

# Montubio culture and its contemporary relevance in the ancestral communities of Sucre Canton, Ecuador

## La cultura montubia y su vigencia en los pueblos ancestrales del cantón Sucre, Ecuador

William Renán Meneses Pantoja<sup>1,a</sup> , Michell Josué Murillo Vera<sup>1,b</sup> , Mayra Yasmina Espinoza Arauz<sup>1,c</sup>  , Eduardo Antonio Caicedo Coello<sup>1,d</sup> , Carlos Enrique Chica Medranda<sup>1,e</sup> 

Received: 05-05-2025

Accepted: 10-07-2025

Online: 21-07-2025

Article available  
by scanning QR



### Cite as

Meneses Pantoja, W. R., Murillo Vera M. J., Espinoza Arauz, M. Y., Caicedo Coello, E. A., y Chica Medranda, C. E. (2025). Montubio culture and its contemporary relevance in the ancestral communities of Sucre Canton, Ecuador. *Desafíos*, 16(2), 149-59. <https://doi.org/10.37711/desafios.2025.16.2.8>

## ABSTRACT

**Objective.** To analyze the level of knowledge and appreciation of Montubio culture among university students in Sucre Canton (Ecuador), and to propose educational strategies that strengthen its preservation as ancestral heritage. **Methods.** A mixed-methods, descriptive study was conducted, integrating analytical, synthetic, historical, logical, inductive, and deductive methods. A survey was administered to 191 students from the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí (Sucre campus), and semi-structured interviews were conducted with three faculty members and cultural managers. **Results.** Quantitative findings showed that university students' knowledge of Montubio culture in Sucre Canton is limited and fragmented, associated with limited access to information and systematized educational resources; however, a high level of acceptance of educational strategies aimed at its preservation was identified. Qualitative findings from interviews with faculty members and cultural managers revealed weak integration of Montubio culture into educational processes and the need to strengthen its intergenerational transmission. As an outcome, an educational brochure was developed to reinforce cultural identity and support the preservation of local heritage. **Conclusions:** University students in Sucre Canton exhibit low levels of knowledge and only partial appreciation of Montubio culture, conditioned by limited access to systematized cultural information, highlighting weaknesses in its intergenerational transmission.

**Keywords:** Montubio culture; cultural identity; cultural heritage; education; ancestral communities.

## RESUMEN

**Objetivo.** Analizar el nivel de conocimiento y valoración que los jóvenes universitarios del cantón Sucre (Ecuador) tienen sobre la cultura montubia y proponer estrategias educativas que fortalezcan su preservación como patrimonio ancestral. **Métodos.** Se empleó un enfoque mixto y un estudio descriptivo que integró métodos analítico, sintético, histórico, lógico, inductivo y deductivo. Se aplicó una encuesta a 191 estudiantes de la Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí (extensión Sucre) y se realizaron entrevistas semiestructuradas a tres docentes y gestores culturales. **Resultados.** Desde el enfoque cuantitativo, los resultados evidenciaron que el conocimiento de la cultura montubia entre los jóvenes universitarios del cantón Sucre es limitado y fragmentado, asociado al escaso acceso a información y recursos educativos sistematizados; no obstante, se identificó un alto nivel de aceptación hacia la implementación de estrategias educativas para su preservación. Desde el enfoque cualitativo, las entrevistas a docentes y gestores culturales revelaron la débil integración de la cultura montubia en los procesos educativos y la necesidad de fortalecer su transmisión intergeneracional. Como resultado, se elaboró un folleto educativo orientado a fortalecer la identidad cultural y apoyar la preservación del patrimonio local. **Conclusiones.** Los jóvenes universitarios del cantón Sucre presentan un bajo nivel de conocimiento y una valoración parcial de la cultura montubia, condicionados por el limitado acceso a información cultural sistematizada, lo que evidencia debilidades en su transmisión intergeneracional.

**Palabras clave:** cultura montubia; identidad cultural; patrimonio; educación; pueblos ancestrales.

### Affiliation and academic degree

<sup>1</sup> Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí, extensión Sucre Bahía de Caráquez, Ecuador.

<sup>a</sup> Master's Degree in Innovation and Tourism Marketing.

<sup>b</sup> Bachelor's Degree in Hospitality and Hotel Management.

<sup>c</sup> Master's Degree in Business Management.

<sup>d</sup> PhD in Pedagogical Sciences.

<sup>e</sup> Master's Degree in Education and Social Development.



## INTRODUCCIÓN

Montubio culture constitutes one of the most representative expressions of Ecuador's intangible cultural heritage, especially in the province of Manabí, where practices related to agricultural work, oral tradition, and community life have defined rural identity for generations. However, in recent decades, a progressive process of weakening and disinterest has become evident among younger generations, who display only a fragmented understanding of these traditions due to the impact of globalization, migration, accelerated urbanization, and the predominance of technologies that have transformed ways of life (Bravo, 2022; Nagar et al., 2021). The problem lies in the fact that, despite its recognition as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ecuador, Montubio culture is facing a gradual loss of practices, meanings, and intergenerational transmission, a situation that is reflected with particular clarity in Sucre Canton.

Previous studies indicate that Montubio culture comprises a set of values, customs, symbolic expressions, and productive practices present in provinces such as Manabí, Guayas, Santa Elena, and Los Ríos. Among its most notable elements are *amorfinos*, music, dances, traditional clothing, gastronomy, and agricultural production, all of which express an identity deeply tied to the territory (Nivela et al., 2021). Nevertheless, various studies warn that these manifestations are losing relevance. Sacón et al. (2025) argue that many cultural expressions in Manabí require stronger organizational support and sustained public policies to prevent their disappearance. Along the same lines, *Revista PCI* (2024) notes that the lack of permanent community-based projects has limited the continuity of cultural practices such as Montubio traditions in various rural communities.

This scenario highlights the need to create educational mechanisms that allow the revitalization and transmission of ancestral knowledge to younger generations, especially in university contexts where cultural identity is often displaced by global dynamics. Following Dussel (as cited in Felix, 2021), education should not only be understood from an intercultural perspective, but also from a transcultural one, understood as a process in which individuals participate in a critical dialogue among cultures that encounter one another, interact, and mutually transform each other. From this perspective, transculturality implies going beyond the mere coexistence of differences in order to build educational spaces where local, ancestral, and community-based knowledge holds the same epistemic value as hegemonic modern knowledge. As the author argues, modernity has produced processes of cultural exclusion that directly

affect Indigenous and rural peoples; therefore, a truly plural education requires recognizing these power relations and promoting pedagogical practices that integrate, resignify, and strengthen the knowledge specific to each territory.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2025) emphasizes the integration of ancestral knowledge into formal education, and Oblitas Bardales et al. (2025) highlight that contextualized educational practices strengthen respect for diversity. From these perspectives, education is recognized as a strategic means of addressing the problem of disinterest and cultural loss affecting the Montubio people.

This situation becomes particularly relevant in Ecuador, a country characterized by broad cultural diversity across the Highlands, Coast, Amazon, and Insular regions (Finer et al., 2008; Torres Jara, 2015; Whitten, 1976). Although ancestral peoples are bearers of collective memory, they currently face challenges such as globalization, territorial loss, and discrimination (Horbath, 2008). Within this framework, the Montubios, despite their historical role in agricultural production and in shaping the country's rural identity, run the risk of having their culture rendered invisible if processes of recognition, teaching, and appreciation are not strengthened among younger generations.

For this reason, this study is justified by the need to understand how university students in Sucre Canton perceive Montubio culture and which factors limit its dissemination and preservation. Higher education constitutes a strategic space for incorporating heritage-related content and promoting community participation in cultural safeguarding. Additionally, the Organization of Ibero-American States (2024) points out that intercultural educational spaces foster the transmission of identities and cultural strengthening, which supports the relevance of a study focused on the Montubio reality.

In this context, the objective of this study was to analyze the level of knowledge and appreciation that university students in Sucre Canton, Ecuador, have regarding Montubio culture and to propose educational strategies that strengthen its preservation as ancestral heritage.

## METHODS

### Study type and area

The research was conducted under a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques in order to obtain a broad understanding of the knowledge and appreciation

that university students possess regarding Montubio culture. The study was descriptive in nature, aimed at characterizing the level of dissemination of Montubio cultural practices and analyzing the relationships among variables such as cultural knowledge, age, and academic trajectory. Fieldwork was carried out during 2023, and the study area corresponded to Sucre Canton, in the province of Manabí, specifically the student community of the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí, Sucre campus, in Ecuador.

### Population and sample

The study population consisted of 845 students from the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí, Sucre campus, enrolled in different degree programs: Business Administration, Agribusiness, Accounting and Auditing, Early Childhood Education, Nursing, Hospitality and Hotel Management, Marketing, and Tourism. This group significantly represents the academic and cultural context of the canton and constitutes a strategic segment for analyzing the intergenerational transmission of Montubio culture.

The sample consisted of 191 students, selected through stratified probabilistic sampling, considering the different academic programs as strata. Included were students who were officially enrolled at the University during the data collection period in the aforementioned programs. Likewise, students' voluntary participation and questionnaire completeness were taken into account, thus ensuring that the information collected was valid for analysis. In contrast, students who were not enrolled during the study period, as well as those belonging to degree programs not contemplated in the study design, were excluded. Similarly, incomplete, duplicate, or inconsistent surveys were discarded in order to preserve the quality and reliability of the analyzed data.

### Variable and data collection instruments

The study considered as its main variable the level of knowledge and appreciation of Montubio culture among university students in Sucre Canton. To measure this variable, data collection instruments designed by the authors were used, based on a review of specialized literature and the objectives of the study.

The quantitative instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions, organized into four dimensions: knowledge of Montubio identity, cultural practices (orality, gastronomy, *amorfinos*, and Montubio rodeo), access to cultural information, and appreciation of Montubio culture. In addition, it comprised five items on a five-point Likert-type scale with the following response options: almost never, usually not, occasionally, usually yes, and

almost always. This made it possible to measure the frequency and perceptions of students regarding the study variable.

The qualitative instrument consisted of a semi-structured interview guide, also developed by the authors, aimed at university teachers and cultural managers linked to the preservation of local heritage. This guide was structured around categories related to cultural identity, intergenerational transmission, education, and cultural tourism, making it possible to explore in greater depth the social and patrimonial relevance of Montubio culture from an expert perspective.

Regarding instrument validation, both instruments were subjected to a validation process through expert judgment, in which specialists evaluated the clarity, relevance, and coherence of the items in relation to the research objectives. The observations made allowed for adjustments to the wording and final structure of the instruments, ensuring their suitability for data collection.

### Data collection techniques and procedures

To collect information, survey and semi-structured interview techniques were used, in accordance with the study's mixed-methods approach.

The survey was administered to students at the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí, Sucre campus, through a structured questionnaire created on the Google Forms platform. Prior to its administration, institutional authorization was requested, and participants were subsequently informed about the objectives of the study, thereby ensuring their voluntary participation through acceptance of informed consent. The questionnaire link was distributed to students through instant messaging networks (WhatsApp). The estimated time to complete the instrument was 5 to 7 minutes.

The semi-structured interview was conducted with three experts linked to university teaching and cultural management: Gustavo Enrique Hidalgo, engineer; Narcisa Alvia Espinoza, director of the Museum and Cultural Center of Bahía de Caráquez; and Eura Zambrano Vera, professor at the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí, Sucre campus. Prior to conducting the interviews, informed consent was requested from the participants, who authorized the academic use of the information provided. The interviews were carried out both in person and virtually, depending on the experts' availability, at previously coordinated times, and lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes each. The information obtained was recorded

through notes and audio recordings, which were subsequently transcribed for analysis.

This procedure made it possible to collect quantitative and qualitative information in a systematic and ethical manner, thus ensuring the reliability and validity of the data obtained.

### Data analysis

The quantitative data obtained through the survey were coded, tabulated, and processed using SPSS statistical software, version 25, employing descriptive statistics, specifically absolute frequencies and percentages. This made it possible to organize and interpret the information related to the level of knowledge and appreciation of Montubio culture among university students.

As for the qualitative information collected through the interviews, content analysis was applied following a systematic procedure. First, the interviews were transcribed in full; subsequently, an exploratory reading was carried out to identify relevant data. Based on this process, thematic coding was performed, organizing the discourse into categories linked to cultural identity, intergenerational transmission, and the current challenges facing Montubio culture. Finally, the qualitative results were contrasted with the quantitative findings, allowing for a comprehensive interpretation from the study's mixed-methods perspective.

### Ethical considerations

The research respected the ethical principles of confidentiality, informed consent, and voluntary participation. Students and experts were informed about the objectives of the study and authorized the academic use of the information. No sensitive personal data were collected, and anonymity in the presentation of results was guaranteed, except in the case of the interviewed experts who approved the mention of their identities.

## RESULTS

This research generated both quantitative and qualitative information that made it possible to understand the level of knowledge, appreciation, and perception that young people in Sucre Canton have regarding Montubio culture. To this end, surveys were administered to university students and interviews were conducted with experts in teaching and cultural management, which made it possible to obtain a comprehensive view of the issue.

The results are presented below, differentiated according to the technique employed, with the aim of highlighting the main findings and contrasting the perspective of young people with that of the specialists.

### Survey results

Table 1 presents the results of the survey on Montubio culture and its continued relevance among the ancestral communities of Sucre Canton. With regard to the first question, 59% of the students indicated that they only occasionally know what it means to be Montubio, while 19% stated that they usually do know, and only 3.7% reported that they almost always do. In contrast, 18.5% declared that they usually do not know, and 0.5% indicated that they almost never do, reflecting that there is still a sector that is unfamiliar with this cultural identity. These results reveal that knowledge of Montubio culture is still partial and fragmented.

In the second question, 48% of the students responded that they only occasionally seek information about Montubio culture, while 25% indicated that they usually do so, and only 5% stated that they almost always do. In contrast, 14% affirmed that they usually do not seek such information, and 2% said that they almost never do, confirming that a large proportion of young people do not consistently access sources related to this heritage. These results show that the search for information is sporadic and unsystematic.

In the third question, 47% of respondents considered that Montubio culture is only moderately important for young people, while 10% rated it as very important and 14% as important. In contrast, 19% believed it has little importance, and 5% stated that it has no relevance at all. These results show that, although most respondents recognize a certain degree of cultural value, the perception of its full importance is limited, suggesting that Montubio culture does not occupy a central place in the lives of young people today.

In the fourth question, 17% of respondents stated that they strongly agreed that activities should be developed to benefit ancestral communities, while 32% indicated that they agreed. Another 33% were undecided, reflecting a certain lack of clarity or commitment regarding the proposal, and 13% indicated that they disagree. Finally, only 1% expressed strong disagreement.

Lastly, in the fifth question, 57% of respondents stated that they strongly agreed with the development of brochures or guides containing information about the ancestral communities of Sucre Canton, while 19%

said that they agreed. Another 17% were undecided, whereas only 2% expressed disagreement, and no student indicated strong disagreement. These results reflect strong support for the creation of informational materials as a key tool for disseminating and preserving knowledge about Montubio culture.

**Analysis of the interview results**

This interview was conducted with Gustavo Enrique Hidalgo, engineer and historian who served as assistant to Emilio Estrada, archaeologist and former President of Ecuador. As a knowledgeable figure in the history and culture of Manabí, his perspective was considered valuable for this research.

**Table 1**  
Results of the survey on Montubio culture and its continued relevance among the ancestral communities of Sucre Canton

Items and indicators	n = 191	
	fi	%
<b>Knowledge of what it means to be Montubio</b>		
Almost always	7	2.5
Usually	36	13.2
Occasionally	112	41.3
Usually not	35	12.9
Almost never	1	0.3
<b>Seeking information about Montubio culture</b>		
Almost always	11	5.7
Usually	51	26.7
Occasionally	96	50.2
Usually not	28	14.6
Almost never	5	2.6
<b>Importance of Montubio culture among young people</b>		
Strongly agree	34	17.8
Agree	63	32.9
Undecided	66	34.5
Disagree	26	13.6
Strongly disagree	2	1.0
<b>Development of activities related to ancestral communities</b>		
Strongly agree	34	17.8
Agree	63	32.9
Undecided	66	34.5
Disagree	26	13.6
Strongly disagree	2	1.0
<b>Development of brochures and guides with information on Sucre Canton</b>		
Strongly agree	115	60.2
Agree	38	19.9
Undecided	34	17.8
Disagree	4	2.0
Strongly disagree	0	0.0

**Montubio culture and its continued relevance in the ancestral communities of Sucre Canton**

1. Do you know what it means to be Montubio?

The interviewee indicated that there is currently a distinction between the terms *montubio* and *montuvio*, clarifying that the former is the correct and authentic term, whereas the latter emerged from an error in dissemination. He explained that the Montubio is the result of the mixture of Aboriginal peoples, Spaniards, Afro-descendant, and Indigenous peoples, recalling the popular expression passed down by his ancestors: “he who has no *inga* has *mandinga*,” in reference to Indigenous and Afro-descendant roots.

2. Do you agree that the arrival of tourists to Montubio communities is a major contribution to tourism in Sucre Canton?

He stated that he agreed, since he considers that rural areas have remained neglected and their production has not been properly valued. He expressed that peasants receive unfair prices for their products due to the lack of regulation, which affects their economy.

3. How likely is it to find information about Montubio culture?

He noted that the likelihood is low, since little documentation is available. He indicated that he owns only a few books containing information about Montubio customs and that in-depth research is scarce.

4. How often do you speak about Montubio culture?

He mentioned that during his career as a professor at the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí (ULEAM), Sucre campus, he shared his knowledge with students. He also participated in discussion forums and supervised theses related to Montubio culture.

5. Do you believe it is important for Montubio culture to be present in educational institutions?

The interviewee considered that the teaching of Montubio culture should be mandatory, since losing one’s roots is equivalent to losing cultural identity, especially in territories where this tradition has historically developed.

6. Do you agree that tools should be offered to facilitate young people’s engagement with Montubio culture?

He affirmed that he did, since he considers it necessary for young people to know the way of life of their ancestors, including clothing and modes of expression. In his view, such tools would help keep Montubio culture alive in future generations.

7. How likely are you to visit the ancestral communities in the canton?

He stated that he visits these communities occasionally, mainly for travel-related reasons or upon invitations from authorities and residents. Among the places he mentioned were San Isidro and Charapotó.

8. Do you consider Montubio communities important for the economic development of Sucre Canton?

He maintained that these communities are of great importance, since they supply food to the Ecuadorian population. He criticized the fact that they are not provided with the means to expand their employment opportunities.

9. How often have you attended events in the Montubio communities of the canton?

He stated that he attends when invited by community authorities and said that he feels proud to participate in such spaces, as he believes that Montubio cultural identity should not be lost.

10. Do you agree that actions should be taken to improve tourism in ancestral places within the canton?

He affirmed that he did, emphasizing that the Decentralized Autonomous Governments (GADs, by its Spanish acronym) should prioritize projects that strengthen Montubio culture, given that it forms part of the canton's history and has tourism potential.

11. Do you consider it important for access roads to the communities to be in good condition?

The interviewee noted that it is essential to have adequate access roads, both to facilitate the arrival of tourists and to enable residents to market their products, which would directly benefit the local economy.

**Narcisa Alvia Espinoza, Acting Director of the Bahía de Caráquez Museum and Cultural Center**

Narcisa Alvia Espinoza has developed her career in different roles within the Bahía de Caráquez Museum, which has allowed her to gain a comprehensive understanding of the historical, cultural, archaeological, and paleontological development of northern Manabí. This museum housed high-value and historically significant pieces, paintings, and remains, such as the Gold Sun of Jama, among others. For this reason, her contribution to this research is considered important.

**Montubio culture and its continued relevance in the ancestral communities of Sucre Canton**

1. Do you know what it means to be Montubio?

Espinoza explained that the Montubio refers to the rural population engaged in agriculture and

hunting, who preserved their customs through clothing and manual labor. She acknowledged, however, that technology has now displaced part of these practices.

2. Do you agree that the arrival of tourists to Montubio communities is a major contribution to tourism in Sucre Canton?

She considered the arrival of tourists to be an important contribution, since Montubio culture is undergoing a process of decline. She noted that there is still an opportunity to revitalize it and to show visitors not only the beaches, but also the cultural diversity of the communities.

3. How likely is it to find information about Montubio culture?

She indicated that the available information is scarce. In this regard, she argued that the Ministry of Culture should update and disseminate content, with particular emphasis on children and young people who have not experienced these traditions.

4. How often do you speak about Montubio culture?

She commented that the Bahía de Caráquez Museum does not have a specific space dedicated to this culture, although she considered it appropriate to organize talks and activities that would allow both the community and tourists to learn more about it.

5. Do you believe it is important for Montubio culture to be present in educational institutions?

She stated that its teaching is essential, since many customs are disappearing. As an example, she mentioned that some students are unaware of the existence of the *toquilla* straw hat, which demonstrates the need to include these contents within the educational sphere.

6. Do you agree that tools should be offered to facilitate young people's engagement with Montubio culture?

Espinoza stated that she agreed and suggested the implementation of activities such as talks and open-house events that would encourage young people to take an interest in the practices of their ancestors, in order to keep them alive over time.

7. How likely are you to visit the ancestral communities in the canton?

She indicated that her visits to these communities are infrequent, mainly due to difficulties of access. However, she emphasized that she has had meaningful experiences in places such as San Isidro, where the preparation of food in clay pots is still preserved.

8. Do you consider Montubio communities important for the economic development of Sucre Canton?

She emphasized that these communities play a fundamental role in the local economy, since they produce food that supplies the city. She underscored that, without this rural-urban connection, the economy of the canton would be severely affected.

9. How often have you attended events in the Montubio communities of the canton?

She commented that she attends events such as discussion forums and open houses when invited, and noted that these experiences always leave her with valuable lessons that enrich her understanding of the culture.

10. Do you agree that actions should be taken to improve tourism in ancestral sites within the canton?

The director expressed her agreement and cited as an example the museum under construction in San Isidro, which she said has great potential to promote Montubio culture and attract visitors.

11. Do you consider it important for access roads to the communities to be in good condition?

The director maintained that having adequate access roads is essential, both to facilitate the arrival of tourists and to ensure the mobility of the inhabitants themselves. She added that the implementation of lighting systems would help improve safety and visitors' perceptions.

**Eura Zambrano Vera, Professor at the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí, Sucre Campus**

Eura María Zambrano Vera holds degrees in Aquaculture and Educational Sciences, as well as a master's degree in Sustainable Tourism Management and another in Human Resources Management and Administration. She has worked as a university professor for more than 15 years and in the public tourism sector for 20 years. She currently serves as director of the Department of Tourism and Culture of the Decentralized Autonomous Government of San Vicente canton, in Manabí. Her contribution to this research is relevant, given that her comprehensive vision of the territory in cultural and tourism matters is significant for this study.

**Montubio culture and its continued relevance in the ancestral communities of Sucre Canton**

1. Do you know what it means to be Montubio?

Zambrano explained that, more than theoretical knowledge, being Montubio is a matter of identity and a sense of belonging. She also stated that she recognizes herself as part of this culture because

she has experienced it closely, which gives her confidence and pride in feeling native to it.

2. Do you agree that the arrival of tourists to Montubio communities is a major contribution to tourism in Sucre Canton?

She answered affirmatively, emphasizing that tourists value the authenticity of rural communities and are moved by seeing how their inhabitants identify with their culture. She also added that this contact strengthens the tourist appeal of the canton.

3. How likely is it to find information about Montubio culture?

She indicated that she does not usually rely on books or digital sources as her main reference, but rather prefers direct experience in the communities. She considered that contact with people and observation of their daily practices constitute a richer way of accessing cultural information.

4. How often do you speak about Montubio culture?

She commented that she addresses this topic frequently in her daily life, both with her children and with her students. She also noted that speaking about Montubio culture is part of her identity and, therefore, a constant aspect of her everyday life.

5. Do you believe it is important for Montubio culture to be present in educational institutions?

She affirmed that it is, arguing that teaching about ethnic groups and cultural identity is indispensable, just like environmental education. She further emphasized that both dimensions are related, since without identity there can be no cultural preservation or respect for the environment.

6. Do you agree that tools should be offered to facilitate young people's engagement with Montubio culture?

She agreed and suggested the development of technological platforms integrating information about the towns in the province where these traditions are still preserved, in order to disseminate them among young people.

7. How likely are you to visit the ancestral communities in the canton?

She stated that she visits these communities frequently, taking advantage of opportunities for collaboration and participation in festivals, which she considers important for supporting residents and strengthening their efforts toward cultural preservation.

8. Do you consider Montubio communities important for the economic development of Sucre Canton?

Zambrano argued that these communities are essential to economic sustainability, since the

productive sector is concentrated in rural areas. She also stated that localities such as Charapotó and San Isidro contribute significantly to supplying the families of the canton.

**9. How often have you attended events in the Montubio communities of the canton?**

She revealed that she actively participates in these events, noting that they are a source of cultural learning. However, she acknowledged that, although the communities maintain a calendar of celebrations, support from local authorities is lacking to strengthen and promote these activities.

**10. Do you agree that actions should be taken to improve tourism in ancestral sites within the canton?**

The professor stated that she agreed, but warned that such actions must be accompanied by budgets intended to cover basic needs, foster social inclusion, and ensure equity in the resources allocated by local governments.

**11. Do you consider it important for access roads to the communities to be in good condition?**

Finally, she emphasized that having adequate access roads is a fundamental requirement for achieving sustainable tourism and strengthening local productivity. She further added that rural communities require first-rate connectivity, which would contribute both to economic development and to the positioning of cultural tourism in the area.

## DISCUSSION

The findings obtained in this study allow for a clearer understanding of the current state of knowledge and appreciation of Montubio culture among university students in Sucre Canton. First, the results show that most students do not have a clear or structured notion of what it means to be Montubio, as 59% indicated that they only occasionally understand this concept, and only 3.7% stated that they know it almost always. This trend is consistent with what Bravo (2022) points out, namely that cultural heritage remains alive only when there is a systematic educational process that enables its appropriation and recognition by younger generations. The weak understanding of the meaning of Montubio culture is not merely a problem of lack of information, but also reflects a rupture in the processes of intergenerational transmission, which have historically depended on orality and community practices.

In line with the above, the results show that access to information on Montubio culture is limited: 48% of the young people indicated that they only occasionally find resources or content related to it. This supports the argument put forward by Vergara Mantilla et al. (2023), who emphasize that heritage learning requires dynamic, technology-mediated teaching strategies capable of awakening students' interest. The scarcity of accessible, updated, and contextualized materials on Montubio culture suggests the urgent need to create educational resources that support the preservation of this heritage. In this regard, the fact that 57% of students strongly agree with the development of cultural brochures represents a concrete opportunity to strengthen local identity, since pedagogical resources should serve as the bridge between ancestral knowledge and contemporary educational realities.

The interviews conducted with teachers and cultural managers reinforce the idea that Montubio culture has not been adequately integrated into local educational processes, despite its historical and social importance. Guacho Tipán (2022) emphasizes that intercultural education should not only recognize diversity, but also incorporate it systematically into the curriculum, teaching methods, and institutional practices. To this is added the perspective of UNICEF (2025), which indicates that cultural and linguistic relevance is essential for the transmission of knowledge in multicultural contexts. Furthermore, the testimonies gathered in this study reveal that academic staff are aware of this need, but there is also a lack of consolidated initiatives that integrate Montubio culture into educational content, confirming that higher education still has gaps in the promotion of local heritage.

Another relevant finding is the relationship between culture and tourism as a strategy for heritage sustainability. Seventy-six percent of the students stated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the creation of tourism projects integrating ancestral customs. This is consistent with Nagar et al. (2021), who argue that, despite the high degree of genetic mestizaje among the Montubio people, their cultural and productive practices remain distinctive and constitute a resource for the local economy and social cohesion. In this sense, the articulation between responsible tourism and cultural heritage can become a means of revitalizing Montubio identity, provided that participatory initiatives are implemented that involve communities and avoid the folklorization or superficial commercialization of culture (Alvarado & Macias, 2024).

Across the board, both students and interviewees highlighted the importance of generating mechanisms for the documentation, research, and dissemination

of Montubio culture. They called for historical databases, better access roads to rural areas, and public policies that guarantee the continuity of cultural projects. These demands coincide with the arguments presented in the source document, which warns that modernization and urban growth, when not connected with historical memory, generate processes of cultural forgetting that particularly affect ancestral peoples. In the case of the Montubios, this situation becomes critical due to the lack of institutionalized spaces that encourage cultural revitalization (García et al., 2025; Mendoza et al., 2025).

This research shows that young people's perceptions are not disconnected from the national historical context. Like other ancestral peoples of Ecuador, such as the Kichwa, Shuar, or Otavalo peoples, the Montubio people face challenges derived from globalization, discrimination, and territorial loss. However, unlike other ethnic groups that have managed to consolidate policies of cultural reinvigoration, the Montubio people are still in an initial process of identity strengthening, which partly explains the fragility with which their cultural memory is maintained within the formal education system (Cedeño et al., 2023; García et al., 2018).

From a decolonial perspective, this phenomenon can be understood as the result of the coloniality of knowledge, which, according to Dussel (as cited in Felix, 2021), continues to reproduce epistemological hierarchies that privilege Western knowledge while subordinating rural and ancestral knowledge. This perspective aligns with contemporary studies showing that Latin American education must move toward a decolonial pedagogy capable of articulating modern science with traditional knowledge, fostering a horizontal dialogue among diverse cultural systems (Seithi Kato et al., 2023). Along the same lines, research on intercultural curriculum demonstrates that a decolonial approach is not limited to the superficial inclusion of cultural content, but rather requires reconstructing educational processes from the identities, epistemologies, and histories of peoples in order to counteract the epistemic exclusion generated by modernity (Molina & Rivera, 2022; Zambrano, 2022). Moreover, recent authors argue that assuming otherness as a valid interlocutor constitutes a central principle in ethical and decolonial pedagogy, since it allows for a rethinking of power relations, the questioning of cultural hegemony, and the promotion of the identity-based emancipation of communities (Mujica Johnson, 2024).

The results of this study make it clear that the creation of an educational brochure is not only appropriate, but also necessary, since it responds directly to the

problems identified: lack of knowledge, limited access to information, the absence of intercultural strategies, and the need to revitalize Montubio identity in Sucre Canton. This material can become a useful resource for teachers, students, and communities, provided that it is prepared with historical rigor, cultural relevance, and accessible language.

Although this research provides important data on young people's perceptions of Montubio culture, it has some limitations. First, although significant, the sample is restricted solely to university students, which prevents the results from being generalized to the entire youth population of the canton. Second, data collection through digital surveys may have influenced the quality of responses, especially among students with less access to technology. In addition, the interviews were conducted with a limited number of experts, which restricts the diversity of perspectives gathered. Finally, the limited availability of recent studies on Montubio culture conditioned the theoretical analysis, making it necessary to resort to documents that were difficult to access or contained fragmented information.

Despite these limitations, the results obtained constitute a solid basis for future research to include other educational institutions, rural communities, and cultural actors in Sucre Canton.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study show that knowledge and appreciation of Montubio culture among university students in Sucre Canton are insufficient and fragmented, revealing weak cultural transmission in educational, family, and community settings. This situation is reinforced by limited access to information and systematized pedagogical resources, which limits the appropriation of Montubio identity by younger generations and confirms the fulfillment of the objective of diagnosing this level of knowledge and appreciation.

Likewise, it was found that young people do not have sufficient informational resources on Montubio culture. Nearly half indicated that they have little access to related information, and this is directly associated with the absence of pedagogical materials, institutional programs, or strategies for cultural dissemination. Appreciation of Montubio culture, although present, is conditioned by this lack of information, which limits its identity-based appropriation.

From a qualitative perspective, it was observed that Montubio culture is not structurally integrated

into local educational processes, although both students and cultural actors showed willingness to adopt educational strategies for its preservation. In this context, the creation of an educational brochure is a relevant option for disseminating and valuing ancestral heritage, thereby strengthening Montubio cultural identity in Sucre Canton.

Furthermore, openness toward educational strategies to revitalize Montubio identity was confirmed, such as the creation of a brochure, a proposal supported by many students. This resource facilitates the dissemination, understanding, and appreciation of ancestral heritage, contributing to the preservation and continuity of Montubio culture among the younger generations of Sucre Canton.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

- Alvarado, L. F., & Macías, J. F. (2024). Los valores ancestrales como identidad cultural montubia. *Dominio De Las Ciencias*, 10(2), 657-667. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.23857/dc.v10i2.3824>
- Bravo, D. V. (2022). Patrimonio e identidad cultural, el desafío de la educación patrimonial en la era de los avances tecnológicos. *REVISTA DE HISTORIA Y GEOGRAFÍA* (47), 191-217. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.29344/07194145.47.3384>
- Cedeño, E. B., Cedeño, X. B., & Molina, L. (2023). Identidad Colectiva, Empoderamiento y Gastronomía en Manabí – Ecuador. *Revista Internacional De Gestión Innovación Y Sostenibilidad Turística*, 3(1), 86-96. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.51260/riqistur.v3i1.391>
- Felix, E. (2021). Perú: lucha por la integración pluricultural y el peligro de la modernidad en la educación. *Revista Estudios Psicológicos*, 1(4), 33-50. <https://estudiospsicologicos.com/index.php/rep/article/view/17>
- Finer M, Jenkins CN, Pimm SL, Keane B & Ross C (2008). Oil and Gas Projects in the Western Amazon: Threats to Wilderness, Biodiversity, and Indigenous Peoples. *PLoS ONE*, 3(8), e2932. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0002932>
- United Nations Children's Emergency Fund. (2025). *La educación intercultural bilingüe en Ecuador: Materiales en lenguas originarias y en español para la EIB*. UNICEF. [https://www.unicef.org/lac/la-educacion-intercultural-bilingue-eib-en-ecuador?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.unicef.org/lac/la-educacion-intercultural-bilingue-eib-en-ecuador?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- García, Y. V., Blanco, R. F., & Enrique, L. E. (2018). Protección del patrimonio sonoro y documental de la cultura montubia den Ecuador. *Universidad&Ciencia*, 7(2), 1-12. <https://works.hcommons.org/records/24407-gc403>
- García, Y. V., Castellón, G. D., Sánchez, V. S., & Chica, L. G. (2025). Inclusión social del pueblo Montubio de Ecuador a través de las prácticas musicales. *Revista De Ciencias Sociales*, 31(1), 342-354. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31876/rcs.v31i1.43512>
- Guacho Tipán, I. G. (2022). El papel de la educación intercultural en la promoción del respeto y la diversidad. *Bastcorp International Journal*, 1(1), 4-13. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.62943/bij.v1n1.2022.18>
- Horbath, J. E. (2008). *La discriminación laboral de los indígenas en los mercados urbanos de trabajo en México: revisión y balance de un fenómeno persistente*. Siglo del Hombre CLACSO. <https://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar/clacso/clacso-crop/20120606125325/04horb.pdf>
- Mendoza, B. E., Ureta, L. A., Alcívar, L. D., & Félix, M. F. (2025). Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial de Manabí (Ecuador): Vulnerabilidad y Acciones para la Salvaguardia. *Revista Reflexiones*, 105(1), 1-33. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15517/rr.v105i1.60906>
- Molina, J. E., & Rivera, P. M. (2022). Decolonial approach to the intercultural bilingual curriculum: from theory to practice. *Revista Interamericana De Investigación Educación Y Pedagogía RIIIEP*, 15(1), 281-310. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361201865\\_Decolonial\\_approach\\_to\\_the\\_intercultural\\_bilingual\\_curriculum\\_from\\_theory\\_to\\_practice](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361201865_Decolonial_approach_to_the_intercultural_bilingual_curriculum_from_theory_to_practice)
- Mujica Johnson, F. (2024). La pedagogía de la profundidad y la amplitud. Una perspectiva decolonial basada en Gabriela Mistral y Enrique Dussel. *Revista Dilemas Contemporaneos*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.46377/dilemas.v11i2.4006>
- Nagar, S. D., Conley, A. B., Chande, A. T., Rishishwar, L., Sharma, S., Mariño-Ramírez, L., Aguinaga-Romero, G., González-Andrade, F., & King, J. (2021). Genetic ancestry and ethnic identity in Ecuador. *HGG Advances*, 2(4). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.xhgg.2021.100050>
- Nivela, G. A., Caicedo, W. R., Burgos, B. A., & Suarez, S. K. (2021). Importancia de la cultura montubia como recurso y atractivo turístico en la Provincia de Los Ríos. *Journal of Science and Research*, 6(3), 161-184. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5659422>
- Oblitas Bardales, S., Torres Acurio, J., Bautista Apaza, E. V., & Mamani Cachicatari, G. (2025). Gestión de la participación comunitaria y su impacto en la educación intercultural bilingüe en el altiplano peruano. *Revista Espacios*, 46(02), 1-14. <https://revistaespacios.com/a25v46n02/25460204.html>
- Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos. (2024). *Encuentro Nacional de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe y V Encuentro de Experiencias Etnoeducativas*. OEI. [https://oei.int/oficinas/ecuador/noticias/encuentro-nacional-de-educacion-intercultural-bilingue-y-v-encuentro-de-experiencias-etnoeducativas/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://oei.int/oficinas/ecuador/noticias/encuentro-nacional-de-educacion-intercultural-bilingue-y-v-encuentro-de-experiencias-etnoeducativas/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
- Revista PCI. (2024). Línea de Fomento de la Artesanía Tradicional y el Patrimonio Agroalimentario como estrategia de salvaguardia del PCI. *Revista Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial*, 15, 1-89. <https://revistas.patrimoniocultural.gob.ec/ojs/index.php/PCI/issue/view/34/28>
- Sacón, Y. N., Zambrano, M. L., & Macías, C. C. (2025). Diagnóstico del patrimonio cultural inmaterial de las comunidades del cantón Bolívar, Manabí, Ecuador. *Turismo Y Patrimonio*, 24, 7-24. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24265/turpatrim.2025.n24.01>
- Seithi Kato, D. S., Galamba, A., & Pinto Monteiro, B. A. (2023). Decolonial scientific education to combat 'science for domination'. *Cult Stud of Sci Educ*, 18, 217-235. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s11422-023-10165-4>
- Torres Jara, G. N. (2015). *Diseño de una guía didáctica de las celebraciones andinas y sus manifestaciones culturales para niñas y niños entre 8 a 12 años de edad de la provincia Chimborazo con ilustraciones infantiles* [Tesis de maestría, Universidad de Barcelona]. Diposit Digital. <https://doi.org/https://hdl.handle.net/2445/69353>

- Vergara Mantilla, M. A., Pibaque-Pionce, M. S., & García Rodríguez, R. (2023). Importancia del conocimiento patrimonial y cultural aplicando las TIC en estudiantes del bachillerato. *Journal TechInnovation*, 2(2), 70-78. <https://doi.org/10.47230/Journal.TechInnovation.v2.n2.2023.70-78>
- Whitten, N. E. (1976). *Ecuadorian Ethnocide and Indigenous Ethnogenesis: Amazonian Resurgence*. International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. [https://iwgia.org/images/publications/0189\\_23Andino.pdf](https://iwgia.org/images/publications/0189_23Andino.pdf)
- Zambrano, L. M. (2022). La sabiduría cultural como identidad histórica en las nuevas generaciones manabitas. *Revista Científica*, 7(23), 119-135. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369310714\\_La\\_sabiduria\\_cultural\\_como\\_identidad\\_historica\\_en\\_las\\_nuevas\\_generaciones\\_manabitas](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369310714_La_sabiduria_cultural_como_identidad_historica_en_las_nuevas_generaciones_manabitas)

**Contribución de los autores**

WRMP: data curation, resources, supervision, writing, reviewing, and editing.

MJMV: conceptualization, research, writing, and original draft preparation.

MYEA: validation and project administration.

EACC: visualization.

CECM: methodology.

**Fuentes de financiamiento**

This research was conducted with the authors' own resources.

**Conflictos de interés**

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

**Correspondencia**

Espinoza Arauz Mayra

E-mail: [mayra.espinoza@uleam.edu.ec](mailto:mayra.espinoza@uleam.edu.ec)