nature, these themes often use a natural layout, mimicking the arrangement of landscapes in nature but with slight refinements to suit the softness of the dress's fabric.



Figure 37, 38: Quyên Nguyen, Traditional Vietnamese wedding attire with lotus flower pattern and red shirt color, 2023, Source: [18]

Patterns of symbolic animals in love: dragons - phoenixes, peacocks, cranes, khong tuoc (swans), or mandarin ducks

The theme of courtly patterns, prominently featuring dragon, phoenix, and peacock motifs, dominates traditional Vietnamese wedding attire. According to the author Nguyen Du Chi “Dragons are often adorned in significant places and symbolize the power of the monarch, as well as auspiciousness and prosperity” (Nguyen Du Chi, 2003, p.114, [19]). And according to him, “The phoenix embodies the beauty and gracefulness of various birds, especially the combination of Pheasant and Peacock. Furthermore, the Phoenix, with its five colors, represents five virtues: righteousness, benevolence, justice, fidelity, and magnanimity” (Nguyen Du Chi, 2003, p.132 – 133, [19]). When these two mythical creatures are combined, they signify the harmony between earth and heaven, the unity of a couple. With these meanings, the images of these animals have become popular patterns incorporated into traditional wedding attire, from ancient times to the present day.

		
<p>Figure 39: Source: [20]</p>	<p>Figure 40: Source: [21]</p>	<p>Figure 41: Ao Zai ABC, 2023, Traditional Vietnamese wedding attire with Dragon-Phoenix motifs Source: [22]</p>
<p>Quyên Nguyễn, 2023, Traditional Vietnamese wedding attire with Dragon - Phoenix motifs.</p>		

Coin and Double happiness characters

Similarly to dragon and phoenix patterns, coin patterns or double happiness characters have long existed on the wedding Ao Dai of brides and grooms and continue to be the best choice of couples for their wedding day. However, with the application of technology, these patterns have been expressed in various forms and techniques such as embroidery, painting, or the use of crystal beads. These patterns not only create a glamorous appearance with positive meanings for the wearer, honoring beauty on the wedding day, but the attire also becomes an artistic masterpiece for admiration and a reminder to cherish happiness every time it is viewed



Figure 42: A pair of bride and groom adorned in traditional Ao Dai attire featuring the “Double Happiness” characters, 2023, Source: [23]

Freeform patterns

In addition to the double happiness characters or coin patterns forming circles usually decorated in the center of the chest, nowadays, these motifs are sometimes replaced by a couples of birds or flowers arranged in the font.



Figure 43: Quyên Nguyen, 2023, Ao Dai with embroidered flowers in the font, Source: [24]

Decorative pattern creation techniques

As mentioned earlier by the author, the patterns on traditional wedding Ao Dai in Ho Chi Minh City today are expressed in various forms and techniques such as hand embroidery, machine embroidery, or the technique of attaching crystal beads to the dress patterns.

Embroidery technique

Not only in Vietnam but also in most East Asian countries, embroidery has been presented for a very long time, allowing people to express the perfect beauty of objects on clothing through each stitch of the needle. In Vietnam, the embroidery craft, which has developed over thousands of years, has gradually become extremely sharp, not flashy but delicate and soft. Many embroidery products have evolved beyond being mere 'products' and can be considered as works of art with exquisite embroidery stitches and elaborate motifs that deeply reflect the cultural identity of the Vietnamese people. Perhaps that is why, even today, amidst a wide range of options for enhancing beauty through clothing, many consumers, including young people, still prefer clothing with embroidered patterns for their significant life events



Figure 44: The elegant, delicate floral embroidery, 2022, Source: [17]

With advanced and developed technology, there are now many machineries and equipment available to support embroidery work, making it fast, convenient, and capable of executing complex patterns such as dragons and phoenixes, while still showcasing every small detail such as fins, tails, and wings.



Figure 45: Ao Dai Tai Loc, Advanced technology facilitates swift and precise machine embroideries, offering convenience without compromising intricacy, Source: [25]

Despite the support of advanced technology, a portion of consumers still prefer to own handmade embroidered products due to their uniqueness, meticulousness, and distinctiveness.

Sequins and Beads Technique on Wedding Ao Dai

Sequining is another technique that many designers, tailors, and customers choose to embellish their wedding Ao Dai. This method has the advantage of creating highly effective focal points, partly because each sequin itself serves as a decorative element. Various types of sequins with different shapes, materials, colors, transparency, and shine, similar to crystals, reflect light and easily create raised surfaces, thus effectively enhance the aesthetic appeal of the fabric.



Figure 46: A red Ao Dai adorned with intricate beadwork and sequins, adding a sparkling charm to the bride on her wedding day, Source: Nhan Nguyen–Sun Studio



Figure 47: Khai Vinh, 2022, Beadwork and gem-setting techniques on the wedding Ao Dai, infusing Western elements of luxury, 2022, Source: [26]

Decorating techniques using lace flowers and detached appliqué create a 3D effect

Contributing to the creation of an artistic world of decoration for traditional wedding ao dai in Ho Chi Minh City, we must mention the technique of decorating with lace appliqué or combining sequining on existing lace materials. This is an optimal decorating method that offers both aesthetic and economic value. The arrangement of lace appliqué on the primary fabric is called “appliqué”, which replaces the traditional Vietnamese method of directly embroidered on fabric. These lace patterns can be arranged in various ways on a pre-made garment, such as the hem, and sleeves, or arranged freely to add variety to traditional Ao Dai designs. This method is most commonly seen in the use of detached lace or pre-woven lace patterns.



Figure 49: A golden-toned lace wedding Ao Dai with delicately attached floral decorations for the bride, Source: Nhan Nguyen–Sun Studio

Both of these methods, sequining and lace appliqué, have gained increasing popularity in recent years. On one hand, they address many common issues encountered during the embroidery process, such as fabric bunching, wrinkling, or thread snagging. In contrast these decorative patterns are easy to modify, offering great flexibility in design layouts.



Figure 50: LAHAVA, 2020, Lace patterns combined with elegant embellishments, Source: [27]

To enhance the aesthetic and sophisticated quality of wedding Ao Dai designs, many fashion designers have combined lace and sequins to create exquisite patterns for brides. Particularly, they use detached lace made of lace or tulle attached to the dress to achieve a 3D effect, making the lace patterns appear realistic and captivating.



Figure 51: LAHAVA, 2020, A design featuring detached voile flowers intricately attached to the Ao Dai, Source: [28]



Figure 52: Quyen Nguyen, 2023, Creatively ornamented with a phoenix motif, its tail constructed from fine and silky feathers, Source: [29]



Figure 53: Khai Vinh, 2023, A design featuring detached voile flowers intricately attached to the gown, producing a vivid 3D effect, Source: [30]

When technology is continuously advancing, this 3D decoration method is becoming a prevalent trend in decoration in our country in general and in Ho Chi Minh City in particular.

Changes in Accompanying Accessories

In order to create the beauty of the brides and grooms on their wedding day, in addition to clothing, accompanying accessories play a crucial role. In the past decades, it seemed that traditional Vietnamese wedding ao dai was always associated with a headpiece/hat (Mấn), as the wearing of headpieces/hat is a long-standing cultural tradition inherited from our ancestors, which needs to be continued and preserved for generations. During the Nguyen Dynasty, only Kings and Queens had rights to wear golden headpieces/hat, symbolizing luxury and nobility. The headpieces/hat of brides and grooms are circular- Silhouette shaped veils, characterized by an uneven circular design. They are made by carefully wrapping a long strip of fabric, resulting in varying thickness and height of the circular shape, depending on the design.

		
<p><i>Figure 54: The traditional headpiece/hat, 2010, Source: Huynh Trinh</i></p>	<p><i>Figure 55: The traditional headpiece/hat with a wide brim, 2013, Source: Huynh Le</i></p>	<p><i>Figure 56: The basic Silhouette of headpiece/hat, Source: Huynh Nguyen</i></p>

Nowadays, in the Vietnamese perspective of beauty, wearing a headpiece/hat not only upholds the traditional beauty but also serves as a form of decoration, enhancing the bride's appearance and making her stand out, especially among the bridesmaids. This is particularly true in recent years, especially in Ho Chi Minh City, where these accompanying accessories have seen significant changes, almost as if they've donned a new outfit with unique and innovative designs. Many young brides tend to favor the round-shaped typically used with the Northern Vietnamese "four-panel traditional dress" but paired with the wedding Ao Dai in Ho Chi Minh City. This combination brings together the styles of both regions, creating a playful yet charming and graceful appearance.



Figure 57: Quyên Nguyen 2022, Circular veil style, Source: [31]

Some "headpieces/hat" have undergone extensive modernization, retaining the traditional wedding "headpiece" shape but made from materials such as plastic or metal, resembling headbands or crowns. This meets the diverse beauty needs of today's brides in Ho Chi Minh City.



Figure 58, 59: Whether for a demure bride or an active one, this modernized "headpieces/hat" style adds to the bride's beauty on her joyful day, Source: SONLEE



Figure 60: Khai Vinh, 2023, Source: [32]



Figure 61: Kim Tuyen, Source: [33]

The Modernized "headpieces/hat" style adds to the bride's beauty on her joyful day,

Moreover, many brides like to wear traditional ao dai but combine them with Western-style veils or simply adorn their hair with flowers or hairpins. All of these elements contribute to the beauty of modern brides who are dynamic and youthful while still preserving the precious traditional charm of the Ao Dai



Figure 62: Source: Nhan Nguyen–Sun Studio



Figure 63: Source: Hoa Vi

Traditional Ao Dai and matched with a head veil, 2023.

Solutions for Inheriting the Values of Traditional Wedding Attire

Investing in Design Team Training

This is a fundamental foundation for promoting sustainable development in the fashion industry. Therefore, to improve the professional training in Vietnam, fashion students also need effective business skills training to make their creations marketable. They should collaborate with each other and with fields such as science, society, and culture to create products that reflect the unique cultural characteristics of their own people. Students themselves will apply design patterns in life and connect globally to understand what is happening around them. They can upgrade fashion education institutions and collaborate with foreign partners, and other countries to access technology and creative methods in fashion design. Furthermore, courses, projects, or specialized topics on traditional clothing need to emphasize the unique characteristics of each ethnic. This is currently lacking in many teaching programs.

Build Collaborative Relationships

For the fashion industry to truly thrive, it requires a solid foundation from the education environment, the establishment of relationships between educational institutions - design firms/fashion designers, and businesses/a stable market. Educational institutions can collaborate with large companies and major brands, acting as a bridge to help students or designers develop both in terms of expertise and practical skills. Additionally, businesses can provide financial support so that students have the necessary resources for development.

Preserving Authenticity

According to the author Nguyen Dang Duy, "Cultural identity is the distinctiveness expressed in the lifestyle of a nation or community" (Nguyen Dang Duy, 2008, p.239, [35]) Competition is always the driving force for development, and many new art trends have a strong appeal, often breaking the rules of traditional art to create something new, affecting creative thinking in traditional wedding attire design. Therefore, integrating creativity and cultural identity into wedding attire design is essential.

Promoting Products

Fashion is one of the fields that most clearly reflects the spirit of the times and adapts to the era in which we live. Some costumes represent an entire nation, a culture, or even a civilization and an era. Therefore, it is necessary to promote the beauty of traditional Vietnamese wedding attire, the Ao Dai, through design competitions, international beauty pageants, fashion shows at home and abroad, exhibitions in public areas frequented by foreign visitors such as airports, cultural centers, tourist areas, or through modern communication channels such as Facebook, TikTok, Youtube, Instagram, etc. The traditional Ao Dai is deserving of Vietnamese pride and promotion so that it can assert itself and become the subject of outstanding new collections, creating a youthful, fresh, and modern image while preserving the unique cultural traits of the nation. During this promotion process, one cannot ignore the role of the media, especially professional fashion journalists who have deep knowledge of fashion, guiding the public on how to dress and have the courage to point out products lacking in aesthetics or culture.

Results and Discussion

Inheriting the Values of Traditional Wedding Attire

Currently, Vietnamese fashion has gradually found its place in both domestic and international markets, asserting the essence of Vietnamese culture. The development of the fashion design industry has brought forth various forms for traditional wedding attire: Flexible and diverse patterns; Colors have also become diverse thanks to advances in dyeing technology; The quality of fabric has improved, and its closeness to nature has made wearers more graceful, elegant, and vibrant. However, despite the diversity and richness of decorative motifs, it is challenging to identify a distinctive feature of patterns and ornamentation in traditional Vietnamese wedding attire. This is due to heavy borrowing from external sources and a tendency towards unrestrained creativity. On one hand, competition drives the production of wedding garments that are increasingly affordable, beautiful, convenient, and of high quality. On the other hand, profit motives lead to efforts to cater to various tastes, often resulting in the lack of regulation in patterns and a lack of finesse, with designs appearing rigid and lacking expressiveness.

The Ao Dai's silhouette, despite various modern modifications to sleeve length and hemline, it still maintains the traditional "T- Silhouette" design and a modest, figure-flattering silhouette. Thus, contemporary wedding Ao Dai, in essence, only retain the traditional cultural elements through skillful fabric cutting and meticulous tailoring, which have always been a distinctive feature of Vietnamese ao dai and a symbol of Vietnamese women's beauty. In this regard, inheriting the characteristics of traditional wedding attire essentially involves inheriting the artistic mindset of shaping (both design and tailoring techniques). When inheriting the distinctive features of traditional wedding ao dai, one should first consider the fundamental elements that constitute the essence of the nation, including the external aspect represented by the distinctive features of the ao dai and the inner aspects involving psychology, thinking, intellectual depth, and the concept of beauty in Vietnamese culture. Straying from these elements means straying from the essential qualities of our culture and potentially losing our cultural identity.

		
<p>Figure 64, 2012, Source: Huynh Nguyen</p>	<p>Figure 65, 2023, Source: Loan Dai</p>	<p>Figure 66, 2023, Source: Khanh Vy</p>

Is it possible to completely build and inherit all the distinctive elements of traditional wedding attire?

In this era of rapid scientific and technological development that influences all fields, it is understandable that foreign fashion elements are strongly integrated. Therefore, instead of being concerned about how this might affect the preservation of our cultural identity, we should embrace the new while simultaneously seeking solutions to preserve and develop our cultural heritage. This way, traditional Vietnamese wedding attire can incorporate new, evolving elements that truly “integrate” with the times, without losing its unique essence. The writer has articulated this concept quite clearly in the “Solutions” section.

Once again, the importance of designers and communication is emphasized. Alongside preserving distinctive designs, designers play a crucial role in creatively finding a path for the system of patterns and materials that are closely associated with traditional Vietnamese wedding Ao Dai. Through serious creative efforts, there will be an opportunity to elevate the aesthetic value of traditional wedding attire to meet contemporary standards and affirm our cultural identity. When people think of traditional wedding Ao Dai, they should prioritize choosing a distinctive Vietnamese pattern or fabric over imported options.

After the creative process by designers, effective dissemination to the public requires the involvement of communication professionals. They not only introduce designs to consumers but also help scholars and critics, those with deep knowledge, accurately identify the product's values. This helps the public understand the cultural significance of clothing and appreciate the beauty and essence of Vietnamese cultural heritage through generations

Conclusion

Through the research process of the topic, "The Traditional Wedding Attire Of Vietnamese People In Ho Chi Minh City Nowadays", several conclusions can be drawn:

The traditional wedding attire of the Vietnamese people, known as the Ao Dai, has gone through various stages and is now considered a symbol of the nation. In today's era of globalization, traditional wedding attire is facing competition from Western-style wedding gowns. Therefore, efforts must be made to preserve and promote the cultural and ethnic identity to maintain its significance. Even with modern adaptations, the Ao Dai retains its modest elegance to a reasonable extent. The point being emphasized here is the need for ongoing promotion and education to ensure that values and cultural identity are preserved, passed down, and enhanced for future generations. The direction of inheriting and promoting traditional wedding attire in the right way, is linked to the essence of the nation and elevating aesthetic standards to adapt to the changes in culture and the times.

Through theoretical research and practical work, traditional wedding attire reflects the creative thinking of the Vietnamese people while showcasing a high level of aesthetics. The artistry in

traditional wedding attire is the concentration of aesthetic concepts, talent, and a unique style. The design is meticulously crafted, balancing and encompassing both Western and Eastern philosophies. Moreover, it incorporates distinctive elements such as structure, materials, composition, and patterns from various countries worldwide, creating a new look that bridges tradition and modernity. Therefore, despite historical ups and downs, the Ao Dai deserves to be a source of pride for every citizen, a symbol of national pride, and an intangible cultural heritage recognized by UNESCO in 2002, making it a cultural symbol of the nation.

As society develops, wedding attire becomes an essential and necessary aspect of a person's most significant life event. It is closely tied to the aesthetic values of the nation, incorporating Eastern philosophical principles with a contemporary spirit. Traditional wedding attire has not become outdated amidst the whirlwind changes in fashion trends. Traditional wedding attire doesn't remain stagnant but continually adapts to enrich its cultural essence. Therefore, preserving the essence does not mean clinging to tradition but requires a dialectical mindset in absorbing what is suitable based on the soul and intellect, defined by what is Vietnamese - a blend of tradition and modernity.

Traditional wedding attire, the Ao Dai, is evidence that Vietnam is one of the nations that have successfully transformed numerous cultural values and "localized" them, incorporating them to create a wedding attire that reflects the cultural essence of Vietnam today. The core of the "Ao Dai's" identity lies in the spiritual character of the nation. Therefore, it is crucial to uphold these values to avoid the negative consequences of globalization. This responsibility rests heavily on the shoulders of the design teams and traditional costume businesses, requiring the training of high-quality human resources with a genuine connection to the traditional characteristics of the nation. This is a significant task for the education sector in general and higher education institutions, colleges, and vocational schools in particular.

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Declaration of Interest Statement

The author declares that they have no conflict of interests.

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