

## Habits and Cultural Practices at the National University of Education of Ecuador (UNAE)

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**Abstract.** This study is an attempt to approach the cultural habits and practices of a group of second semester students of Basic Education at the Universidad Nacional de Educación del Ecuador. In order to achieve this goal, an analysis instrument has been elaborated and linked in two modules of contents: one dedicated to identify certain students' socio-demographic characteristics and another focused on the study of cultural habits and practices: use and frequency of library and reading habits; use and frequency of written press, radio and television; employment of new technologies; and participation in cultural activities, typology and frequency.

The results obtained show, the important presence of certain cultural habits and practices (press, radio, TV and the use of new technologies) and show explicit weaknesses in the studied university population (reading and attendance at cultural activities).

### 1. Introduction

Studies on cultural habits and practices have had a long trajectory since the mid-twentieth century through the impulse given by international organizations and governmental institutions [1], which focused on the need to have cultural indicators in national or international territories. In these last decades, several Latin American countries -Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela- have joined this process creation and implementation of cultural indicators. Ecuador, however, still lacks official statistics, data and analysis on the cultural sector, although it has two studies carried out so far: on the one hand, the Latin American Survey of cultural habits and practices 2013 [2], prepared by the OEI from the work of the Ibero-American Cultural Observatory (OIBC) with the collaboration of Latinobarómetro, which collects data in Ecuador and, on the other hand, a work on cultural habits and practices in Machala region 2014 [3].

In recent years, these macro national studies have led to the Latin American university field, which has become the subject of study with different objects and approaches [4]. This type of study has not been echoed in Ecuador until now. Therefore, this contribution comes to cover an existing gap in that university micro-space scale. Finally, note that this contribution is part of a larger research project that addresses more detailed aspects of consumption, habits and cultural practices in the student population of the Universidad Nacional de Educación del Ecuador [5].

## 2. Materials and methods

This study is based on a quasi-experimental instrument composed of open and closed questions carried out along with others of multiple options and applied to groups already formed and, therefore, not selected randomly [6]. From this perspective, a questionnaire has been drawn up consisting of two modules: a first one that integrates identifying data intended to analyze certain students' socio-demographic characteristics, and, a second, aimed at studying cultural habits and practices, such as the use and frequency of the library and reading habits [7]. Regarding the reading of books, the indicators differentiate between reading books motivated by study and those made for leisure or entertainment, in addition, to inquire about the number of read books. Other elements of study are the press, radio and television, considering both elements: use and frequency (daily, weekly and monthly), as well as the genres or sections of interest. It also includes the use of new technologies, computer and Internet, equipment, Wi-Fi connection availability, uses and frequencies. Along with this, we also try to discover the participation of students in cultural activities, their typology and frequency.

The collection of information is done during class hours and applied during the last three semesters throughout the years 2016 and 2017 to six groups, two by semester, corresponding to the Second Cycle of Basic Education university program and within the subject "Participatory action research. : History of life" at UNAE.

## 3. Results and discussion

### 3.1 First module: characterization of the analyzed student population

The investigated group of students' geographical origin presents a predominant figure in Cañar parish where the university is located, and its bordering neighbors, Azuay, which provide the highest percentage of student representation in this institution.

The first group, formed by the students of the 2nd Semester of 2016, is formed by 55 students with a gender distribution of 51% women and 49% men, whose ages are grouped in two intervals: 71% between 18 and 22 years old and 29% are 23 or older, with 21 as the average age.

The second group, integrated by the students of the 1st Semester of 2017, is formed by 49 students and distributed by 49% women and 51% men grouped in two age groups: 59% between 18 and 22 years old and 41% are 23 or older, being 22 the average age.

The third group, made up of the students of the 2nd Semester of 2017, is formed by 65 students and distributed by 57% women and 43% men, grouped in two age groups: 82% range between 18 and 22 years old and 18% are 23 or older, being 20 years old the average age.

A distinctive feature in regards to the educational origin of the legal nature of the schools before university, is that more than 3/4 of the students come from public high-schools. While between 18% to 14% come from private high-schools, and a lower percentage of legal mixed institutions (private schools financed by the Ecuadorian Government).

In relation to the marital status of students, a high percentage of students are single, between 89%, 88% and 94% respectively; however, between 8% and 11% present family responsibilities. From the point of view of ethnic self-recognition, between 98% and 100% are defined as mestizo (mixture between white and native Southamerican races).

### 3.2 Second module: habits and cultural practices

In order to provide an agile reading of figures, the following data refers to the 1st group formed by students of the 2nd semester of 2016, the second figure refers to the 1st semester of 2017 and, the 3rd one to the 2nd semester of 2017, as follows:

#### 3.2.1 Use of the library

A characteristic feature of library use (86%, 78% and 89%) and its predominant frequencies "weekly" (30%, 20% and 35%) and "monthly" (31%, 49% and 9%) present similar ranks among the three

groups, being able to observe in the students of the 2nd Semester of 2017 a greater relevant frequency "sometimes" (32%).

### 3.2.2 *Reading of books*

The reading of books related to entertainment and leisure have percentage rates below 50% (49%, 41% and 25%). While the reading of books linked to the university tasks is observed similar rates to the previous modality (41%, 55% and 31%).

### 3.2.3 *Reading the press*

A high percentage of students, more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  parts (85%, 73%, 78%), claim to be press readers with a predominant frequency of weekly (42 %, 49% and 26%). Among the press sections the one that obtains the highest percentage of reading is that related to the news which fluctuate (67%, 63% and 32%); in second place is the sports section (33%, 37% and 15%); in third place those referred to politics (33%, 27% and 10%); and then the cultural section (29%, 18% and 9%); and finally the cinema broadcasting section (9%, 10% and 5%).

### 3.2.4 *Radio*

The data obtained shows that more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  parts of the analyzed students (80%, 76% and 80%) are usually regular listeners to the radio with a preferential frequency of "daily" and "weekly". The news spaces exceed 50%, with the exception of the last semester of 2017 (28%); the listeners of sports spaces occupy the second position (32%, 24% and 6%); third, leisure programs (24%, 27% and 21%); and then politics (25%, 14% and 6%), culture (25%, 8% and 4.6%) and other spaces (4%, 30% and 15%) follow.

### 3.2.5 *Television*

More than 80% of students tend to watch TV (78%, 86% and 81%) with a preferential frequency of "daily" and "weekly". The most watched television genres are the news (66%, 82% and 15%); sports (23%, 43% and 12%), leisure (33%, 22% and 21%); politics (26%, 33% and 3%), culture (27%, 22% and 6%); cinematography (49%, 27% and 21%).

### 3.2.6 *New technologies*

The results obtained show a very high percentage of students who have a computer (100%, 90%, and 91%) and Wi-Fi connection in their home or in their area of residence (96%, 88%, and 86%). Regarding the use of internet, the use of Facebook or similar (21%, 39% and 40%) and its use as a study support (23%, 61% and 23%), followed respectively by its use to watch "videos", stand out. musicals ", " movies "and" other things".

### 3.2.7 *Cultural activities*

Participation in cultural activities generally presents low percentages, with the exception of visits to exhibitions (41%, 33% and 43%) and they are activities carried out outside the university precinct. The students who usually visit the theater oscillate between 16% to 38%; to classical music concerts between 0% to 23%; to modern music concerts moves between 9% to 21%; to museums it rotates between 8% to 31%; to ballet shows oscillates between 0% to 8%; and other activities fluctuate between 0% to 20%.

In regards to the frequency of visits to cultural activities, the possibilities of "sometimes" and "never" are those that reach the highest percentages.

## 4. **Conclusions**

The profile of the students studied shows certain similar characteristics: most of them come from the main geographical area where the university is located and its near surroundings. It is observed that the ages of the students, in relation to the semester cycle they attend, are higher than what is expected for students who study second semester at university. A proportional balance of gender is evident among the studied students; most come from public educational schools. The majority of students present a civil marital status legally present as single and 10% have family responsibilities. Finally, ethnically a self-defined student hegemony as a mestizo is confirmed.

In the field of cultural habits and practices, a similar trend is observed among the three semesters analyzed. Thus in regards to the frequency of using the library facilities, the figures are significant

showing a frequency of "weekly" and "monthly". However, the reader habits, both of books of entertainment and those related to university tasks, offer lower rates. On the other hand, a third part of the universe of study responds to a profile of the press reader, with a "weekly" frequency, whose most visited sections are the news, politics and culture. Likewise, a similar percentage of students tend to be radio listeners with a "daily" and "weekly" frequency, especially in news and entertainment programs. On the other hand, TV is the second media with the highest amount of users, around 80% of students, with a frequency also "daily" and "weekly", with news programs having a higher level of audience, time that a balanced percentage distribution is observed among the remaining television sections.

The technological supports are those that register the highest percentages of use, both in the access, Wi-Fi connection, and in the availability of personal computers, whose main destination of use is Facebook or similar and, secondly, as a means of supporting the study. Finally, the variables that present great weaknesses and deficiencies are those related to attendance to different cultural activities, which show quite low percentages.

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