











SHORT COMMUNICATION

Well-being, Experiences, and Ancestral Culture: Values from Interculturality

Bienestar, Vivencias y Cultura Ancestral: valores desde la interculturalidad

Lilia Moncerrate Villacis Zambrano¹  , Valeria Cecilia Bravo Gómez¹  , Luis Daniel Zambrano Molina¹ 
, Víctor Manuel Román Vélez¹  

¹Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro De Manabí, Extensión SUCRE. Bahía de Caráquez, Ecuador

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the work was to analyze the experience of ancestral culture based on the values of cultural identity. Throughout history, it has been evidenced that culture continues to be transmitted through life, enriching the people in wisdom. However, it is currently being lost due to the impact of foreign cultural influence that invades the youth, relegating the values of ancestry. For this reason, it is important to examine the thinking of young people on this subject and understand their cultural vision from a global perspective. To carry out this work, qualitative, quantitative and analytical methods were used. In addition, the Delhi method was used, which made it possible to consult experts using a specific instrument. The type of research conducted was descriptive, and the technique used was a survey. The information collected was processed using SPSS 25 software, which helped to measure the reliability of the instrument used, obtaining a value of 0.95. The most relevant conclusion of the study was that values, multiculturalism and diversity are still valid. However, a dichotomy is observed in practice, which has led to the loss of referents. Especially, young people find it difficult to be congruent with their actions and words, resulting in a loss of identity. This implies the need to preserve traditions, customs, memories, gastronomy and diversity in the context of globalization.

Keywords: Culture; Praxis; Wellness; Cultural Identity; Ancestral Wisdom.

RESUMEN

El objetivo del trabajo fue analizar la vivencia de la cultura ancestral a partir de los valores de identidad cultural. A lo largo de la historia, se ha evidenciado que la cultura se sigue transmitiendo a través de la vida, enriqueciendo al pueblo en sabiduría. Sin embargo, actualmente se está perdiendo debido al impacto de la influencia cultural extranjera que invade a la juventud, relegando los valores de la ascendencia. Por esta razón, es importante examinar el pensamiento de los jóvenes sobre este tema y comprender su visión cultural desde una perspectiva global. Para llevar a cabo este trabajo, se utilizaron métodos cualitativos, cuantitativos y analíticos. Además, se empleó el método Delhi, el cual permitió consultar a expertos utilizando un instrumento específico. El tipo de investigación realizado fue descriptiva, y la técnica utilizada fue una encuesta. La información recolectada fue procesada utilizando el software SPSS 25, el cual ayudó a medir la confiabilidad del instrumento utilizado, obteniendo un valor de 0.95. La conclusión más relevante del estudio fue que los valores, la pluriculturalidad y la diversidad siguen siendo vigentes. Sin embargo, se observa una dicotomía en la práctica, lo que ha llevado a la pérdida de referentes. Especialmente, los jóvenes encuentran dificultades para ser congruentes con sus acciones y palabras, lo que resulta en una pérdida de identidad. Esto implica la necesidad de preservar tradiciones, costumbres, memorias, gastronomía y diversidad en el contexto de la globalización.

Palabras claves: Cultura; Praxis; Bienestar; Identidad Cultural; Sabiduría Ancestral.

INTRODUCTION

Preserving ancestral knowledge is crucial in a context where it is being lost due to the accelerated advancement of modernity. As indigenous people, they strive to protect this acquired knowledge and fight for what they possess. Safeguarding ancestral traditions in today's world is of utmost importance, and one of the main ways to do so is through environmental conservation, which is considered their heart and source of life. The author emphasizes the importance of preserving identity at a time when society is dazzled by external influences and devalues what is inherent, adopting new values that are not aligned with ancestral traditions.⁽¹⁾

Addressing the topic of ancestral heritage obliges us to examine our ethnic groups, such as the Muiscas, Ticunas, Misak, Arawak, or Huitotos, and understand their contribution to the construction of our country. Understanding their history involves comprehending their practices in favor of the environment, water, territory, and community formation. The younger generations have paid little attention to ancestral music due to the lack of a historical memory that has impacted their formative development. This makes it easy for them to adopt foreign musical expressions that alienate their critical capacity. Unlike the mountainous regions, where cultural values have been preserved through family and community, the coastal regions lack that foundation, which impoverishes their musical and artistic expressions.⁽²⁾

Every human being needs an identity to socialize what they know, what they practice, and who they are. "...Man needs a shelter, an essential and permanent support that gives him the possibility to place himself, to know himself, and to feel himself in the world...".⁽³⁾

Identity is not limited to a mere declaration but rather lived and becomes what identifies us as individuals, as human beings with values, and it also becomes a necessary reference for society, especially for the youth today. Current society faces a serious problem of cultural identity due to the lack of rootedness in ancestral values and traditions.

Culture is not merely an accessory element but a decisive dimension in all development processes. It is not just about adding it to topics such as per capita income, employment, or productivity and competitiveness indexes but recognizing its importance in institutional strengthening, the existence of social fabric and capital, as well as the mobilization of citizenship. Therefore, it is crucial for the people to have communication, history, and culture, essential elements for the restoration of their identity and the definition of who they are and aspire to be in the social sphere.⁽³⁾

The inherited cultural vestiges allow us to analyze, from an evaluative perspective, the relationship between nature and human beings, as well as the customs that, despite the passage of years, remain relevant in our society. These ancestral traditions dignify our origin as Latin American people and give meaning to cultural diversity.⁽⁴⁾

Identity is not limited solely to ancestral objects but remains alive through the practice of customs, rituals, art, and the transmission of values in our daily lives. It is in these historical expressions and in our relationship with others and the environment where we demonstrate coherence between what we say and do, thus evidencing our own existence.

Culture, in its ethnographic sense, encompasses a complex set of knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs, and other capacities and habits acquired by human beings as members of society. The study of culture and its condition in diverse human societies constitutes a suitable subject for investigating the laws of human thought and action.^(5,6)

Herrera et al.⁽⁶⁾ point out that the destruction of regional or indigenous food culture cannot be solely attributed to globalization, modernism, and capitalism, but rather these are triggers for the search for an identity materialized in national cuisine.

It is undeniable that current globalization has left little room for deep reflection on our own identity, leading to a loss of critical capacity and an uncritical adoption of aphorisms and trends from other cultures. This is dangerous as it disconnects our cultural identity and ancestral values, which are essential if we do not want to abandon our own culture in favor of foreign culture.

Experiencing ancestral culture poses a great challenge as it implies applying it as a value that is manifested in practice rather than turning it into a mere trend. This entails significant changes in how we relate to our identity.

The purpose of this research is to verify the experience of ancestral culture based on the values of cultural identity rooted in the Montubio roots. Its determination and dissemination are sought with the purpose of strengthening identity as a cultural value. In today's society, which faces a serious crisis of cultural identity due to a loss of values in all dimensions of human existence, it is more necessary than ever to fortify inherited culture through cultural expressions and the practice of values that promote well-being.

METHODS

The research employed a mixed methodology, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The Delphi method was utilized, which involved analyzing the instrument with the participation of experts in the

field. The study had a descriptive design, using a survey as the data collection technique. The target population was the Sucre Extension, and a sample of 64 students was randomly selected.

SPSS 25 software was used to tabulate and analyze the collected information. A reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, resulting in a reliability value of 0,94. This indicates that the instrument used was reliable.

RESULTS

A survey was conducted targeting the university population to identify their awareness and experience of ancestral values. The reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0,938 (number of items: 8).

In relation to the perception of the ease of experiencing ancestral culture, 67,2 % of respondents expressed that it is easy to experience ancestral culture, while 31 % have little knowledge of the culture, and 1,6 % have no knowledge of the culture (Table 1). The results indicate that a significant portion of people are familiar with ancestral culture, but there is also a small percentage of 1,6 % who have no knowledge, suggesting that it is gradually being lost. As citizens, it is important for everyone to experience and embrace ancestral values.

		F	%	% V	% A
Valid	None	1	1,6	1,6	1,6
	A little	20	31,3	31,3	32,8
	A lot	43	67,2	67,2	100
	Total	64	100	100	

Source: Own elaboration.

When analyzing the difficulty of putting ancestral values into practice, as shown in table 2, it was found that 60,9 % practice ancestral values to a small extent, while 37,5 % practice them to a great extent. These results indicate a very high percentage of limited practice and knowledge of the values of their own Montubio culture. Additionally, there is a minimal percentage of 1,6 % that shows a lack of knowledge and limited practice among young people, indicating a loss of cultural references. The diversity of forms, behaviors, actions, and values demonstrates that one cannot speak of a univocal concept of family, as throughout history, it has been evident that the form is not permanent, but rather a certain specific function that the family must fulfill in each stage.

		F	%	% V	% A
Valid	None	1	1,6	1,6	1,6
	A little	24	37,5	37,5	39,1
	A lot	39	60,9	60,9	100
	Total	64	100	100	

Source: Own elaboration.

The perception of the importance of preserving cultural values to maintain Montubio Manabita identity yielded interesting results. 67,2 % of the respondents affirmed that preserving cultural values is important, while 31,3 % expressed that it is not important, and 1,6 % considered it to have little importance (table 3). These results demonstrate a positive attitude towards cultural identification, as the majority of young people value the preservation of cultural values. There are important aspects that need to be addressed in the education of new generations, based on respect, knowledge, and the trust that young people have in this stage of development. Some individuals mentioned that certain aspects such as machismo and violence should not be perpetuated in today's society, which represents a positive progress for society.

It was quite revealing to observe the responses in table 4, where 62,5 % indicated having little knowledge of Montubio history, while 35,9 % stated having no knowledge at all, and 1,6 % admitted to having a significant lack of knowledge about Montubio history. These findings clearly demonstrate the lack of familiarity among the new generations with ancestral culture and the lack of understanding of the values practiced by their parents. They are increasingly adapting to new knowledge and drifting away from traditions in favor of activities of foreign origin. From this perspective, it can be deduced that over the years, the cultural richness brought by cultural expressions such as music, dance, legends, and traditional attire has been gradually lost. At times, they even feel ashamed of their Montubio identity.

Table 3. Perception of the importance of collecting the values of the culture in order to have a Manabi Montubi identity

		F	%	% V	% A
Valid	None	1	1,6	1,6	1,6
	A little	20	31,3	31,3	32,8
	A lot	43	67,2	67,2	100
	Total	64	100	100	

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 4. Knowledge of Montubio history and values lived by parents

		F	%	% V	% A
Valid	None	1	1,6	1,6	1,6
	A little	23	35,9	35,9	37,5
	A lot	40	62,5	62,5	100
	Total	64	100	100	

Source: Own elaboration.

The responses provided by the students were interesting, with 64 % expressing that it would be beneficial to incorporate this knowledge into their professional education as a value of ancestral identity, so that they can serve as role models for future generations. In this way, the identity of our people and the values of a good life can be preserved (table 5).

Table 5. Considerations on the importance of incorporating ancestral knowledge and values into higher education

		F	%	% V	% A
Valid	No	1	1,6	1,6	1,6
	Sometimes	22	34,4	34,4	35,9
	Yes	41	64,1	64,1	100
	Total	64	100	100	

Source: Own elaboration.

DISCUSSION

By comparing with other works, through the conducted research, thematic issues have been analyzed that allow confronting some indicators, such as the work of Cevallos Ruales⁽²⁾ in his article titled "Montubian Culture, Intangible Heritage of Ecuador: an opportunity for cultural tourism." In that work, he concludes that the enormous cultural potential of the Montubian people makes them deserving of recognition as intangible heritage of Ecuador. They are the ones who can rescue, preserve, conserve, and promote the attractions they possess, with the aim of including them in the future list of representative heritages.

The obtained results verify the existence of this enormous cultural potential in the Montubian people and justify their recognition as intangible heritage of Ecuador. These values are important to keep present in daily life and to experience them through positive attitudes in various circumstances. It has been evidenced that young generations, adolescents, and children show an increasing loss of cultural identity of their native ethnicity (Montubian), due to the adoption of foreign cultures promoted by the media and as a consequence of globalization and deficiencies in the actions implemented by the State in this matter. If effective measures are not taken to recover the sense of cultural belonging in contemporary citizenship, new generations will develop an unawareness of their cultural roots and, as a result, show resistance towards them.

In the research conducted by Ros⁽¹¹⁾ on cultural values and socioeconomic development, the comparison between cultural theories is highlighted, where it is manifested that the cultural dimensions of Postmaterialism, Intellectual and Affective Autonomy, and Egalitarianism are the result of a series of macroeconomic and macrosocial conditions. Thus, while economic growth reinforces material values, human development reinforces more solidarity-based values.

It is true that many young people, if they do not have a self-assumed base of identity as their own and as a value to practice, devalue who they are and assimilate other customs. In this way, they gradually lose their values with the passage of what is known as modernity, which has caused a profound wear and deterioration of their

own culture. Nowadays, the influence of the contemporary world and phenomena such as globalization have led to a large number of Ecuadorians adopting and adapting to foreign cultures, thus forgetting their original ethnicity. This situation is particularly evident in the coastal region, where, for example, the descendants of the Montubian ethnic group have modified traditional housing, clothing, and traditional dances, although other aspects such as gastronomy still prevail today.

CONCLUSIONS

The research allowed analyzing the limited awareness that university students have regarding their identity and the practice of ancestral values, especially in relation to their identity as Montubians. When they are in the city, they tend to immerse themselves in another culture that does not contribute to their beliefs and human values. It is of vital importance to preserve culture as a fundamental part of their lives, especially because their roots come from the values of Montubian culture, which possesses a cultural richness with unique characteristics that make them distinct in the country, such as their dialect, customs, language, oral tradition, and the struggle to survive with their own characteristics, which is becoming increasingly difficult due to the scarcity of cultural references.

Recovering this process through the attitudes that students will manifest represents a great challenge, not only for them but also for educators, who must educate through praxis, as nowadays words hold little validity if not accompanied by consistent action. Only in this way can ancestral culture be experienced based on the values of identity.

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Conceptualization: Lilia Moncerrate Villacis Zambrano, Valeria Cecilia Bravo Gómez, Luis Daniel Zambrano Molina, Víctor Manuel Román Vélez.

Research: Lilia Moncerrate Villacis Zambrano, Valeria Cecilia Bravo Gómez, Luis Daniel Zambrano Molina, Víctor Manuel Román Vélez.

Writing - proofreading and editing: Lilia Moncerrate Villacis Zambrano, Valeria Cecilia Bravo Gómez, Luis Daniel Zambrano Molina, Víctor Manuel Román Vélez.