INTERCULTURALITY- COMPETITIVENESS FOR ECUADORIAN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

In the multicultural spheres originated by globalization, interculturality becomes a necessity. Thus, the educational context lives a situation of change before the new international models of learning, process by which the individual is provided with essential tools and knowledge to put them into practice, with training aimed at developing intellectual, moral and emotional capacity according to the culture and norms of coexistence of the society to which they belong. This research proposes interculturality as competitiveness to identify relevance and quality in higher education because it does not measure the success of students by the level of assertiveness and ambition but by social solidarity. The diversity of Ecuador is great wealth, but it an also be a danger if it is not assumed from the unity of the country as a foundation and as an objective. The research methods and techniques used allowed the management of information and its processing and interpretation to facilitate an approach to this problem and offer recommendations for its realization.

Keywords: Interculturality, education, competitiveness, quality, diversity.

INTRODUCTION

In recent times there has been much discussion about interculturality, a contribution that encompasses the knowledge of interculturality and its validity not only in Ecuador but throughout the world. It is a work that addresses issues such as ethnic and regional diversity, collective rights and plurinationality.

It is important to highlight what Ecuador decided to build in 2008 "a new form of citizen coexistence, in diversity and harmony with nature, to achieve good living, sumak kawsay", as a commitment to the present and the future. For this reason, "Ecuador is a constitutional State of social rights and justice, democratic, sovereign, independent, unitary, intercultural, plurinational and secular" (Constitution of Ecuador 2008). Krainer & Guerra. (2016). This new paradigm, this new form of coexistence can not be achieved without a liberating educational process, which feels the bases of change on the conscience of each human being. This process is now called intercultural education, which is no longer restricted to the indigenous of a place, but has acquired a national connotation. Its implementation has opened the opportunity for the construction of a new society.

From this perspective, the construction of an intercultural State requires a profound transformation of the values of society and the State / government. Education plays a fundamental role in achieving change; therefore, it is necessary that those who are part of the sectors that make decisions and elaborate public policies know and handle, in an appropriate manner, the concepts of what they want to consolidate. This is possible through efficient public policies, timely and, above all, feasible to implement in educational institutions. Likewise, the contribution of teachers, women, and men as facilitators of the teaching-learning process is intuitive,since they are in charge of translating into the new generations intercultural values and of support in the construction of new knowledge.

The diversity of Ecuador is a sign of wealth that can also be a danger if it is not assumed from the unity of the country as a foundation and as an objective. Therefore we must think about the country in its rich diversity, and at the same time discover its unity and its projection to the future. This research was carried out at the Estatal del Sur de Manabí university, Ecotourism career, through methods of analysis and synthesis the relevance and quality of competitiveness for higher education not for the success of assertiveness and ambition but for social solidarity.

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Understanding interculturality

In Latin America there is attention to ethnic-cultural diversity, which is based on legal recognition and a growing need to promote positive relationships between different cultural groups, from confrontation to discrimination, racism and exclusion, forming conscious citizens of the differences and capable of working together in the development of the country and in the construction of a just, equitable, egalitarian and plural society. Interculturality is based on this effort. (Catherine Walsh, 2010)

More than ideology, interculturalism is a set of anti-racist, anti- segregation potentially and it is appropriate to promote contacts and knowledge between cultures in order to favor positive social relations among them. It is safeguarded that the cultural relations between human groups must be produced on a level of equality that allows positive interaction, through knowledge and consequent mutual enrichment. (Silvia Carrasco,2004)

Interculturality causes interaction of cultures, communication, and interaction, demanding a set of ethical values and the possibility of dialogue between cultures. It is an investigation that transcends the educational to think about the construction of different societies in another social order.

Plurinationality

Plurinationality is not an ethnic concept but a political concept based on the opening of the social contract, modern contractility that is expressed in the Constitutional Charter to differences that may be ethnic, or gender, or culture, or age, etc. (Acosta & Martínez, 2009)

Within the culture there is the plurinationality, the path taken by society to establish itself as it is presented today, that is, in the political and legal organization of the peoples and nationalities of the country. Plurinationality guarantees access to duties and rights by strengthening intercultural dialogue, overcoming the condition of racism, exclusion, and violence that characterizes the modern nation-state.

Multiculturality

There is confusion between multiculturality and interculturality, treating as synonyms independent concepts. Multiculturalism emphasizes the coexistence of several cultures in a given territory; nterculturality emphasizes the harmonic relationship (Ruiz, Abel, & Bautista Sánchez, 2006).

Then multiculturalism is the presence of several cultures living in the same physical, geographic or social space, covering all the differences that occur within a culture whether religious, linguistic, racial, and ethnic or gender. Multiculturalism recognizes the cultural diversity that exists in all areas and promotes the right to this diversity Promote harmonious coexistence between cultures Promote exchanges between different cultural groups.

Among the characteristics of multiculturalism, the following stand out:

• Promotes coexistence in harmony between different cultures.
• Accepts and recognizes the presence of all cultural forms without protesting any and within a framework of equality.
• Avoids the stereotypes and prejudices that exist around different cultural forms.
• Promotes tolerance and respect for cultural diversity.
• Defends the right to difference.
• Rejects discrimination and marginalization.

Understanding that talking about multiculturalism is talking about how to organize human coexistence in a society where a multitude of groups of

different cultures, different traditions, and, therefore, also live together with different scales of values and priorities. A cultural diversity, which, It is also crossed by belonging to different social classes, at different levels of knowledge, power, and social influence. It is not, therefore, the discourse on multiculturalism, an easy, simple, or flat discourse, as it is usually presented, most of the time by politicians or official institutions. To speak of multiculturalism is to talk about politics, economics, teaching, media and everything that determines the lives of people and the groups of which they are part, in a society like ours.

Cultural or intercultural values

Intercultural values are characteristic of nations that have multiple cultures within their territory. It could be said that it is a great diversity of specimens within the same habitat (Quintana Cabanas, September-December 1992).

If interculturality did not exist, we would all be equal, we would all have the same beliefs, and we would act in the same way. This would limit growth and development as human beings. Interculturality allows us to expand horizons and the way we think.

Nowadays, cultural values favor a more open attitude in the plural and globalized world. When the world is perceived from a multicultural perspective, it is easier to approach concepts, events or situations from different positions. In this sense, it is easier to develop skills for problem – solving and critical thinking. Likewise, interculturality teaches that there is more than one valid point of view regarding the perception of reality.

On the other hand, it helps to reinforce self-esteem in individuals by recognizing and respecting members from different cultural groups and consolidating their own cultural identity. Cultural values have many benefits, among which the following can be mentioned:
- ✓ The diversity of ideas and beliefs from different cultures contribute to promoting respect for them.
- ✓ It allows to mix the different cultural forms and learn from each of them.
- ✓ A multicultural perspective reduces ethnocentrism and broadens and enriches horizons.
- ✓ Encourages innovation and creativity by offering a broader perspective enriched by different cultural forms.

Interculturality understandings

Interculturality in Latin America, particularly in Ecuador, is indispensable to deconstruct the dominant ways of understanding concepts such as culture, resizing the identity and understanding the moments in which ethnicity is required. This is due to the hegemonic forms that construct the imaginary over the others and impede to propose profound changes concerning the State and democracy (Viaña 2008). In this sense, traditional notions about concepts such as culture, identity, ethnicity, interculturality, ethno-education, and intercultural education, and current understandings based on the experiences of academic peers in higher education are investigated.

It is that culture has traditionally been conceived as the set of practices, values, and principles that guide and govern, society. For Viaña (2010), the Western conception of Hegel's culture, which consists in contrasting the idea of culture with that of nature, is the matrix of a monocultural and universal vision that has hindered understanding among the various:

Here are Peru and Chile ... which, however, are not appropriate to become countries of culture ... (They had) a native culture, which was to perish as soon as the spirit approached it. America has always revealed itself and continues to reveal itself impotent in the physical as well as in the spiritual. The Indians, since the landing of the Europeans, have been perishing at the blow of European activity. In the same animals, the same inferiority is seen as in men (Hegel cited in Viaña 2010)

This research is based on the relativism of Boas and the different criteria on the culture that have been constructed in other historical and power contexts; it becomes necessary to debate in the Latin American context. According to Viaña (2010), culture is built assuming postulates of universal culture and social evolutionism, which have become a "simple swallowing by the State and the dominant culture of other civilizing forms" (Viaña 2010, twenty-one). Among the attempts to construct proposals to approach culture in the Latin American context, contributions such as those of Moya and Moya (2004) appear, which mention that:

Culture is a way of life and thinking of the people based on their particular experiences of relating to nature and human beings. Involves all material and non-material expressions. (...) Culture implies having a form of residence, a type of kinship, a way of conceiving space and time, a way of interpreting the world, etc. (...) Additionally, culture is a system of symbols, which expresses collective rationality (Moya and Moya 2004).

Culture then is not something static but is characterized by the production that the human being makes of his internal and, above all, external experiences. That is, in these perspectives relationships are indispensable.

Law of interculturality in Ecuador

According to Walsh, (2002) with the constitutional reforms that hold the State responsible for the promotion of interculturality that grants a series of collective rights to nationalities, indigenous peoples and to accept indigenous and black demands but also to build new intercultural projects and democratic focused on the transformation of relationships. In this sense, the concept of interculturality goes beyond diversity, recognition, and inclusion.

Interculturality as competitiveness

To identify relevance and quality in higher education, from this perspective, the concept of interculturality is clearly positivist (Porras Arévalo), since it is a concept of a phenomenon observed by the senses, an epistemological aspect that becomes relevant at the moment to evaluate the theories and concepts involved in the study of interculturality. This leads to thinking that the profusion

of terms and concepts involved in the theory of interculturality needs an epistemological study that clarifies the concepts according to the perspectives of philosophy of science that guides them.

Reconstruct and strengthen your thoughts and knowledge, not as a local folkloric knowledge, but as an epistemology, which allows you to begin to face the collinearity of knowledge and the dominant geopolitics of knowledge. Paths that do not deny modernity, but allow it to be lived in another way, without being absorbed by it, change the eurocentric lens and see from the stories lived, thus promoting a collective strength (Ivorra Pérez, 2014).

It is this strength that allows us to negotiate with whom and for what to rescue identity, that is, with what purposes to interrelate knowledge. Ethno-educational models have no significant impact on society, ethnic people are those that have to conform to the dominant norms and take on the challenge of interculturality, society as a whole is considered free of changes constituting a challenge to which they freely submit democratic societies, there are structural barriers that impede the advancement of peoples, therefore it is taken as a tool for the process and project transforming structures, institutions, social relations, and the construction of conditions of being, being, thinking, knowing, learning, feel and live differently; that is, an action.

To build participatory and supportive societies, it is not enough for the state to guarantee rights, but to have social actors, ie enlightened citizens who care about the various aspects of human development and for the expansion of deliberative spaces in which agreements and agreements can be reached. make decisions that affect the life of the community.

Enlightenment and competitiveness is the liberation of man from his guilty incapacity, from the impossibility of using his intelligence without the guidance of another. Entire populations, despite being born endowed with the sufficient capacities to be able to become, feel incapable of using their reason, because they have never been allowed to attempt the adventure.

Social bases of interculturality

The intercultural aims at a phenomenon of tension and recognition of that social diversity present in the contemporary world and of questioning the concept and the way in which the Modernity Project was imposed, seeking a democracy in which everyone has access to power and in the that the exercise of the latter is framed in a series of principles based on reciprocal recognition. Modernity, while acknowledging citizenship as a set of autonomous individuals with rights and responsibilities, ignored cultural specificity, ethnicity, and collective rights, confining "the diverse" to a situation where equality was changed in inequality and lack of freedom. In Latin America, this "modernizing project" was the benchmark of the elites, but it has been a difficult and convulsive process because the same project of the modern State also implied social inclusion, a commitment that the elites have never wanted to adopt. It was a process of modernization without modernity, in which citizens were treated only formally and in which not even "the ethnic" was conceived in those terms, but on the contrary, the indigenous was seen in a stereotyped manner and as a cultural subject and socially inferior (Vásquez, 2008)

To speak of interculturality is to expose many of the conflicts that exist in the societies, is to accept that there are different cultures and that not all have the same recognition and power, this recognition of diversity forces us to question inequalities and all kinds of consequences that they bring (poverty, discrimination, racism, xenophobia, etc.). We find here another powerful reason for interculturality, contribute to question the structural situations and the conditions that allow domination of some cultures over others, of certain human collectives over others, labeled as different and inferior.

Intercultural education in Ecuador

The predominant vision of interculturality remains anchored in a traditional, positivist logic that refuses to be modified, despite the paradigm changes accepted in the official educational discourse of the countries of the region. (Porras Arévalo). In this way, interculturality as a pedagogical and ethical proposal is immersed in a general conception of development that reflects the universalist dimension of the modern project, whose pretension of homogeneity of the human constitutes the epistemic framework from which students are classified and classified according to the needs.

Interculturality is inferred as the possibility of dialogue between cultures with the aim of a society where there is always a cultural identity without imitations or that generate controversy, education not only teaches to respect differences but demonstrates the values of cultures justifying its continuity.

The most visible manifestation of education is found in the disputes generated around the notions of national identity and local territorial identities, expressed, for example, in the multiplication of social and political movements of the ethnic societies.

Educational theorists have developed a concept of interculturality different from that which has been put into practice in Latin American educational reforms and which derives from a distant epistemological framework of positivism, which places the subject as a producer of diverse cultural realities and cultures as processes creative, as permanent movements of construction, deconstruction, definition and redefinition of identity, knowledge and citizenship (Touriñán López, 2008).

In this conceptualization, intercultural education is understood as the only way to move towards an educational proposal that provides the space for the democratic construction of inclusive national identities and societies where interculturality is also transformed into legal interculturality.

The proposed change considers a shift from the intercultural approach as a curricular innovation directed towards the positioning of an intercultural approach as a structuring axis. Education for diversity should focus on a dialogue of knowledge that allows consensus in the processes of teaching and learning knowledge.

Focus on interculturality as a curricular innovation

Interculturality is a dimension that is not limited to the field of education but is present in human relations in general as an alternative to authoritarianism, dogmatism, and ethnocentrism. However, the search for more democratic and plural societies involves educational processes that affirm and provide the experience of living in democracy and respect for diversity. The educators have an inescapable responsibility.

Intercultural education must be understood in a pedagogical process that involves various cultural systems. It is born of the individual and collective right of the indigenous people that entails, not only to enjoy the right to education as all citizens, but also, the right to maintain and cultivate their own traditions, culture, values, but also of the need to develop intercultural competences that allow any citizen of any place of the country to belong to the hegemonic culture or not, to be able to coexist democratically with the others.

One way of thinking about an intercultural education proposal is to approach it from the different fields of action, be it towards oneself and its belongings (identity), towards the other (coexistence), or towards the referential world (knowledge).

Success of students intercultural education

Current educational institutions will be inclusive and intercultural insofar as they accept and are enriched by interculturality as a cooperative educational construct conducive to improving school coexistence and making the relationships of the different members of the educational community more humane. At present, the challenge is complex, and today interculturality is between the desire to be a reflective educational proposal, and the reality of being at a crossroads of paths that range from the folkloric exaltation of the cultures of immigrant students to the approach of educational compensation.

Through education, it is tried to overcome the limitations derived fundamentally from language and culture. The students must receive an education that increases their level of understanding and acceptance. Therefore, the vision of interculturality creates a unity, sensitive to other cultures, building social bases, promoting the development of each individual without altering their identity and self-esteem.

Interculturality involves the search for positive relationships between people of different cultures, this implies the meeting of an I (we) with an OTHER (the others), so that this meeting takes place within the framework of positive relationships (Albó, Julio 25-27 2001)

The recognition of one's identity implies taking root inwards. It begins with the recognition and acceptance of one's personality, of the "I", but immediately follows its natural social expansion by feeling part of a basic social group of reference, of a "we" shared among several. The strengthening of this cultural group identity is the essential starting point for any positive intercultural relationship. It is particularly necessary to work on this cultural self-identification in the case of members of subordinate cultures.

Cultural revaluation is a fundamental aspect of interculturality because only to the extent that traditional cultures reinforce their group self-esteem, will a relationship of democratic horizontality and not of dominant verticality be possible with the culture of the surrounding society.

Communication and learning

The need to communicate is very critical because it needs to avoid misunderstandings to perform correctly and efficiently, as would be the case of professionals who are in an intercultural relationship by empire of their functions, it is necessary that they learn to meta – communicate, that is, " have the ability to say what you want to say when something is said: Meta – communicate means talking about the meaning of our messages, but not only what they mean, but also what effects they are supposed to cause "(Millán & Tomás, April 1999)

Intercultural dialogue must be carried out within as much equality as possible (Asunción-Lande & Nobleza C., 1988). It can occur in different ways, the important thing is to establish an intercultural communication on an equal footing, it must pay close attention to the elements of the context that allow both parties to feel in reasonable equality of creative conditions and knowledge of the important aspects of each culture.

Communication is effective when it reaches a level of understanding acceptable to the interlocutors, that is, when both groups can understand correctly what they and others mean, because they share enough or profound meanings. The search for intercultural efficiency leads to creating communicative competence, being able to feel competent to communicate with the members of another culture for the development of the education of the human being, in the expansion of markets, in the use of modern means of communication and wherever that two or more dissimilar cultures must communicate effectively and competently.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology of the work was centered in the design and initial instrumentation of an intercultural intervention, from the competitive activity for the education, directed to ecotourism students of the Estatal del Sur de Manabí University, same that included activities focused on interculturality - competitiveness for Ecuadorian education.

The intervention ran from November 2017 to March 2018 (and was replicated in May - September 2018), within the framework of extracurricular academic activities. The general objective consisted of designing and executing actions that contribute to the formation of socio-affective competences of relevance and quality for social solidarity, for use in university practice and other contexts of action. It included three main research topics:

Theme I: Interculturality Understanding.
Theme II: Interculturality as competitiveness.
Theme III: Intercultural education in Ecuador.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

As the main results of the application of these instruments, it is appreciated that in contrast to the adequate knowledge of interculturality, the intellectual, moral and affective capacity is not observed according to the culture and norms of coexistence of the society to which they belong. (Table 1)

Table 1: Median of the scores obtained in diagnostic instruments

Instrument name	Median scores	Rating category
Self-diagnosis of social solidarity	12	Low or poor
Autotest of professional self-esteem	8	Good
Autoscale How good do I promote communication in harmony between?	127	Very good

Even though the results of the communication autoscale were positive, in general, it was suggested that the students perceive results below the expected ones, in the following propositions:

   a. I am tolerant.
   b. I retract when I make a mistake.
   c. I accept my identity.
   d. I feel satisfied when I learn from others, even if it means accepting that I was wrong.
   e. The conditions in the classroom are respect, mutual legitimacy, equality.
   f. I spend so much time listening to others and directing the dialogue.

The above shows the limitations of some students to be empathetic, supportive, understanding, self-critical, receptive to questioning; This can be a difficulty in their formation, in the same way as in different contexts and circumstances of life, including the scope of professional performance.

These workshops simulated professional performance contexts of the future professional, including classrooms and scientific spaces for interaction, debate, and presentation of research results, in which interculturality focused on competitiveness for higher education is useful.

CONCLUSIONS

The understanding of the transcending role of interculturality from the perspective of competitiveness for Ecuadorian education such as self-esteem, positive attitude, emotional self-efficacy and self-motivation to face adverse situations.

The vision of the importance of putting into practice social and particularly communicative competencies (empathy, assertiveness, listening, among others), to interact effectively with others.

The assumption of the importance of maintaining good relations with other people, prosocial attitudes, an open, constructive and effective communication, centered on respect for others, the practice of receptive and expressive communication. In the same way, the characteristics of multiculturalism were highlighted:

- ✓ Promotes coexistence in harmony between different cultures.
- ✓ Accepts and recognizes the presence of all cultural forms without protesting any and within a framework of equality.
- ✓ Avoids the stereotypes and prejudices that exist around different cultural forms.
- ✓ Promotes tolerance and respect for cultural diversity.
- ✓ Defends the right to difference.
- ✓ Rejects discrimination and marginalization.

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