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THE TAPTANA CAÑARI: AN ANCESTRAL WAY OF THINKING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN QUALITIES IN TEACHER TRAINING

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the impact of Taptana Cañari thought on the development of human qualities for life in teachers, showing how this ancient way of thinking, when combined with current teaching methods, fosters the growth of social, communication, and moral skills in teaching. This study used a qualitative approach through data collection instruments such as interviews, video, field diaries, and questionnaires, administered to a sample of 25 teachers. Content analysis software such as MAXQDA and NVivo were used to analyze the data. Among the results, it is noteworthy that the application of this method helped improve virtues such as feeling part of a group, respect for different ways of being, attentive listening, and teamwork, promoting a significant change in the relationships between teachers and students and in the way they understand teaching. The findings support the idea that humanistic and constructivist teaching with a human-centered education, with an emphasis on culture and peaceful coexistence, not only improves teaching but also promotes the personal and professional growth of the individual, contributing to the achievement of quality and justice in education.

KEYWORDS: Human Qualities, Ancestral Knowledge, Intercultural Education, Teacher Training, Constructivist Pedagogy.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's education system, comprehensive teacher training is a key pillar for strengthening effective teaching that prepares students to face the social, cultural, and educational challenges of today's world (Silva-Vera *et al.*, 2023). However, although it is globally recognized that there is a need to enhance both technical and human skills in teachers, there are major problems at the local, national, and international levels. In Ecuador, research shows that initial and ongoing teacher training focuses more on academic and technological issues than on improving important human qualities such as compassion, resilience, empathy, the ability to overcome difficulties, collaboration, and intercultural relationships, which are vital to addressing the diverse situations and needs of students (Soto and Deroncele, 2021).

This scenario severely limits teachers' ability to create open, inclusive, and emotionally engaging learning environments, which are critical for helping children feel engaged and actively participate. In settings where strict conditions exist—whether school-related, curriculum-based, or structure-based—it is difficult to implement innovative teaching approaches. This leads to repetitive teaching that is rigid, boring, and out of touch with students' culture or society. Rather than promoting critical thinking, creativity, or engagement with the environment, these approaches reinforce passive and disconnected practices that fail to create a strong connection with students' prior knowledge, interests, or needs (Quispe, 2025). As a result, the true meaning of teaching and instruction is lost, restricting both the student's overall development and reflection on the teacher's role.

There are several studies at the national and global level that point to a gap in teacher training. For example, in countries like Peru and other Latin American countries, a similar pattern is seen where teacher training programs focus primarily on generating knowledge about science, neglecting the development of social, emotional, and moral skills that help teachers better respond to the complexity of classrooms and the needs for a more just and intercultural education (Founes *et al.*, 2024; Moreno *et al.*, 2024; Borbor, 2024). Consequently, poor preparation in these areas affects the quality of teaching, causes stress and emotional exhaustion in teachers, and directly influences student learning and well-being.

This scenario poses a basic problem: How can teachers develop the human qualities necessary for their professional practice in varied and complex

settings? Therefore, this research aims to answer this question by studying the impact of Taptana Cañari, a way of thinking of the Cañari people that harmonizes cultural customs and ancestral knowledge with current teaching methods, on the development of human qualities for life in teachers at a school in Cuenca, Ecuador.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to understand how the application of Taptana Cañari as a way of thinking influences the development of human qualities for life in teachers, especially in the development of socio-emotional skills, values, and intercultural principles. This is with the purpose of improving teachers' teaching methods and creating a school context that is more humane, inclusive, and respectful of cultural diversity. To do this, the question must be answered: How does teaching the Taptana Cañari Method contribute to the development of human qualities in teachers at a school in Cuenca, Ecuador?

To support this research, it is imperative to analyze the learning theories and teaching approaches that help teachers develop human qualities for life. This is especially true based on constructivist and humanist approaches, along with ancestral knowledge as a way to strengthen the cultural diversity found in today's classroom. Thus, from the constructivist approach formulated by Piaget (1954), learning is not passive, but rather is done actively through interaction with the social and cultural world. This means that meaningful, contextual, and participatory experiences are very important for the development of teachers' human skills and abilities. Therefore, employing practical and reflective experiences helps teachers improve their self-awareness, empathy, and problem-solving skills—qualities necessary for addressing the challenges of the classroom and the educational community.

On the other hand, Simon's heuristic theory (1997) emphasizes that meaningful learning comes from researching and solving problems with comprehensive, inclusive, and innovative methods. Therefore, Taptana Cañari, as a way of thinking, combines ancestral knowledge with contemporary pedagogical methodologies, and helps teachers discover and develop key human qualities for teaching through experiences that integrate knowledge from ancestral cultures with the teacher's current world.

Along the same lines, humanistic approaches, authors such as Rogers (1986) and Maslow (1983) emphasized that teaching should focus on the integral growth of the human being, fostering self-knowledge, acceptance of others, and empathy. For this reason, training based on these ideas improves

not only technical skills but also the emotional and ethical aspects of the teacher, a key issue in making the educational process more humane.

On the other hand, the integration of ancestral knowledge and cultural customs, as suggested by the Taptana Cañari way of thinking, strengthens this human approach. Hence, researchers such as López et al., (2024) state that bringing ancestral knowledge of indigenous peoples to the education of teachers today contributes significantly to strengthening cultural identity, enlivens respect for diversity and helps with intercultural awareness. In this way, the development of skills to live in society, recognize and respect other cultures is favored, qualities that are key to interpersonal relationships in diverse educational settings.

According to Vásquez (2020), Taptana Cañari is a way of thinking that comes from the Andean worldview, which considers knowledge in an integral way without divisions into separate areas, as is the case with Western knowledge. Furthermore, Cadena et al., (2024), argue that it is ancestral knowledge used by the Cañaris that connects learning with cultural values for the holistic development of the individual that leads to perfecting mathematical operations. It should be noted that the interest in integrating ancestral knowledge and customs in education is due to the need to value cultural identity and improve teaching-learning processes. In this scenario, Taptana Cañari emerges as a way of thinking that allows reflection on the cultivation of values, the development of skills, the fostering of creativity and the promotion of respect and participation between people of diverse cultures in educational environments (Troya et al., 2023).

On the other hand, human qualities for life are knowledge, ways of being, feelings and skills that allow individuals to form a scientific, ethical, social and personal mind in order for them to be critical, disciplined and creative in everything they do on a daily basis (Pérez, 2019). Therefore, human qualities for life attempt to create people who are critical, disciplined, creative and ethical capable of dealing with life's challenges. According to Alcívar et al., (2024), knowledge is complex because it allows us to understand the environment that surrounds the human being, favors access to information and contributes to social change in order to achieve equality and social justice. Therefore, it is very important to develop human qualities for life on a daily basis because it favors the development of teachers' professional practice in an efficient and effective manner.

What has been presented up to this point

underscores the prevailing need to link the humanistic training of teachers and the improvement of the quality of education provided in educational institutions at all levels. In this regard, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2018) points out that it is important to have teachers who not only teach what they know, but also instill values and life skills, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4. Therefore, using ancestral teaching methods can help achieve this because it strengthens human qualities that give rise to more open, fair, and culturally appropriate learning spaces.

In summary, the problem identified regarding the poor development of human qualities in teachers at the educational unit where the research was conducted and its effect on the quality of teaching demands a change in current ways of educating. Therefore, the integration of ancestral knowledge such as Taptana Cañari is not only a new way of teaching, but also a successful path to improving socio-emotional, ethical, and cultural attributes within professional teaching practice. Thus, this study aims to contribute to building a more humane and realistic teaching that responds to today's challenges from a holistic, intercultural, and versatile perspective, in line with the principles of good education with meaning, as defined by global standards, and the local needs of the Ecuadorian education system.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study uses a qualitative action research method, since its objective was to fully understand the influence of the Taptana Cañari Method on the development of human qualities in teachers at a school in Cuenca, Ecuador. According to Cruz et al., (2024), action research allowed teachers to actively participate in the process, contributing to reflection and changing their ways of teaching. The sample consisted of 25 teachers from the school located in Cuenca, Ecuador. It should be noted that they chose to participate of their own free will. Therefore, the participants were selected based on their experience in teaching, their level of involvement with the institution, and their openness to new ways of teaching with different cultures. Among the selection criteria, participating teachers were considered to be interested in ancestral knowledge and to show interest in helping students develop emotionally and socially. In accordance with Elliot (2025), this study adopted a qualitative action research approach, with the purpose of deeply understanding the impact of the implementation of Taptana Cañari on the development of human qualities in teachers at an

educational institution in Cuenca, Ecuador. Therefore, action research allowed for the active participation of teachers in the process, favoring reflection and transformation of their pedagogical practices. To collect data, different tools were used, allowing for a rich combination of data and a complete view of the study process. First, diaries were used, where the researcher regularly wrote about the experiences and changes she noticed while the teachers used Taptana Cañari. Second, individual interviews were conducted using a semi-structured instrument to understand the teachers' perceptions of how the method changed their personal development and professional teaching practice. Finally, questionnaires with easy and difficult questions were administered to measure attitudes, socio-emotional skills, and changes in the teaching methods of the teachers participating in the study.

On the other hand, the action research process was developed in an organized manner through several stages that complemented each other. To achieve this, it began with a diagnosis, which aimed to characterize how human skills were initially manifested in the teachers. Therefore, interviews and questionnaires were also used as methods to collect information. This was followed by a training phase using a program that applied Taptana Cañari, and an awareness-raising process was also conducted, with teachers participating reflectively in this program through training workshops. It should be noted that the workshops were video-recorded and later analyzed using NVivo software. This program applied the principles of Taptana Cañari and its techniques with the aim of enhancing the development of human qualities for life in teachers, strengthening their teaching methods, and promoting in-depth reflection on the use of this way of thinking in contemporary teaching.

After this, the application of Taptana Cañari in the classroom began. In this phase, teachers applied the principles, ideas, and techniques derived from Taptana Cañari in their own classes. During this process, teachers recorded their experiences and lessons in field journals. Meanwhile, the researcher

monitored and supported the teachers, providing ongoing advice and encouraging them to develop critical thinking about the changes seen in their development of human qualities. In the final stage, the collected data was analyzed using a thematic model to identify recurring patterns, as well as the categories that emerged from the application of Taptana Cañari and important connections between the theoretical categories and the emerging ones. This contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the application of Taptana Cañari on teaching. Data analysis was conducted using techniques that allowed for the interpretation of the qualitative information collected. To this end, theoretical and emerging categories related to the development of human qualities for life were considered, as well as the nodes and word clouds created using MAXQDA software. In this way, importance was given to ideas about how the development of human qualities was progressing, the teachers' perceptions, and the problems or difficulties encountered when implementing Taptana Cañari. This procedure facilitated the research in obtaining a comprehensive view of the results of implementing Taptana Cañari in teaching and in their personal and professional development. Similarly, the videos were analyzed using NVivo software to understand how teachers demonstrated the development of life skills during the activities. To this end, each video recording was systematically analyzed to extract information related to behaviors, interactions, and situations (Tonin et al., 2023). This technique allowed researchers to analyze not only the content but also manifestations through gestures or attitudes. Furthermore, the anonymity of the participants and the protection of their data were ethically assured (Espinoza and Calva, 2020). Furthermore, permission was obtained from the educational unit to be part of the study. Finally, participation was by choice, and the ethical rules of integrity and respect for all participants were respected.

3. RESULTS

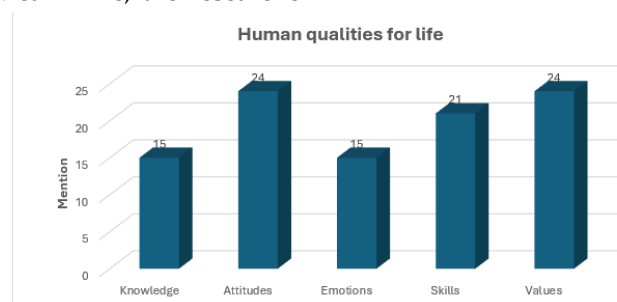


Figure 1: Characterization of the Initial State of Development of Human Qualities in Teachers based on the Semi-Structured Interview.

Note: Data obtained from the MAXQDA analysis of the interview applied to teachers.

The results obtained in this study demonstrate that the application of Taptana Cañari promotes the development of human skills in teachers at a school in Cuenca, Ecuador. In this sense, the idea of increasing qualities such as empathy, active listening, and responsibility was supported by the teachers' own opinions and was evidenced by the implementation of Taptana Cañari during classes. Based on the results presented in figure 1, we can describe the state of the participating teachers' human qualities at the beginning of the research. The chart shows how many times teachers expressed qualities related to knowledge, attitudes, emotions, skills, and values.

In this sense, it can be observed that the largest number of references are in attitudes and values, both categories with 24 mentions, which shows that teachers consider these qualities important for their work and learning. This indicates a clear understanding of the need to do things with ethics, responsibility, respect, and dedication, as well as maintaining positive attitudes when facing educational challenges. Skills are then mentioned,

with 21 references, which shows that teachers also see the need to help their students develop useful and social skills such as clear communication, empathy, or problem-solving. Likewise, they show that it is necessary for them to develop these skills, since they are very important for their work as teachers in diverse contexts. On the other hand, emotions and knowledge achieve the lowest figures, with 15 mentions each. This may suggest that, at the beginning of teacher training, teachers do not give as much importance to emotional growth or theoretical knowledge about the virtues that human beings should develop, or perhaps they do not yet understand their importance.

Overall, this shows a great interest on the part of teachers in attitude and values. However, it also indicates that it is important to improve the emotional and mental areas of human growth through teacher education. Ultimately, this information is key to guiding future teaching aids focused on better teacher training from the initial stage of instruction.

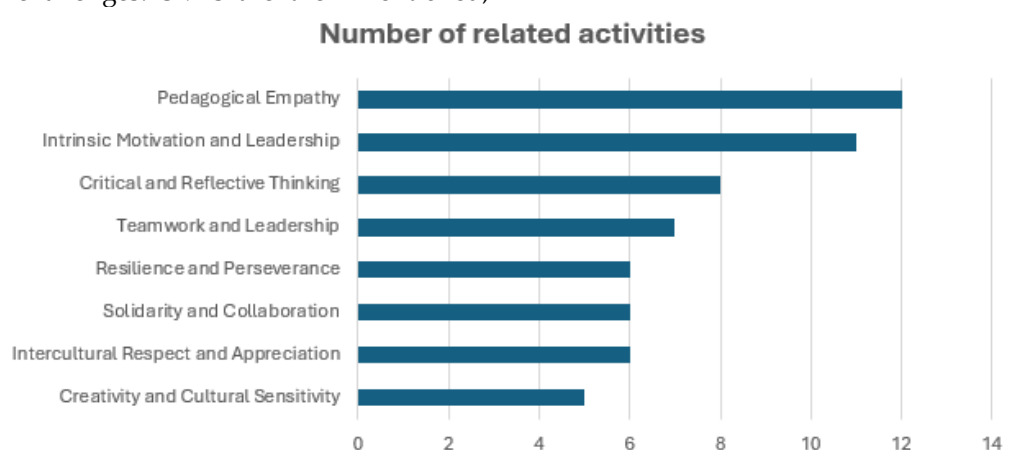


Figure 2: *Manifestation of Human Qualities in Pedagogical Activities during the Application of Taptana Cañari.*

Note: Data obtained from NVivo analysis of the videos during the observation phase.

Figure 2 helps to see how the different forms of human qualities were expressed in teaching during the use of the Taptana Cañari Method. The information is sorted based on the number of tasks that displayed each way of being. Within this framework, "empathy in teaching" is at the forefront with 12 mentions, which shows that it was the most frequent human feeling in the learning experiences analyzed from the recorded videos. This emphasizes the need for teachers to focus great attention on what they themselves feel and need, as well as on the situations students experience. This allows for the creation of a space of understanding and support.

Furthermore, internal motivation and leadership follow with 11 mentions, which demonstrates a strong personal interest on the part of teachers in guiding and encouraging their students, always maintaining an active attitude in their teaching task. Critical and reflective thinking (mentioned 8 times) is at a medium level of appearance, while group work and leadership (mentioned 7 times), showing that Taptana Cañari also helps develop habits related to reflection and working with others. On the other hand, qualities such as resilience and perseverance, collaboration, respect, and valuing other cultures are mentioned 6 times each, which demonstrates a significant presence, but not as prominent as the first

qualities. Finally, creativity and cultural sensitivity are present with 5 associations, being the least evident within the group, although they demonstrate an essential part in the comprehensive approach to implementing Taptana Cañari.

As a group, these results show that the use of Taptana Cañari helps develop many qualities in teaching, especially those that have to do with

putting oneself in the shoes of others, being a good guide, and thinking carefully about what one does. This complete form reinforces not only the mental part of the teaching and learning process but also the human, emotional, and social part, which is very important for education between cultures, especially in this increasingly changing world.

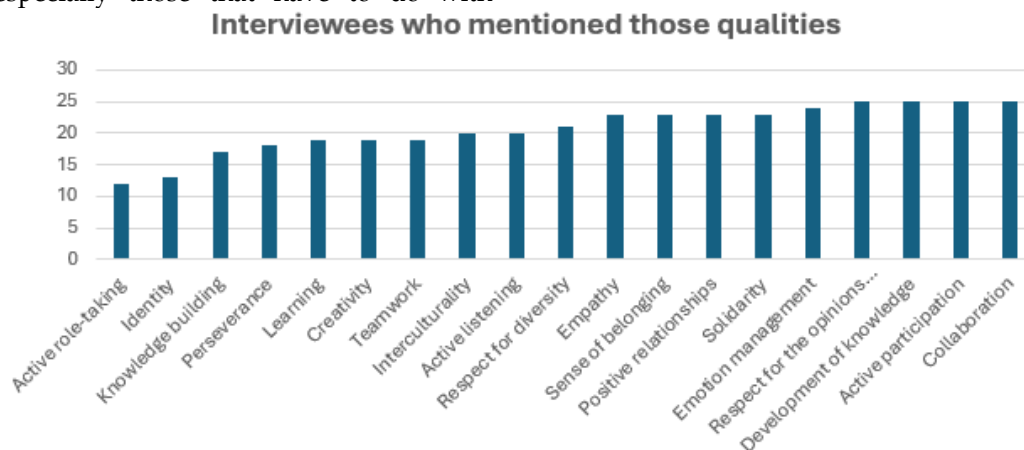


Figure 3: Qualities Mentioned by Teachers during Interviews.

Note: Data obtained from the MAXDQ analysis of the interviews in the reflection phase.

El figure 3 shows important information about what teachers think about the impact of Taptana Cañari on the development of their human qualities for life. Overall, it is clear that human qualities were highly accepted and appreciated by the study participants, with numbers ranging from 12 to 25 mentions per quality. This shows a good degree of appropriation of Taptana Cañari. The most frequently mentioned human skills, by twenty-five teachers interviewed, are cooperation, active participation, growth in knowledge, respect for differences, and managing emotions. These mentions indicate that teachers perceive a significant impact of Taptana Cañari on improving key skills for living together, working as a team, respecting diversity, and managing emotions. All of these are key points in challenging multicultural educational environments.

The above are followed by other qualities that are also highly appreciated, such as collaboration, good relationships and empathy (named 23 times each), which show that Taptana Cañari also supported the strengthening of the connection between people, to understand each other better and to create groups to learn together based on respect and closeness. At an intermediate level are qualities such as identity (21), respect for different groups (20), good listening skills (20), understanding and respect for other cultures (19), and collaborative work (19). These qualities highlight the importance of Taptana Cañari as a way of thinking in creating a cultural mindset and a cooperative attitude.

On the other hand, the same graph, although less so, discusses qualities such as perseverance (17), identity building (13), and active participation (12). This shows that although these skills were less frequently mentioned, they are also key to the overall human growth supported using Taptana. In essence, the results of the graph make it clear that teachers' opinions of the impact of Taptana Cañari as a way of thinking are very positive, especially regarding the strengthening of emotional skills, communication abilities, and values for better coexistence. This way of teaching not only helps children learn new things, but also enhances the human aspect of working with children, positioning the teacher as someone who is kind, works alongside others, and respects different cultures. In conclusion, using Taptana Cañari has been a great support in the comprehensive development of teachers, helping to develop important human qualities for achieving a more humane, inclusive, and multicultural education.

4. DISCUSSION

The results of this work show that teachers feel a positive and great effect regarding the thinking of the Taptana Cañari in the growth of key human qualities for their teaching work. Thus, the reinforcement of social skills is emphasized such as feeling part of a group (21 times named), respect for different cultures (20), attentive listening (20), understanding other cultures (19) and teamwork (19). These results agree with what was said by López et al., (2024), who think

that ancestral knowledge, such as that used by the Taptana Cañari, helps to strengthen cultural identities and favors the cultivation of values such as respect and good coexistence in diverse classroom contexts.

Similarly, although not as present, human qualities such as perseverance (17), forging a unique sense (13) and collaboration (12) were also seen. These qualities, although less noticeable, are important for the individual to develop effectively and affectively. This finding coincides with what Rogers (1986) and Maslow (1983) say, who mention the lack of person-centered teaching where qualities such as feeling fulfilled, overcoming difficulties and supporting others are key parts of a quality education.

On the other hand, the results also support what was stated by Vásquez (2020) and Cadena et al. (2024), by showing that Taptana Cañari, as a way of thinking from the Andean worldview, favors the development of cultural values, reflective thinking and active forms of learning, thus improving the type of person and professional that the teacher is. From this point, using Taptana Cañari not only helps to learn intellectual precepts but also expands social and moral capacities to achieve intercultural and inclusive teaching, as suggested by UNESCO (2019) on the comprehensive development of the teacher as part of objective 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Overall, the results indicate that Taptana Cañari is a good way for teachers to improve life skills. Furthermore, its use promotes a way of teaching that accepts differences, works to achieve equity, and is more aligned with students' cultural backgrounds. This real-world experience, therefore, leads to the construction of a more friendly and appropriate educational model, where the personal and professional growth of teachers are as key as learning.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Taptana Cañari helps teachers grow in their

human qualities by allowing them to unite ancestral knowledge with current ways of working. Furthermore, its use in the classroom strengthens social and emotional skills, as well as the "ways of speaking and good deeds," which are essential for teaching that is centered on the person and the cultural diversity found in the classroom. On the other hand, the human qualities that were most strengthened were a sense of belonging, respect for differences, careful listening, and collaborative work, which demonstrates a positive shift in the ways of thinking and relationships that emerge in the teaching-learning process among teachers and between students and teachers. This proves that Taptana Cañari is not only a teaching tool, but also a way to generate an inclusive, kind, and collective mindset.

Although certain qualities such as perseverance, the cultivation of personal identity, and active involvement were less common, they are still very important in comprehensive teacher training. However, their low repetition rate does not diminish their value, but rather indicates the need to continue promoting reflective approaches and spaces for growth that support these nuances of human growth. Likewise, the effect of Taptana Cañari goes beyond the technical and educational, as it strengthens the ethical and emotional aspects of teachers, leading to more friendly, respectful, and culturally appropriate learning environments. This discovery supports the ideas of humanist and constructivist methods that demand a comprehensive education where being and being together are as important as knowing. Ultimately, the results obtained reinforce that the key is to support teacher preparation through strategies that combine ancient knowledge, diverse cultures, and human attitudes, so that they can face the social and cultural challenges facing schools today. In conclusion, Taptana Cañari, in this field, emerges as an innovative, relevant and effective way of teaching.

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