

Scientific  
Journal of  
**Applied  
Social and  
Clinical  
Science**

## **USE OF THE BALCHÉ TREE FOR THE PREPARATION OF REFRESHING PRODUCTS**

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**Abstract:** Currently it is important to redouble efforts for the conservation, rescue and preservation of traditions and customs in the Mayan culture, especially in the town of Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Quintana Roo. Therefore, to rescue them, specifically an intoxicating drink that was used in ancient times in sacred ceremonies and among its properties included the purification of the soul and the proper functioning of the digestive system, and which is considered one of the incomparable traditions, develops the applied research “Use of the Balché Tree for the Preparation of Refreshing Products”. It is a documentary research that consisted of the review of the existing literature, in order to generate a concrete theoretical foundation on the subject of study. From the information generated, it seeks to argue the preparation of refreshing products based on the Balché tree that contributes to the economic activation of the Mexican southeast.

**Keywords:** Use, Balché tree, preparation, refreshing products.

## INTRODUCTION

From the point of view of Baudez (2003), it seems clear that the natural world of the Maya (the set of representations concerning the bioecological environment) does not represent the same borders or the same definitions as ours. The natural/cultural/supernatural divide, for example, does not seem to be operational, at least not on a particular level. It can be thought that from the perspective of the Mayan peoples, the relationships established between human beings and what for us are “elements of the natural world” are different, since they are the result of different ontological and ethical constructions.

What is at stake is the loss of cultural values that favor the disappearance of traditions, customs and cultural attitudes. Dimensions that express the nature of a

national history and that have been the basis of national sovereignty and identity, but that, day by day, are obscured by the interests of the environment.

The reflection of traditions and customs as cultural elements are part of the identity and are associated with positioning, popularity and also the expression of the nature of a national history. However, many of the traditions are being lost for various reasons, among them, the detriment of values, the high cost of living and the presence of cultures from other countries such as the elaboration of products from the enormous external influences caused by globalization, one of these traditional losses in the region of Quintana Roo, is the sacred drink that was used in the Mayan ceremonies called Balché, it is sad to know that the Mayan legacy has been fading, possibly due to the fact that new processed drinks have emerged today that have replaced the traditional ones.

## GOALS

### GENERAL GOAL

To integrate a theoretical foundation of the topic to rescue Mayan traditions through the preparation of refreshing products, based on Balché, in order to preserve Mayan traditions for current and new generations, based on existing literature.

### SPECIFIC GOALS

- To compile information on rescuing Mayan traditions through the preparation of refreshing products, based on Balché in physical and digital media.
- Contrast the author’s opinion in order to generate global conclusions on the subject in question.
- Expand knowledge about rescuing Mayan traditions through the preparation of refreshing products, based on Balché, as well as its impact on economic activation.

## STATE OF THE ART

### GENERALITY

Mexican culture, like many indigenous cultures, is also at risk of disappearing. The threats are not recent, although in current times they are inexorably worsening as a result of the enormous external influences caused by globalization (Pérez, 2004, P.40). "There are reasons to encourage the loss of cultural identity, these are linked to economic, personal, school and social factors. This decline of social class, ethnicity and local anchors" (Chamorro & Maldonado 2017, P.3).

In the same way, Rodríguez (2013) mentions that "the culture and traditions of Mexicans have been gradually being lost, due to the fact that it has been decided to adopt the customs of other countries instead of embracing the wealth that is possessed in Mexico."

For their part, Arriaga and González (2016) emphasize that "culture has a duality, cultural production has an economic value and a symbolic value and, therefore, contributes to economic growth and development."

### CULTURAL IDENTITY

In order to properly understand the term "cultural identity", we will begin by defining the two component words of the same, extracting the contributions that are considered most valuable from each one, and then analyze the conceptions of various authors on the subject.

Identity: "Identity can be expressed as being itself, the entity, what it is, what exists plus its entity, its essence, form and value" (Rojas, 2004). Therefore, identity is understood as the set of traits of an individual or a community that characterize them compared to others.

For his part, Navarrete (2015) expresses that identity is something unrepresentable,

one can only talk about it but never represent it in tangible, definitive, exhaustive, or categorical terms. For this reason, it is not necessary to speak of the term identification, as a concept that helps or allows a better understanding of the process of identity construction.

From the perspective of Zárata (2015), he states that according to the approach that the person must reason and choose above the identity attributed by the community, it can be inferred that, from this point of view, the identity must be independent of the community and be owned only by the subject.

On the other hand, (Tejeda, 2005) establishes identity has to face change and social transformation, since, although identity self-affirmation gives security about what we are personally and collectively, modern life continues its course, and even if you want to completely distance yourself from the world, even the most fixed and restricted identities have to assume the dynamics in which you are immersed. In short, identity has to face the challenge of the weakness of social and collective action. The accent on individualism and the relevance of individual identity have an impact so that collective action is diminished.

Due to this situation, Mercado & Hernández (2010) point out that identity implies not only that subjects feel different from others, but also that they are recognized by others (heteroadscription), since collective identity implies similarity towards the interior and difference to the outside, and that difference requires the sanction of social recognition for it to exist socially and publicly, since people are social constructions to the extent that they depend on the interpretation of their characteristic features by other people, with whom they interact significantly.

Culture: The word culture comes from the Latin *cultus*, it refers to the cultivation of the human spirit and the intellectual faculties of man. However, over the years, culture has been associated with civilization and progress.

Podestá (2006) in his research entitled *An Approach to the Concept of Culture*, explains that culture can be based on the definition of the British anthropologist Edward B. Tylor, who in 1871 conceived culture as “that totality that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs and any other aptitudes and habits that man acquires as a member of society”.

“Culture generates a way of living, fulfilling the most important social function, that of providing people and human groups with an appreciation of themselves, which is an indispensable condition for any development, personal or collective” (Molano, 2007).

In the above quotes, it is worth recognizing that culture is the set of distinctive, spiritual, material and affective features that characterize a society or social group. It encompasses, in addition to the arts and letters, ways of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, beliefs and traditions.

The relationship between culture and identity is then very close insofar as both are symbolic constructions, but they are not the same thing. While culture is a structure of meanings embodied in symbolic forms through which individuals communicate, identity is a discourse or narrative about oneself constructed in interaction with others through that pattern of cultural meanings. To study culture is to study symbolic forms, to study identity is to study the way in which symbolic forms are mobilized in interaction for the construction of a personal self-image.

Cultural identity: Cultural identity is understood through the definitions of culture and its evolution over time. Therefore, the concept of cultural identity encompasses

a sense of belonging to a social group with which cultural traits are shared, such as customs, values and beliefs. Identity is not a fixed concept, but is recreated individually and collectively and is continuously fed by external influence.

“Cultural identity is assumed as a communicational process between cultures, through which specific, specific traits are manifested, which characterize a group, region, community, people, nation, from the identifying and differentiating elements and in which different levels of realization take place” (Fernández Peña, Idania & Fernández Peña, Iliana, 2012, P. 10).

Cultural identity, in principle, is one of collective identity, understood as a fabric of images and perceptions integrated into the psychological posture of the individual, through which people interpret social codes from their experiences and discourse and try to coordinate their action with those of others in various social practices, self-assigning themselves to social groups with which they find common characteristics, interests or traits. These images and perceptions are found in people’s psycho-biological, social and philosophical motivations, and are a synthesis of the culture and personality they carry with them (Chein & Kaliman, 2006).

Likewise, cultural identity entails a sense of belonging to a social group with which cultural traits are shared, such as customs, values and beliefs. Identity is not a fixed concept, but is recreated individually and collectively and is continuously fed by external influence. According to anthropological and sociological studies, identity arises through differentiation and as reaffirmation against the other. Although the concept of identity transcends borders, the origin of this concept is often linked to a territory. It must be noted that cultural identity is encompassed in the sense of belonging to a community, to a social sector,

to a specific reference group. This collectivity can generally be geographically located, but not necessarily (for example, in the cases of refugees, displaced persons, emigrants, etc.). There are cultural manifestations that express their sense of identity more intensely than others, a fact that differentiates them from other activities that are a common part of daily life (Molano, 2007).

## MAYAN TRADITIONS

Definition.- From the point of view of Rosales et al, Leona et al (2009), rituals constitute symbolic universes that reinforce social norms, give legitimacy to the established social order and confer meaning to the sexual division of labor. Through them, women and men occupy defined places in and by the community; the exercise of the roles or roles conferred in a ritual has a relevant meaning for society, since if these are not properly developed, the survival of the whole community is at stake.

According to Bourdieu (1987) defined the culture of Yucatan, the “mestizo” culture counts for more than a truly “hach” Mayan culture. This variation is an example of the heterodoxy of Mayan communities today. It must not be a surprise that in the Mayan communities in Quintana Roo there is more than one interpretation and of course arguments of what “the Mayan culture” is. Like the saying, “each pol each yokolcab” (each head is a world).

As RAMÍREZ et al, ALFONSO et al (2006) think, religious practices and the cult of supernatural beings associated with agricultural cycles, and especially the cultivation of corn, knowledge of the lunar cycle and its influence on the milpa, practices linked to the important moments of the life cycle, such as birth, godparenthood and its set of ritual actions, such as the hetz mec, puberty, marriage, illness and death, the cult

of the dead, and the use of the agricultural subsystems associated with solar.<sup>29</sup> It must be noted that in general there is a marked disappearance of the traditional forms of indigenous government and of manifestations of social organization that speak of an organized political expression of the Mayan community against the power of the State and its forms of government.

Importance: As Galiego (2017) states, the Mayan culture has its own form of cultural and spiritual manifestation. The first principle within the Mayan culture is that everything has life. Within the Mayan spirituality itself, there are variants in its way of practicing and living it since individuals are not homogeneous, similar, yes it is, but never equal. The essence of spirituality is given at the moment when you are communicating with the Ajaaw, it is the varied form of communication, in giving thanks for what he has given for each of his children, in the manifestations of respect for Mother Nature, she is the provider and regulator of the sustenance of all that exists.

According to Rodríguez (2013) beyond the successes or failures that can be perceived in collective contexts or popular expressions, it is a fact that thinking about the “Mayan culture” and the Yucatan Peninsula as a space for reproduction and construction of identities Within a “homogeneous” framework, it has been an idea that has been developed mainly from academic spheres to learn Maya as traditions, a vision that has been reinforced by a certain sector of the social and political elites in the state.

## BALCHÉ

Definition: Katz (2006) mentions that it is a very common alcoholic beverage in the ancient indigenous cultures of Southeast Mexico and Mesoamerica. It is currently used by the Mayans of the Yucatan Peninsula and is made from the legume of the same name.

(*Lonchocarpus violaceus*), from which a syrup and water are obtained, which are fermented to obtain the Balché. Another similar alcoholic beverage is xtabentún, which is obtained from the plant called “glory of the morning” (*Turbina corymbosa*).

Characteristic:

Family: Fabaceae.

Scientific name: *Lonchocarpus longistylus*.

Spanish common name: Balche

Mayan common name: Balche

Brief description of the species: Tree up to 10 meters high, with dense and rounded foliage, very showy lilac-purple flowers; the fruits are flat pods up to 10 cm. long. Endemic species of the Yucatan Peninsula.

Description of its habitat: Subdeciduous and subevergreen forests.

Traditional uses of the species: Sacred tree of the Mayans, from the bark and through fermentation an alcoholic beverage called “Balché” is obtained, used in ritual acts. Also used as an ornamental.

Conservation status: Stable.

Government actions for their conservation.- Production of plants in nurseries supported by the Secretariat of Sustainable Development, to subsequently donate them to conservation, restoration and urban reforestation programs. The production of this species can change with each production cycle.

## METHODOLOGY

To carry out this research, a documentary approach was chosen, in order to deepen the analysis and interpretation of the existing literature to structure a solid theoretical foundation on the subject of rescuing the Mayan traditions through the preparation of refreshing products, based on of balché, as well as some specific generalities on this subject.

The information analyzed was obtained mainly from digital media, that is,

bibliographic material available on the Internet about studies carried out, popular science articles, among other sources.

The methodology was mainly subject to the contrast between the various existing authorial points of view, in order to understand and conclude according to the global opinion.

Finally, the unification of each idea, theory, study or analysis carried out allowed the generation of a precise theoretical foundation to support the research work in progress.

## FINAL COMMENTS

### SUMMARY OF RESULTS

In this applied research, the structuring of a theoretical foundation was prioritized from the search, analysis and interpretation of the existing literature on issues related to the balché and the loss of the Mayan culture, mainly its customs and traditions, therefore, the result It is given from the globalized conclusion, taking into account the research and opinion of various authors who emphasize the study topics.

### CONCLUSIONS

The theoretical foundation is the basis for the orientation and organization of the facts or phenomena studied. It is worth mentioning that the authorial opinion allows to determine that the reflection of traditions and customs as cultural elements, are part of social identity, are associated with positioning, popularity and also the expression of the nature of a national history, it is In other words, they are dimensions that express the nature of a history and that have been the basis of national sovereignty and identity, but that, day by day, are obscured by interests. Therefore, the research focuses on the rescue of these through the preparation of refreshing products, in order to benefit ancient cultures by remembering and reviving those customs, thus highlighting the identity for which they fought so hard.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

For researchers or students interested in continuing with some line of research according to this study, it is recommended to investigate and generate knowledge on the subject and delve deeper into the existing information or literature, as well as propose innovation strategies with respect to the preparation of refreshing products based on Balché.

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