

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY  
OF MIAO ETHNIC PATTERNS  
IN HAINAN: ENHANCING  
ECOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND  
FOSTERING GLOBAL  
ENGAGEMENT

**CHEN LEI**

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## ABSTRACT

The Miao people are an ethnic minority in China, who have historically resided in mountainous areas where they shared an intimate bond with the natural world. Their historical relationship with nature can be understood by studying their pattern arts. Each theme, shape and the color used is rich in symbolism. This study explores the ecological significance of Miao ethnic pattern art in Hainan, China, with a focus on themes, shapes and colors. Using a mixed-methods approach, this research examines the intersection of art, culture and ecology within the Miao ethnic community, with particular emphasis on the design of pattern art. The study aims to contribute to discourses on sustainable and to advocate for the use of Miao art as a medium to inspire ecological mindfulness and cultural empathy. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative thematic analyses, to examine the artistic and ecological perspectives embedded in Miao art. Findings reveal that Miao pattern art transcends aesthetic value, serving as a visual narrative of ecological awareness and cultural heritage. Thematic elements often depict natural motifs, such as flora and fauna, symbolizing interconnectedness and sustainability. Shapes in the patterns, inspired by natural landscapes, reflect Miao's reverence for cycles and growth, while earthy tones and vibrant colors convey symbolic meanings tied to their ecological worldview. Amidst challenges posed by modernization and globalization, the study highlights the critical role of preserving and adapting these traditions to contemporary contexts. It emphasizes the potential of integrating traditional knowledge with modern technologies, fostering global appreciation while safeguarding cultural and ecological values. This research contributes to discourses on sustainable art and cultural preservation, advocating for the use of Miao art as a medium to inspire ecological mindfulness and cultural empathy.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The discussion of ecological aesthetics has become increasingly popular in recent years among domestic academics. It happens due to a number of urgent practical issues, including modern living conditions, ecological decline, environmental degradation (Zhang, 2018), and the need to restructure our ecological. This has thus resulted in the emergence of specialized study fields, the creation of industry-specific terminology and concepts, as well as the philosophical foundations of ecological aesthetics, which are in particular based on ecological ontology (Van de Ven et al, 2017).

Ecological aesthetics, often interchanged with environmental aesthetics, is an interdisciplinary approach that examines the aesthetic value and appreciation of natural environments and human-made landscapes. Stemming from the broader field of aesthetics, which traditionally focused on art and beauty, ecological aesthetics explores the perceptual and emotional relationships individuals have with their environment (Averill et al, 1998).

Traditionally, aesthetics often emphasized 'picturesque' or 'scenic' views of nature. Ecological aesthetics expands this view by recognizing the aesthetic value in untouched wilderness, everyday landscapes, and even degraded ecosystems (Carlson, 2017). It underscores a participatory engagement with the environment. It suggests that the full appreciation of an environment requires immersive interaction rather than a detached observation, emphasizing the importance of being in and experiencing nature (Averill et al, 1998).

Ecological aesthetics also recognizes the interconnectedness of all elements within an ecosystem. The aesthetic value is derived not just from individual elements (like a tree or a river) but from the intricate relationships and processes that bind these elements together (Parsons & Carlson, 2008). This includes the anthropogenic impact on landscapes, both positive and negative. The aesthetic assessment of urban and agricultural landscapes,