Xi'an Shiyou Daxue Xuebao (Ziran Kexue Ban)/
Journal of Xi'an Shiyou University, Natural Sciences Edition
ISSN: 1673-064X
E-Publication: Online Open Access
Vol: 66 Issue 06 | 2023
DOI 10.17605/OSF.IO/9NFQA

PRESERVING MYTHOLOGY" PROGRAM FOR THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE AWAJÚN CULTURE

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Abstract

The objective of the educational experience was to determine the effectiveness of the program "Preserving Mythology" in the consolidation of the Awajún culture in the students of the third grade of secondary school of the educational institution "Alberto Acosta Herrera" in Imaza, Peru. Regarding materials and methods, a quasi-experimental design was used with two groups, the experimental group with 35 participants and the control group made up of 30 students. The data collection technique was the survey through a questionnaire applied in two moments, pretest and posttest. For the statistical analysis, SPSS version 25 was used. After the Kolmogórov-Smirnov normality tests for the experimental group (n=35) and Shapiro Wilk for the control group (n=30), the parametric T Student test was selected with a confidence level of 95%. The results showed differences in both groups, however, in the experimental group the difference was significant (p= 0.000), while in the control group the differences between the pretest and posttest results were not significant (p=0.476). At the beginning, both groups registered averages at a moderate level of consolidation (6 - 10); however, after the intervention, the average of the experimental group increased to a very high level (15 - 20), and it is also evident that there was no improvement in the control group. Based on the results, it is concluded that the educational program "preserving mythology" proved to be highly effective for the cultural consolidation of the participants, thus emerging as an original and innovative contribution to improve education in the Awajún culture and respond to the current demands of intercultural and bilingual education.

Keywords: Instruccional programmes, Cultural identity, Amerindian cultures, Amerindian languages, Mythology, multiculturalism, Perú, social interaction.

1. INTRODUCTION

Latin America is characterised as a multicultural and especially intercultural territory, according to Quintriqueo and Arias-Ortega (2019) the presence of approximately 40 million indigenous people with their own social and cultural environment in the region, who come from more than 600 native peoples. These represent a cultural and social wealth for Latin American countries and a commitment in the educational sphere in terms of their conservation.

In Peru, this cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity represents one of the most complex challenges for the education system. A total of 47 languages are known in the national territory, 17 linguistic families and three exclusively Andean languages Aru, Jaqi and Aymara, distributed among more than 43 native peoples such as Madija, Asháninka, Iñapari, Nomatsiquenga, Machiguenga, Nanti, Yine, Piro, Machineri, Chamicuro, Resígaro, Mashco, Piro, Bora, Chayahuita and Jebero, Candosco, Resígaro, Mashco,

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Piro, Bora, Chayahuita and Jebero, Resígaro, Mashco, Piro, Bora, Chayahuita and Jebero, Candoshi, Harakmbut, Acual, Wampi, Jivaro del río corrientes, Munichi, Pano, Quechua de la Amazonía, Ese ejja, Tikuna, Secoya and orejón, Cocama-cocamilla and Omagua, Ocaina, Witoto, Arabela, Iquito, Vacacocha, Taushiro and Awajún (Solís, 2009, 317)

Given this reality, since the early 1990s, a series of measures and policies have been established in Peru to achieve the insertion of indigenous peoples into the education system through intercultural and bilingual education (EIB) (Canaza-Choque et al. 2018), i.e., a distinctive educational modality due to its plans, projects and policies aimed at indigenous populations settled mostly in rural geographical areas. In this way, the Peruvian State recognises its value by pointing out that the cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity of the country is assumed as a richness. Furthermore, it promotes recognition, acceptance and respect for differences, as well as mutual knowledge and an attitude of learning about others, which are the basis for harmonious coexistence and cultural exchange (Education Act No. 28044, Article 8, paragraph f).

However, it has been observed that in recent years the promotion of intercultural bilingual education in the country has faced a series of economic, social and cultural difficulties, which have prevented it from being given its proper place and from promoting cultural identity, especially among indigenous peoples and ethnic groups. On the contrary, after centuries of discrimination, indigenous parents have currently promoted communication in dominant languages among the younger generations, with the intention of creating favourable conditions for their insertion into modern societies, as a way of transforming an imminent reality, as indicated by UNESCO (2017), "children and adolescents from indigenous families are less likely to attend school or to develop successfully in training programmes than non-indigenous children" (p. 1).

Certainly, learning Spanish as a language for communication in a national context has represented a way for encounter, however, the native language represents a fundamental aspect in the learning process for children and adolescents belonging to indigenous peoples, since, as Corbetta, et al. (2018) points out, "cultural conceptions and knowledge about nature and the social world are sedimented in languages, while languages strongly constitute personal and social identities" (p. 22). (p. 22) and in the field of education, MINEDU (2016) insists that they "learn better if they do so from their own cultural and linguistic references, ensuring access to other socio-cultural scenarios"

In this sense, culture is understood as the set of forms, expressions and behaviours that, based on language, in its double meaning, as an instrument of communication and as a way of conceiving the world, allows social organisation (Heise, et al., 1994). It adds a transcendental value in the educational field, since according to El Cusihuaman (2019) "it congregates original identity artefacts, which make it different from one [culture] to another." (p. 344)

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The ineffectiveness of national policies on interculturality opens the door to the intrusion of transnational cultures, generating the dangerous proliferation of cultural alienation and the weakening of native cultures. These effects have already generated important transformations in Peru, since the non-recognition of languages and cultures other than Spanish has systematically imposed, in these contexts, "a set of values, concepts and models of life alien to the reality of the non-Hispanic peoples of Peru". (Solís, 2009, p. 330).

Current policies, which in sum do not favour indigenous populations, validate what Correa (Correa, 2011) points out that interculturality as a public policy issue is part of an official discourse with a cross-cutting approach to national and sectoral policies and plans that, in general terms, does not materialise in actions that respond to the needs of citizens. This translates, in the words of Cobetta, et al. (2018) into "structural injustices, inequitable distribution of wealth and relations of prestige and power between cultures" (p. 17). In this way, it is preponderant to establish the ideal implementation pathways since intercultural education promotes the closing of gaps, power asymmetries and prevailing inequalities (OREALC - UNESCO, 2017).

In Latin America, countries such as Mexico, Venezuela, Chile and Peru have adjusted education policies to guarantee quality education for young people from indigenous peoples, in response to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda, which states that it is necessary to guarantee access to education in conditions of equity for all young people, including members of these cultures. In Mexico, after a century of transformations in public policies, they are currently aimed at eliminating indigenous peoples' inequality and economic and social inequity. However, Castillo and Cuevas (2020) conclude in their study on intercultural education in Mexico that currently "the economic conditions and infrastructure necessary to carry out real learning processes in accordance with the needs of each region are not provided". (p. 247)

In other countries, such as Venezuela, following the enactment of the Organic Law on Indigenous Peoples and Communities in 2005, ethno-education is promoted, providing more academic training for indigenous teachers to serve as dynamic agents in the implementation of educational projects, and also producing didactic, literary and pedagogical resources in indigenous languages and in line with their cultural reality. However, the author concludes that in practice it is insufficient, precisely because it is not assigned the value and importance it requires (González, 2018). In Chile, intercultural and bilingual education has occupied an important place in government agendas since the country took the path of democracy in the early 1990s. In the words of Gutiérrez (2020) "efforts have focused on the design of curricular bases [...] oriented towards the teaching of the language and culture of the nine peoples formally recognised by the State" (p. 131). (p. 131) among the most significant advances in the country's public policies on IBE, it is worth highlighting the indigenous consultation with the nine representatives of the native peoples carried out in 2019 (Gutiérrez, 2020). (Gutiérrez, 2020).

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Evidently, the objective of these nations is to establish strategies, plans and programmes for the strengthening of intercultural bilingual education, mainly oriented towards the reduction of gaps and inequalities in indigenous populations.

In Peru, several studies have been carried out in recent years on native cultures, interculturality and educational proposals in these spaces, especially in the Awajún culture. García-Segura (2019) analysed the policies developed in the field of education in the Peruvian Amazon during the 20th century and in the 21st century. For their part, in an attempt to preserve the native culture in Peru and the Puno region, Vargas and Pérez (2019) investigated the extent to which the Peruvian education system influenced the loss of identity of the Quechua-Aimara culture in the aforementioned region. They noted that the nature of the Peruvian education system contrasts with the way educational processes are conducted in these cultures.

Among the attempts observed in the literature on teaching to strengthen Awajun culture are Quispe et al. (2019) who described the production of narrative texts by Awajun children in the fourth grade of primary school. The authors observed weaknesses in terms of the coherence and cohesion of these texts. However, this research described textual production in Spanish, but did not touch on competences for written communication in the Awajun language. On the other hand, Nuñez (2021) focused on improving the reading comprehension of children belonging to this culture. For this purpose, he used a book called the Didactic Guide of the Nayap book, which was written in the Awajun language and included topics and exercises related to the Awajun culture in order to, in addition to favouring reading comprehension, bring students closer to their heritage and their cultural reality. Researchers such as Chávez-Epique et al. (2021), for their part, studied the relationship between the implementation of active learning and the development of mathematics competencies in Awajun children in the third grade of primary school. The authors confirmed that the strategy was effective for its intended purpose.

Despite the research efforts carried out on the Awajun culture, the accelerated changes in economic, ecological and cultural matters produced by the scientific and technological advances promoted by the State, show traits of cultural alienation, especially among young people who are unaware of the ancestral customs, mythology and the richness of their culture, a situation that demands the implementation of educational programmes that contribute to the continuation of the academic training of the natives and consolidate the ancestral values and beliefs. Thus, the objectives of this study focus on communicating the characteristics of "Preserving Mythology" as a strategy for the consolidation of Awajun culture and determining the effect of the programme after its implementation during the 2020 school year at the "Alberto Acosta Herrera" secondary school in the district of Imaza.

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2. METHODOLOGY

The study is framed under the quantitative research approach, defined as an "approach that deals with phenomena that can be measured [...] through the use of statistical techniques for the analysis of the data collected, its most important purpose lies in the description, explanation, prediction and objective control of the causes" (Sánchez-Flores, 2019, p. 2). (Sanchez-Flores, 2019, p. 2).

This experience fits, according to the design, in a quasi-experimental research pre and post-test, with an experimental group and a control group, since in the words of Hernandez et al. (2010) "an independent variable is deliberately manipulated in order to observe its effect and relationship with a dependent variable" (p. 148). In this way, we sought to find out whether the "Preserving Mythology" programme influences the consolidation of Awajun culture in the participants of the third grade of secondary school at the "Alberto Acosta Herrera" educational institution in the district of Imaza, province of Bagua, in the province of Condorcanqui. It is important to note that the groups were already formed, in that sense, they are identified as intact groups since no random selection of the participants was made.

The research was carried out with two independent groups (A and B), group A was selected as the experimental group and was made up of 35 participants from the third-grade classroom, section A. Group B or control group consisted of 30 students belonging to section B. It should be noted that the experimental group and the control group were chosen at simple random.

For the development of the study, the survey technique was used which, in terms of Parreño (2016), "is basically characterised by collecting information in writing" (p. 72), for which the researcher must prepare the written questionnaire to be answered by the respondent. Through this technique, valid information was collected on the study variables at two points in time, before and after the implementation of the programme.

Regarding the study variables, the independent variable (VI) is represented by the programme "preserving Mythology" and the dependent variable (DV) is the consolidation of Awajun culture, the treatment was of a quantitative nature with a level of categorisation between: low (0 - 5), moderate (6 - 10), high (11 - 15) and very high (16 - 20). To determine their measurement, an instrument was used, developed exclusively for this study, on their knowledge of Awajun culture.

The instrument consisted of 20 items that made it possible to evaluate the dimensions (Awajun language, stories and legends and cultural identity), each with their respective indicators. The validation was carried out by 5 judges, specialists in education and intercultural bilingual education, who expressed an agreement index of over 0.90. The aspects considered for the evaluation of the instrument were: clarity of the items, congruence, coherence and relevance with respect to the main construct. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the Z-test was carried out.

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The development of the educational intervention was divided into three phases. Phase 1 consisted of obtaining the necessary permissions from the educational centre and the authorisation and informed consent of the representatives. After obtaining the necessary permissions, a pre-test was applied to both groups in order to collect information on the level of consolidation of the Awajun culture of the young people. Phase 2 consisted of the application of the "Preserving Mythology" programme for the consolidation of the Awajun culture. To this end, 1 theoretical-practical sessions were held, each lasting 2 academic hours, developed through different active didactic strategies such as study circles and experiential workshops, in order to encourage participation, collaborative work and interaction.

Table 1: Distribution of the 12 academic sessions of the programme "Preserving Mythology"

Sessions	Cultural aspects		
Month 1. Session: 1, 2 ,3 y 4	Awajun language	- Phonology	Conductive thread: Mythological elements of the Awajun culture
		- Syntax	
		Content	
Month 2. Session: 5, 6 ,7 y 8	Tales and legends	- Imaginary facts	
		- Fictional characters	
		- Popular experiences	
Month 3. Session: 9, 10 ,11 y 12	Cultural Identity	- Use of language	
		- Rithyms and ceremonies	
		- Food and clothing	

Source: Own elaboration

In addition to the distribution of the weekly sessions, the educational programme contains the six transdisciplinary themes that explain the context of the Awajun culture and their way of understanding their environment.

Table 2: Transdisciplinary issues and description.

Transdisciplinary theme	Description
Who we are	What it means to be human
Where we are in time and space	Spatial and temporal orientation: local and global perspective
How we express ourselves	The ways in which we discover and express our ideas
How the world works	Nature and its laws; the interaction between nature and human societies
How we organise ourselves	The interrelatedness of human-made systems and communities
How we share the planet	Our rights and responsibilities as we strive to share finite resources with other people and other living things

Source: Own elaboration

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Finally, phase 3 consisted of the application of the post-test to the two groups one week after the end of the educational intervention. It should be noted that the same instrument was applied in both moments of data collection.

For the statistical analysis of the data, SPSS version 25 was used, the descriptive results were expressed in frequency and percentage tables. The inferential analysis was carried out based on a significance level of 0.05. ≤0,05. For the selection of the statistic, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was applied to the experimental group (n=35) and the Shapiro Wilk test to the control group (n=30), given that a normal distribution of the data was evident in both groups, the student's t-test was applied.

3. RESULTS

Table 3 shows the distribution of the two groups (experimental and control) according to sex and age. In the experimental group, made up of 35 students, a higher percentage of male adolescents (57.14%) was observed, as opposed to 42.86% of female adolescents. As for the control group, made up of 30 students, it was observed that 53.33% of the young people were male and 46.67% were female.

Table 3: **Distribution of the sample by sex and age**

Gender	**Experimental Group**		**Control Group**	
	f	**%**	**f**	**%**
Male	20	57,14	16	53,33
Female	15	42,86	14	46,67
Age				
12 – 13	3	8,57	2	6,67
14 – 15	26	74,29	25	83,33
16 -17	6	17,14	3	10

Source: Own elaboration

On the other hand, the age distribution shows that the experimental group is heterogeneously distributed between 12 and 17 years of age, however, the highest concentration with 74.29% is between 14 and 15 years of age, while 17.14% are between 16 and 17 years of age and only 8.57% are between 12 and 13 years of age. As for the control group, 83.33% of the participants were between 14 and 15 years of age, while those between 16 and 17 years of age represented 10% of the group and only 6.67% were between 12 and 13 years of age.

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Table 4: Levels of consolidation of Awajún culture before and after the intervention

		Level							
Group	**Test**	**under 0 – 5**		**Moderate 6 - 10**		**High 11 - 15**		**Very high 16 - 20**	
		f	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**
Experimental	**Pre test**	0	0	29	82,86%	6	17,14%	0	0
	Pos test	0	0	0	0	17	48,57%	18	51,43%
Control	**Pre test**	0	0	24	80%	6	20%	0	0
	Pos test	0	0	22	73,33%	8	26,67%	0	0

Source: Own elaboration

Table 4 shows the differences between the initial level and the level after the educational intervention that the participants presented in terms of the consolidation of Awajun culture. In both the experimental group and the control group, there was a greater concentration of the sample at the "Moderate" level in the pre-test, with percentages of 82.86% and 73.33% respectively. After the educational intervention, there is evidence of an increase in the number of participants in the experimental group at the "High" (48.57%) and "Very high" (51.43%) levels. As for the control group, there was an increase of 6.67% in the "High" level after the post-test. To determine the degree of significance in both groups, a t-test was performed.

Table 5: T-test statistics to determine significant differences

Group	**Test**	**n**	**m**	**DS**	**T**	**p**
Experimental	Pre test	35	8,54	1,51	-32,93	0,000
	Post test	35	15,27	1,15		
Control	Pre test	30	8,61	1,60	-0,72	0,476
	Post test	30	8,66	1,51		

Note: m: mean, DS: Standard deviation, T: t-test

Source: own elaboration

Table 4 shows the differences found in both the experimental and control groups. It is worth noting the increase in the mean scores of the experimental group, since before the educational intervention it registered 8.54 and after the implementation of the educational programme it was 15.27. In addition, a slight increase was detected in the mean values of the control group, since in the pre-test it was 8.61 and, in the post-test, it was 8.66. According to the T-test, the differences found between the pretest and post-test of the experimental group show a significant difference (p= 0.000), therefore, the alternative hypothesis ($HH1$) of the study is accepted, assuming that there is sufficient evidence to affirm that the "Preserving Mythology" programme influenced the consolidation of Awajun culture in the participants of the third grade of secondary school at the "Alberto Acosta Herrera" educational institution. As for the control group, it is evident through the T-test that the differences between the results of the pre-test and post-test are not significant (p=0.476).

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4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study, the effectiveness of the "Preserving Mythology" programme as a strategy for the consolidation of Awajun culture was evidenced. In this sense, the educational intervention is aligned with the recommendations of Corbetta, et al. (2019) who point out that the particularities of intercultural schools should be considered and the curriculum should be rethought as a way of transforming educational objectives.

In this way, the value of intervention programmes for the generation of educational changes from the meso and micro levels of the education system is ratified. At the meso-educational level, the design and approval of programmes and activities that allow for the consolidation of comprehensive skills are integrated, and at the micro-educational level, programmes are implemented or put into practice through didactic processes to achieve the educational objective (Luna, 2014). In this sense, the educational programme that has been taught represents an important step forward for educational transformation through the actions of the teacher and researcher in contributing to educational transformation in the intercultural sphere.

In addition, the concentration of different elements of culture such as language, stories, legends and cultural identity in the same educational programme makes it possible to contribute in a holistic way to the consolidation and revaluation of Awajun culture in young people, generating a solid interaction between school learning and the foundations of their own culture. This is an additional contribution to intercultural education, since according to Rapiman (2019) "Indigenous educational knowledge are social constructions that maintain the cultural elements of the past and, in turn, reflect the changes in social and cultural relations". (p. 27)

It should be noted that the Awajun language was the most important cultural dimension in the development of the educational programme, since the development and consolidation of this element is fundamental for the insertion of other aspects, in this respect Adizzoli (2021) points out that language is "a way of living, thinking and speaking to the world, which links the life of a community" (p. 201). In this way, promoting the daily use of the Awajun language in students allows for the construction of new learning based on cultural aspects and the meanings they assign to their environment. It also enables young people to communicate with adults who only speak the Awajun language, a relationship that contributes positively to the consolidation and prolongation of the culture.

In this sense, it would be interesting to propose, apply and evaluate similar educational programmes in other cultures that make up the Peruvian state, based on particular characteristics such as beliefs, values and identity. In this way, to contribute to the transformation currently demanded by intercultural education in the country.

Other aspects to highlight about the effectiveness of the "Preserving Mythology" programme are the active strategies used in its execution, such as the study circle and the experiential workshops, coinciding with what Chávez et al (2019) point out: "in this role, students are initiated in the processes of analysis, reflection and peer discussion of

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E-Publication: Online Open Access
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everyday problems" (p. 65). Similarly, the integration of the cultural context (socio-productive, family and community) in educational activities, as this aspect contributes positively to the construction of teach (Chávez et al, 2019). And finally, the use of the Awajun's own mythology as a guiding thread for the development of the programme, since for this culture every element of nature has a mythical history, which allows, in the words of Taipe (2017) "to interrelate men and nature with logics different from the Western world" (p. 65).

Finally, although the study yielded favourable results, the author considers to value some limitations of the research, such as the fact that the study was carried out in all its phases individually, however, in subsequent studies it would be interesting to consider the recommendations of Terron-Caro, et al. (2019) who state that "socio-educational intervention in multicultural and holistic realities demands multidisciplinary work teams" (p. 37), such as psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, among others, so that the same phenomenon can be analysed from different disciplines.

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