

Received: 28 November 2022 Accepted: 28 March, 2023

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33182/rr.v8i4.91>

Indigenous Entrepreneurship In Guaranda, Ecuador: An Analysis Of The Gaps And Challenges Faced By Indigenous Communities

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Abstract

Indigenous entrepreneurship, considered both a survival strategy and a means to strengthen economic and cultural autonomy, has experienced notable growth in recent years. Indigenous peoples, with their rich cultural diversity and traditional knowledge, possess unprecedented potential to drive inclusive and sustainable growth. This research employed a qualitative and ethnographic methodology, focusing on indigenous entrepreneurs as the subject of study, the results revealed a diversity of economic activities, with agriculture, livestock, and tourism standing out. Identified barriers include a lack of business education, difficulties in financing, and limited access to technology. Traditional practices and cultural identity influence entrepreneurial endeavors and their relationship with the economic and social environment. Overcoming these barriers will promote sustainable economic development and the well-being of indigenous communities.

Keywords: *Indigenous entrepreneurship, Social barriers, cultural identity, social entrepreneurship*

Introduction

Indigenous entrepreneurship, considered both as a survival strategy and as a way to strengthen economic and cultural autonomy, has experienced remarkable growth in recent years. (Singh & Awasthy, 2023). Indigenous peoples, with their rich cultural diversity and traditional knowledge, have unprecedented potential to drive inclusive and sustainable growth. (Glavee-Geo et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2008).

Indigenous entrepreneurship involves the creation of productive projects that involve the community, not only in operational terms, but also taking into account their cosmogony and

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cultural identity. (Rueda-Rodríguez et al., 2021).

At the heart of indigenous entrepreneurship is the diversity of commercial activities, from handicrafts, agriculture and fishing to cultural tourism, information technology and the cultural industry. (Arellano & Moreno, 2022). These ventures, often rooted in indigenous traditions and knowledge, not only generate income but also reinforce cultural identity, community values and respect for nature. (Gouvea et al., 2022; Guerrero et al., 2018).

However, despite the remarkable resilience and adaptability of indigenous communities, the path to successful entrepreneurship is fraught with significant obstacles.

Lack of access to finance is one of the most critical challenges facing indigenous entrepreneurs. Financial institutions often view indigenous ventures as high-risk investments due to lack of collateral, perceived low profitability, or lack of understanding of indigenous business models. (Vazquez-Maguirre, 2019). These communities often have difficulty accessing credit or loans, limiting their ability to expand or diversify their businesses. (Palomino Villavicencio & López Pardo, 2019).

In addition, many indigenous entrepreneurs lack the business training and technical skills needed to manage and grow in a business. Although entrepreneurship may be present, a lack of formal education and language barrier can prevent these entrepreneurs from acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in the business world. (Diaz, 2020).

Another significant barrier lies in the legal and bureaucratic sphere. Many indigenous communities face legal barriers to starting and operating a business, which can range from lack of legal recognition of land ownership to complex business laws and difficult-to-navigate licensing procedures. (Vivas et al., 2019).

Similarly, indigenous communities are often excluded from decision-making processes that affect their businesses. To overcome these obstacles and enable indigenous entrepreneurs to thrive, interventions are required at several levels. This includes inclusive and flexible public policies that adapt to the needs and circumstances of indigenous entrepreneurs. Better access to finance and technical assistance is also needed, with financial institutions that recognize and adapt to the unique characteristics of indigenous enterprises.

The indigenous entrepreneurship approach highlights the importance of understanding the local cultural and social context in the study of social entrepreneurship. As expectations around the role of business in society change, social organizations are emerging as innovative and sustainable solutions to address global problems such as poverty, climate change and inequality. These social enterprises balance the goals of people, profits and planet (Kaushik et al., 2023; Singh & Awasthy, 2023).

Social entrepreneurship is viewed differently in different nations due to contextual, historical, and cultural differences, suggesting that universal theories may not be applicable to all contexts.

(Canestrino et al., 2020).

Research on indigenous entrepreneurship behavior seeks to address this problem by studying local phenomena using significant local languages, themes, and constructs. This enriches the existing literature on social entrepreneurship and facilitates the transfer of ideas and best practices between nations.

Indigenous communities in Latin America are actively exploring alternative economic routes to achieve self-determination, progress and sustainable economic development at the tribal level. Entrepreneurship is a critical component and facet of these efforts and tactics. Indigenous entrepreneurship in Latin America provides native populations with an opportunity to address their economic, social and ecological challenges, and address pressing issues of social innovation in the area (Gouvea et al., 2022); (Koehne et al., 2022).

Despite the recognition of rights in Ecuador, indigenous communities continue to face inequalities and marginalization. Generally located in rural and peripheral areas, their economic participation is limited to informal local areas and activities with precarious working conditions, exploitation and discrimination. These situations are due to the high degree of vulnerability and discrimination that still persists in Ecuadorian society towards the indigenous population. (Coral, 2018).

Indigenous entrepreneurship is a phenomenon of growing interest in Latin America (Koehne et al., 2022), and particularly in Ecuador, where indigenous communities represent approximately 7 per cent of the total population.

These communities have sought to adapt to a globalized world, while preserving their ancestral traditions and ways of life. In the case of Guaranda, indigenous communities represent about 43.3% of the population (INEC, n.d.) and have shown a remarkable capacity to undertake economic and social projects in search of sustainable development that improves their living conditions without compromising their cultural identity.

Despite the efforts made by indigenous communities in Guaranda, they face several obstacles that hinder the success and growth of their enterprises. These gaps and challenges arise in key areas such as education, financing, access to technologies, training and the implementation of public policies and adequate institutional support. The lack of attention to these problems has limited the potential for growth and development of indigenous enterprises and has generated socioeconomic and cultural inequalities between these communities and the rest of the Ecuadorian population.

In summary, indigenous entrepreneurship in Guaranda faces multiple challenges and gaps that hinder its potential to contribute to the sustainable development of indigenous communities. Therefore, it is essential to address these challenges in a comprehensive manner and adapted to the needs and particularities of the indigenous communities of Guaranda, in order to promote entrepreneurship as a key tool for sustainable economic and social development.

The objective of the study was to identify and analyze these challenges, the study provides valuable

information to design more inclusive and effective policies and programs that support the economic development of indigenous communities in Guaranda and in Ecuador in general. In addition, this analysis can contribute to the promotion of equality, inclusion and the reduction of discrimination faced by these communities, encouraging their participation in the economy and improving their living conditions.

Methodology

Methodological approach

The research was developed using a qualitative methodology that focused on understanding the perspective of entrepreneurs from indigenous peoples who carry out their economic activities in the city of Guaranda.

Collection of Information

To collect the information, the interview technique was used with a semi-structured open questionnaire. The questionnaire addressed the following aspects: cultural identification and traditional practices related to entrepreneurship, main barriers and challenges, and perception of the support and opportunities existing in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. A sample of 5 entrepreneurs from the city of Guaranda was selected, who agreed to participate voluntarily in the research process. The categories used in the study are presented in **Figure 1**.

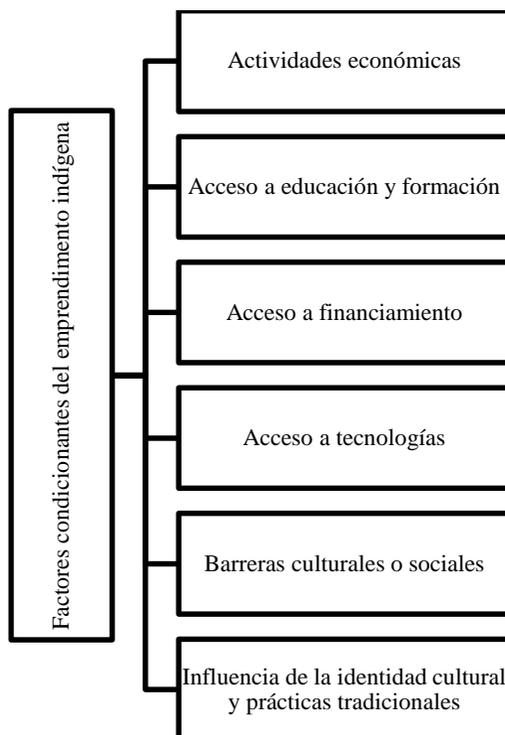


Figure 1 Dimensions for information analysis

Prepared by the author, generated according to the objectives of the study.

Analysis of information

For the processing of the information, Excel software was used, where a table was made for the extraction of the main findings of the responses of the indigenous entrepreneurs who participated in the study. To later carry out a critical analysis of the current situation of indigenous entrepreneurship in the city of Guaranda.

Results and discusión

Results of the analysis of the information collected

Table 1 Analysis of the contributions of indigenous participants entrepreneurs by categories of analysis

| Category | Participant contribution | Global contribution |
|---|---|--|
| Economic activities | Participant 1 Agriculture corn beans and tourism | In the study, participating indigenous entrepreneurs engage in a wide variety of economic activities. These include agriculture (cultivation of corn, beans, beans and tourism), raising animals such as potatoes, guinea pigs, cows, ducks, pigs, chickens and ducks, as well as the marketing of dairy products, poultry and guinea pigs, and the sale of indigenous clothing. In addition, some entrepreneurs combine agriculture and livestock with the production of cheese and milk. The indigenous entrepreneurs participating in the study are engaged in various economic activities. Participant 1 focuses on agriculture, growing corn, beans and is also engaged in tourism. Participant 2 is engaged in the breeding of potatoes, guinea pigs, cows and ducks. Participant 3 is engaged in the breeding of pigs, chickens and ducks, in addition to the marketing of milk. Participant 4 has a poultry and guinea pig farm, raises pigs and also sells indigenous clothing. Finally, Participant 5 is engaged in agriculture, livestock and cheese and milk processing. |
| | Participant 2 Potatoes guinea pigs cows and ducks | |
| | Participant 3 Breeding pigs chickens ducks, marketing milk | |
| | Participant 4 Poultry farm, guinea pigs and sale of indigenous clothing | |
| | Participant 5 Agricultural livestock cheese and milk processing | |
| Education and training for your entrepreneurship | Participant 1 Third level education to improve production and marketing | In relation to education and training for their entrepreneurship, it is observed that some entrepreneurs have third-level education, which has allowed them to improve production and marketing. However, the lack of specific training in business issues is highlighted, with some participants mentioning the total absence of training in areas of entrepreneurship. In general, a need for more training is perceived, since practical |
| | Participant 2 No business training | |
| | Participant 3 There is no training, the activities are carried out based on the experience of the families. | |
| | Participant 4 There is no training in areas of entrepreneurship | |
| | Participant 5 Little training so you must self- | |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | train based on practical knowledge. | experience and knowledge transmitted by families are the main sources of learning for these entrepreneurs. |
| Funding challenges | Participant 1 Difficulties in the procedures, in addition to the impossibility of accessing long-term loans | Generally speaking, indigenous entrepreneurs face challenges in financing their projects. These challenges include difficulties in paperwork, such as obtaining long-term loans and limiting access to them. In addition, some entrepreneurs can only obtain loans in cooperatives for small and medium-term amounts. Others cite the lack of information and payment facilities, as well as the scarcity of low-interest and long-term credit programs. These obstacles hinder access to financial resources necessary for the development and growth of their enterprises. |
| | Participant 2 Limitation to make a long-term loan | |
| | Participant 3 Loans in cooperatives for very small amounts and in the medium term | |
| | Participant 4 Lack of information and payment facilities | |
| | Participant 5 Lack of low-interest and long-term credit programs | |
| Access to technologies for entrepreneurship | Participant 1 Very little only to drip crop irrigation, fertilizer and internet | In general, indigenous entrepreneurs face difficulties in terms of access to technologies for their ventures. It is observed that access to technological tools is limited or even non-existent for some participants. Others mention that access to the internet is restricted and that their ability to use digital technologies is limited due to scarce economic resources. These limitations in access to technology can hinder the improvement of their production processes and the adoption of innovative solutions in their ventures. |
| | Participant 2 We do not have access to technological tools | |
| | Participant 3 Limited internet access, we review videos to improve production | |
| | Participant 4 No access to digital technology | |
| | Participant 5 Limited resources do not allow access to technology | |
| | Participant 2 I have not received advice | |
| | Participant 3 No support | |
| | Participant 4 No support has ever been received from institutions | |
| Cultural or social barriers to entrepreneurship development | Participant 1 Intermediaries, lack of opportunities | Indigenous entrepreneurs face various cultural or social barriers to the development of their enterprises. These barriers include the presence of intermediaries and lack of opportunities, lack of viability and absence of an adequate market, competition and devaluation of community production, lack of opportunities due to indigenous status, and low participation and recognition of indigenous culture in the business environment. These barriers limit equal opportunities for indigenous entrepreneurs and hinder their advancement in the market, as well as their ability to overcome the socio-cultural obstacles they face. |
| | Participant 2 Lack of viability no market | |
| | Participant 3 Competition, devaluation of community production | |
| | Participant 4 Lack of opportunities due to being indigenous | |
| | Participant 5 Little participation by indigenous culture we are not taken into account | |
| Influence of cultural identity and traditional practices on entrepreneurship and its | Participant 1 If, because one is indigenous, there are fewer spaces to undertake with the support of institutions. | Cultural identity and traditional practices have had a significant influence on participants' endeavours, as well as on their relationship with the economic and social environment. Some mentioned that their indigenous status has limited the spaces to undertake with the |
| | Participant 2 Using traditional practices to improve product quality | |
| | Participant 3 Allows only in harvests to | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| relationship with the economic and social environment | <u>generate some small jobs</u> | support of institutions. Others highlighted the use of traditional practices to improve the quality of products and generate employment during harvests. It was also observed that within communities, traditional practices play an important role in the development of entrepreneurship. In addition, it was highlighted that these practices allow maintaining the organization and cohesion of communities in various ancestral activities. In general, cultural identity and traditional practices are key elements that shape indigenous enterprises and their interaction with the socio-economic environment. |
| | Participant 4 Within communities influences internally by traditional practices | |
| | Participant 5 It allows to maintain the organization of the communities in the different ancestral activities. | |

Prepared by the author. According to the excerpts of the contributions of the focus group of participating indigenous entrepreneurs

Critical análisis

Economic activities of the indigenous entrepreneur’s sector

Interpretation of the responses of participants in the study on indigenous entrepreneurship in Guaranda, Ecuador, presented in **Table 1** reveals that indigenous entrepreneurs in the region are involved in a variety of businesses and economic activities. These activities cover sectors such as agriculture, livestock, tourism and the sale of indigenous products.

Agriculture is a common activity among indigenous entrepreneurs in Guaranda, with crops such as corn, beans, beans, potatoes and dairy production. This highlights the importance of land and agriculture in the local economy, as well as traditional knowledge passed down from generation to generation.

Animal husbandry also plays a significant role in indigenous enterprises, with participants involved in raising pigs, chickens, ducks, guinea pigs, cows and poultry. These activities can provide both food and products for sale, contributing to the economic sustainability of communities.

Tourism is also mentioned as an economic activity developed by some indigenous entrepreneurs. This suggests that local communities recognize the potential of their cultural and natural heritage to attract visitors and generate income through tourism services.

In addition, the sale of indigenous products, such as indigenous clothing, is mentioned, which highlights the valorization and preservation of cultural identity through entrepreneurship. Similarly in the study of (Maliqueo Orellana & Maliqueo Orellana, 2022), underpins the fact that indigenous entrepreneurship has so far strengthened the categorization of terms such as "artisanal trade" and "ethnic products", among others, which highlight certain characteristics in the materiality or elaboration of the products, attributing to them a specific identity and value.

Overall, responses show a diversity of entrepreneurship and a combination of traditional

knowledge and modern economic opportunities.

This reflects the adaptive capacity and resilience of indigenous communities in Guaranda, as well as their commitment to sustainable economic development and the preservation of their culture. According to the study of (Macpherson et al., 2021) Indigenous entrepreneurship generates both financial and non-financial benefits, such as contributing to local economic development, maintaining indigenous culture and protecting the local environment. Indigenous culture and the local environment are often considered part of the product being marketed, such as in indigenous tourism or in the design and marketing of cultural artifacts.

Access to education and training for the development of enterprises

The responses of the participants shown in **Table 1** indicate a lack of specific education and training in areas relevant to their businesses in the Guaranda region. Most participants cite an absence of entrepreneurship training, thus limiting access to knowledge and skills key to the successful management of their businesses. Some participants highlight the importance of tertiary education, indicating that they have sought training opportunities beyond basic education to improve production and marketing. These entrepreneurs have recognized the importance of acquiring specialized skills to boost the development of their businesses.

However, the lack of specific training in the subject of business is mentioned by other participants. The lack of training opportunities can limit the ability of these entrepreneurs to efficiently manage their businesses and take advantage of growth opportunities.

Instead of formal education, some participants mention that they base their activities on the experience passed down by their families. While experience is valuable, a lack of formal training can limit opportunities for innovation and adoption of best business practices.

The lack of entrepreneurship training is also highlighted in the responses, which shows a lack of educational programs and resources specifically focused on the development of entrepreneurial skills in the region.

It can be interpreted, the lack of education and training in areas relevant to business can represent a challenge for the development and growth of indigenous enterprises in Guaranda. It is essential to promote the creation of training programs adapted to the needs of indigenous communities, to strengthen entrepreneurial skills and foster sustainable economic development. By doing so, opportunities for success and well-being for both entrepreneurs and indigenous communities at large can be improved.

According to a study conducted in Russia by (Novikova, 2016) indicate that indigenous knowledge is of paramount importance in the development of enterprises, especially when operating in areas where these communities have lived for generations. Indigenous traditional knowledge of land, natural resources and environmental management is valuable in understanding and addressing the specific challenges of those areas. Indigenous knowledge brings a unique and profound perspective

on the relationship between people and nature, and how to use resources sustainably. This knowledge is rooted in the experience accumulated over the centuries and has proven to be effective in preserving ecological balance and biodiversity.

Challenges for access to financing by the indigenous entrepreneur sector

As can be seen in Table 1, participants mention several financing challenges they have faced in their indigenous enterprises in Guaranda. These challenges include difficulties in the procedures, the inability to access long-term loans, limitations in obtaining long-term loans, small amounts of loans in cooperatives and medium-term payment terms, lack of information and payment facilities, and the lack of low-interest and long-term credit programs.

In the research of (Sharma et al., 2023) it is mentioned that financial activities, such as bank fees, financial education, credit-deposit rates, number of branches and ATMs, online banking transactions, bank credit for start-ups, bank credit for the manufacturing sector and credit for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as interest rate and other financial indicators, They effectively contribute to the growth of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. However, existing studies have barely been able to observe the integrated impact of financial indicators on the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

These financial challenges can have a significant impact on the development and growth of indigenous enterprises. Difficulties in procedures and lack of information and payment facilities can hinder access to financing necessary for investments, expansion and acquisition of resources. The inability to access long-term loans and limitations on the amounts and terms of loans in cooperatives can restrict the investment capacity and long-term planning capacity of enterprises. In addition, the lack of low-interest and long-term credit programs may limit the options available for obtaining concessional financing.

As he explains (Castro Herrera & Salazar, 2019) For the leverage of indigenous entrepreneurship, it is necessary to provide financial support that covers the economic aspect and training for the management of finances by indigenous communities, adapting to their particular needs. Being fundamental for the development, operation and sustainability of rural productive projects, regardless of the level of action in which they are classified.

These financial challenges highlight the importance of having financing options tailored to the needs of indigenous entrepreneurs. It is essential to improve accessibility, information and conditions of loans, as well as to develop credit programs that adjust to the characteristics and cycles of indigenous enterprises. By addressing these challenges, the growth and sustainability of indigenous enterprises can be promoted, thereby strengthening the economy and well-being of indigenous communities. In that sense it expresses (Aier et al., 2022) the resilience of indigenous entrepreneurs entails more than the success or survival of businesses; It implies promoting a positive trajectory in the face of setbacks and the substantial growth and development that materializes. These individuals strive to counter social, cultural and political norms, war and

terrorism. Business resilience as the ability to resist, adapt and face adverse conditions and external shocks, relates to the ability to reform company resources in innovative ways.

Access to technologies for the development of enterprises in the indigenous sector

It stands out from the participants' responses presented in **Table 1** that access to digital technologies and tools in the Guaranda region is limited or non-existent in many cases. This can represent a significant challenge for indigenous entrepreneurs in terms of taking advantage of the benefits that these technologies can offer in the development of their businesses.

Some participants mention access to digital technologies and tools, such as drip irrigation or the use of the internet, and highlight the positive impact they have had on their businesses. These technologies can contribute to improving efficiency, productivity and product quality, as well as to obtaining information and knowledge relevant to business management.

However, other participants mention lack of access or limited access to digital technologies. This may be due to factors such as lack of economic resources, internet infrastructure or the absence of programs and support for the acquisition of technologies. As mentioned in the study of (Mosquera-Guerrero et al., 2022) where they emphasize the role of the State as a regulator and facilitator of economic and technological tools that meet the needs of indigenous communities by filling the gaps of different social and economic environments.

Lack of access to digital technologies and tools can limit indigenous entrepreneurs' ability to compete in the marketplace, improve the efficiency of their operations, and access valuable information for business decision-making.

It is important to recognize these limitations and promote initiatives that facilitate access to digital technologies and tools for indigenous entrepreneurs in the Guaranda region. This may include developing training programs, accessing financing for technology acquisition, and improving internet infrastructure in communities. In doing so, the development and sustainability of indigenous enterprises can be boosted, thus improving the well-being of indigenous communities.

Cultural or social barriers perceived by entrepreneurs for the development of their ventures

Indigenous entrepreneurs in the Guaranda region face a series of cultural and social barriers that impact the development of their businesses, as evidenced in **Table 1**. One of the barriers mentioned is the presence of intermediaries and the lack of opportunities. Indigenous entrepreneurs may find it difficult to access markets and obtain the opportunities necessary for the growth of their businesses. This situation can generate an unequal distribution of resources and a lack of recognition towards indigenous entrepreneurs in the region.

Together, lack of viability and lack of market are another major challenge. Some indigenous entrepreneurs face difficulties in finding sufficient demand for their products or services in the Guaranda region. This can be influenced by cultural and social factors that affect preferences and

consumption patterns in the community. Lack of viability can limit opportunities for growth and sustainability of indigenous enterprises.

According to the study of (Onwuegbuzie & Mafimisebi, 2021), it is mentioned that indigenous entrepreneurship presents various difficulties that challenge its escalation towards success, among which are the lack of knowledge, cultural aspects or devaluation of its products.

Competition and the devaluation of indigenous production are also significant barriers. Competition in the marketplace can make it difficult to differentiate the products or services offered by indigenous entrepreneurs, affecting their ability to stand out and achieve success. In addition, the lack of recognition and appreciation of indigenous production can have a negative impact on the competitiveness of indigenous businesses, as the cultural richness and traditional knowledge reflected in their products are not sufficiently valued.

Discrimination and lack of opportunities due to indigenous identity are additional barriers. Some indigenous entrepreneurs face discrimination and find it difficult to access the resources, opportunities and support needed for business development. This can limit their growth and perpetuate economic and social inequalities.

At the same time, low participation and lack of recognition of indigenous culture represent significant cultural and social barriers. Indigenous entrepreneurs may feel that their culture and ancestral knowledge are not taken into account, which can lead to exclusion and limit their full participation in the business and social environment.

Synthesizing it can be said that the cultural and social barriers faced by indigenous entrepreneurs in the Guaranda region have a significant impact on their businesses. It is essential to promote an inclusive environment that values and supports indigenous entrepreneurship, fostering equal opportunities, respect for cultural diversity and recognition of traditional knowledge. By overcoming these barriers, the development and growth of indigenous enterprises can be strengthened, thus contributing to the well-being and prosperity of indigenous communities.

Influence of cultural identity and traditional practices have influenced their ventures and their relationship with the economic and social environment

The responses of the participants presented in **Table 1** reveal that cultural identity and traditional practices have had diverse influences on their ventures and their relationship with the economic and social environment. These influences can be both positive and limiting, and vary depending on participants' individual experiences.

Some participants mention that their indigenous identity has created barriers to entrepreneurship, as there is less support from institutions. This suggests that cultural and social factors may limit opportunities and access to resources for indigenous entrepreneurs. These barriers can hinder the development and growth of businesses and restrict the economic and social potential of indigenous communities.

However, other participants highlight how traditional practices have had a positive impact on their ventures. They mention the use of these practices to improve the quality of products, which can differentiate them in the market and increase their perceived value. In addition, traditional practices can be a source of identity and cultural pride, contributing to the preservation of traditions and strengthening community cohesion. According to the research of (Curry et al., 2016) Indigenous entrepreneurship operates in an environment in which companies must find a balance between operating in a global economy and preserving traditional values, beliefs and cultural elements. Along with a commitment to tradition, heritage and culture, communal and shared ownership are fundamental aspects for indigenous communities.

In terms of the relationship with the economic and social environment, the responses suggest that the influence of cultural identity and traditional practices can be diverse. Some participants mention that these influences are limited to employment generation during harvests, indicating a more seasonal and limited economic impact. Other participants highlight that traditional practices allow to maintain the organization of communities in different ancestral activities, which can have an impact on social and community relations. For its part in the study of (Morales et al., 2021) mentions that studies in Mexico and Peru have shown that indigenous businesses are essential to contribute to the sustainable development of rural communities and improve the quality of life of their inhabitants. These companies use mechanisms such as work as a source of quality of life, gender equality, sustainable exploitation and equitable distribution of benefits to promote sustainable development. However, there are also concerns about the urbanization of these communities and the risk of ethnic extinction of their culture. Community leaders are concerned about the lack of return of young people after obtaining university education in urban areas.

From the above, the importance of recognizing and valuing cultural identity and traditional practices in indigenous enterprises is observed. Although there are barriers and challenges associated with indigenous identity, traditional practices can be a strength and a source of differentiation in the marketplace. In addition, these practices can strengthen community cohesion and organization, contributing to the sustainable social and economic development of indigenous communities.

Conclusions

The analysis of the participants' responses in relation to the influence of cultural identity and traditional practices on their ventures and their relationship with the economic and social environment reveals a number of aspects to consider.

It is clear that indigenous identity can be both an advantage and a barrier for entrepreneurs. While some participants point to the lack of institutional support due to their indigenous status, which hinders the development of their businesses, others highlight the value of traditional practices in terms of product quality and market differentiation. This indicates the need to address existing inequalities and prejudices in the business environment, promoting the valorization of cultural

identity and diversity.

Together, it was identified that traditional practices may have a limited impact in economic and social terms. Some participants mention that traditional practices generate employment only during harvests, indicating seasonal dependence and a lack of economic diversification. It is important to look for ways to strengthen and broaden the scope of traditional practices, so that they can contribute more meaningfully to the sustainable economic development of indigenous communities.

It also highlights the importance of maintaining and strengthening community organization around traditional practices. This can contribute to social cohesion and the strengthening of cultural identity, which in turn can have a positive impact on indigenous entrepreneurship. However, it is necessary to ensure that this community organization translates into equitable opportunities and shared benefits, avoiding possible internal tensions and inequalities. In general terms, it is essential to address the barriers and challenges associated with indigenous identity and promote the valorization of traditional practices in indigenous enterprises. This implies generating an inclusive and equitable business environment, as well as strengthening training and specific institutional support for indigenous entrepreneurs. In doing so, the economic and social benefits of cultural identity and traditional practices can be maximized, and the sustainable development of indigenous communities in Guaranda can be promoted.

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