SAFEGUARDING TRADITIONAL VALLENATO MUSIC: LEVERAGING THE CREATIVE ECOSYSTEM WITH ICT FOR INTANGIBLE HERITAGE PRESERVATION

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Abstract

This quantitative study comprehensively analyzes the factors contributing to the cultural preservation of traditional Vallenato music, an intangible cultural heritage. It examines the multifaceted influence of various variables on the sustainability of this cherished cultural expression. Key stakeholders, including singers, accordionists, musicians, folklorists, heritage enthusiasts, and cultural managers, are meticulously studied. The research findings offer valuable insights for the formulation of effective safeguarding strategies, ensuring the continued vitality of traditional Vallenato music.

Keywords

Traditional Vallenato, Creative Ecosystem, Cultural Preservation, Intangible Heritage, Strategic Management, Creative Industries

1. Introduction

Traditional Vallenato music, deeply rooted in the Magdalena Grande region, was declared intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2015, yet it faces ongoing threats and challenges (UNESCO, 2015). To comprehensively address this issue, we employ a quantitative approach to analyze factors critical to the preservation of traditional Vallenato music within its creative ecosystem. This intricate musical genre, originating from a fusion of diverse cultural elements, embodies tri-ethnic influences, resulting in rhythmic styles like merengue, paseo, puya, and son (República de Colombia - Ministerio de Cultura, 2013).

Our study seeks to assess the quantitative dimensions of safeguarding traditional Vallenato music. While Colombia's Special Safeguarding Plan (SSP) outlines initiatives for intangible cultural heritage protection, challenges persist due to the absence of a robust ecosystem involving public, private, and academic stakeholders, coupled with infrastructural and policy limitations (Rodríguez & López, 2019; Sung, 2018).

In this research, we rigorously examine the essential elements that shape the creative ecosystem supporting traditional Vallenato music.

Utilizing quantitative analysis, we explore the interplay between heritage safeguarding, stakeholder roles, and ecosystem configuration. Our goal is to provide evidence-based insights to ensure the enduring protection of this invaluable cultural expression.

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) encompasses cultural expressions, practices, and knowledge transmitted through generations. These include oral traditions, music, dance, rituals, and craft techniques, which form the core of community identity and cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2003; Lenzerini, 2011).

Safeguarding ICH involves comprehensive measures such as documentation, research, preservation, promotion, and transmission, ensuring the vitality of these expressions for future generations (UNESCO, 2003; Bedjaoui, 2004).

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage of 2003 provides an international framework for these endeavors, emphasizing human rights and international law (Lenzerini, 2011).

Within the realm of ICH, the creative ecosystem plays a pivotal role in safeguarding and promoting cultural manifestations.

Artists, cultural organizations, educational institutions, and enterprises within this ecosystem collaborate, innovate, and exchange knowledge to revitalize intangible cultural expressions (Sténs et al., 2016; Quispe & González, 2022).

This quantitative study delves into the relationship between Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Creative Ecosystem in the Colombian Caribbean Region.

Through surveys and data analysis, we aim to understand how the creative ecosystem contributes to the preservation and promotion of ICH in this region. Variables such as investment in creative activities, collaboration among stakeholders, and cultural management practices will be assessed.

Our findings will inform policy formulation and strategies to strengthen the bond between Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Creative Ecosystem, ensuring sustainable protection and promotion of ICH in the Colombian Caribbean region.

2. Methods

Duis This study is grounded in a quantitative approach, wherein numerical data is gathered through surveys, and statistical techniques are employed for data analysis.

The central research question guiding this article is: "What are the factors that determine the creative ecosystem necessary for the safeguarding of traditional Vallenato music as intangible cultural heritage?" This question is pivotal as it defines the research purpose, identifies relevant variables, and establishes the appropriate design and methodology (Arias, 2020).

Surveys will be administered to a random sample of various stakeholders involved in traditional Vallenato music, including accordionists, singers, composers, cultural managers, folklorists, and heritage consumers.

To ensure the quality and refinement of the research instrument, it was developed based on a comprehensive literature review, validated by field experts, and refined following a pilot test.

Quantitative data collection will be conducted using a survey instrument designed with a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 signifies "None," 2 signifies "Minimal," 3 signifies "Moderate," 4 signifies "Substantial," and 5 signifies "Significant."

This instrument addresses key dimensions related to the variables of safeguarding, the creative ecosystem, and the roles of stakeholders in traditional Vallenato music, as outlined in Table 1.

IBM SPSS Statistics version 27 was employed for comprehensive quantitative analysis. Various techniques were applied, including correlation tests, regression analysis, Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis, frequency analysis, and descriptive statistics.

These techniques enabled us to explore relationships between variables, assess the internal consistency of the scales used, examine data distribution, and obtain pertinent descriptive information about the sample.

During the data integration phase, the collected survey data underwent review and coding. Data were input into a database using SPSS software.

Subsequently, quantitative analysis was carried out using correlation tests and regression analysis to scrutinize relationships between the variables of interest.

Furthermore, reliability, frequency, and descriptive statistics analyses were executed to evaluate the internal consistency of the scales employed and acquire detailed, descriptive insights into the sample.

The results obtained were interpreted in line with the research objectives and are presented in tables and graphs.

Tab. 1: Variables, dimensions, and codes. Authors' own elaboration

Variable	Dimensions	Code
Safeguarding	Contribution of UNESCO recognition	D1
	Impact of UNESCO recognition: Visibility and promotion	D2a
	Impact of UNESCO recognition: Adoption of protection and safeguarding measures	D2b
	Importance of implementing specific policies in educational institutions	D3
Creative Ecosystem	Importance of new and improved physical spaces	D4
	Contribution of different physical spaces: Cemeteries	D5a
	Contribution of different physical spaces: Natural landscapes and rivers	D5b
	Contribution of different physical spaces: Museums	D5c
	Contribution of different physical spaces: Monuments and statues	D5d
	Contribution of different physical spaces: Squares and parks	D5e
	Contribution of cultural and academic events: Festivals	D6a
	Contribution of cultural and academic events: Symposia, forums, workshops, meetings	D6B
	Contribution of cultural and academic events: Research projects	D6c
	Contribution of cultural and academic events: Folklore exhibitions	D6d
Role of Actors	Contribution of actors: Government	D7a
	Contribution of actors: Foundations and cultural institutions	D7b
	Contribution of actors: Media	D7c
	Contribution of actors: Consumers of traditional Vallenato music	D7d
	Contribution of actors: Creators of traditional Vallenato music	D7e
	Importance of actors' commitment: Private companies	D8a
	Importance of actors' commitment: Higher education institutions	D8b
	Importance of actors' commitment: Music training schools	D8c
	Importance of actors' commitment: Folklorists	D8d
	Importance of challenges: Public policies and their influence on actors	D9a
	Importance of challenges: Cooperation among actors	D9b
	Importance of challenges: Bureaucratic aspects and their influence on actors	D9c
	Importance of challenges: Commitment and involvement of actors	D9d
	Importance of challenges: Media and their influence on actors	D9e
	Importance of challenges: Appropriation by new generations of actors	D9f
	Importance of challenges: Training of new actors	D9g
	Importance of challenges: Influence of other music genres on actors	D9h
	Importance of challenges: Social problems and their impact on actors	D9i

3. Results

Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha coefficient yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.904 for the questionnaire, consisting of 32 items on the scale (see Table 2). This value is quite high and suggests good internal consistency among the questionnaire items. This indicates that the questions comprising the scale are highly correlated and reliably measure the same dimension.

A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.904 indicates that the scale used in the surveys is consistent and reliable for measuring the phenomenon or construct under study (Cronbach, 1951). However, it is important to clarify that a high alpha value should not be considered the sole criterion for evaluating an instrument's quality (Taber, 2018). Although this result reinforces reliability, the instrument was based on a comprehensive literature review (Maussa & Montes, 2023) and field expert validation, resulting in dimensions that measured the variables of Safeguarding, Creative Ecosystem, and Role of Actors in the questionnaire.

Tab. 2: Cronbach's Alpha. Authors' own elaboration

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0,904	32

Frequency analysis of the sample (Fauzi & Pradipta, 2018) using this approach (see Table 3) revealed a varied distribution among participants with different age ranges. The majority fell into the age range of 36–45 years, representing 28.2% of the sample. This indicates a significant representation of individuals in the middle stages of their lives. Additionally, participants aged 46–55 years (21.0%) and 56–65 years (19.3%) were identified, indicating the considerable presence of older individuals in the study. In contrast, younger participants, aged 26–35 years and 18–25 years, represented 16.0% and 9.9%, respectively. This shows some participation of younger individuals, although to a lesser extent. A small percentage of participants were over 66 years of age (5.5%), suggesting the inclusion of older individuals in the study.

Diverse profiles were identified regarding the type of actor assumed by the participants. The most common was that of consumers (23.2%). This indicates that most participants were identified as consumers of traditional Vallenato and were interested in safeguarding. Furthermore, other representative roles were observed, such as musicians (12.7%) and cultural managers (12.2%), reflecting people's involvement in the creation and promotion of Vallenato music. The roles of singers (11.6%), accordionists (11.0%), folklorists (9.4%), composers (6.6%), researchers (5.0%), singer-songwriters (3.9%), journalists (2.2%), producers (1.1%), and versemakers (1.1%) were also identified, demonstrating the diversity of actors involved in the preservation and dissemination of traditional Vallenato.

Tab. 3: Characterization of the sample. Authors' own elaboration

Characteristic	Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Age Range	36 to 45 years	51	28,2
	46 to 55 years	38	21
	56 to 65 years	35	19,3
	26 to 35 years	29	16
	18 to 25 years	18	9,9
	Over 66 years	10	5,5
Actor Type	Consumer	42	23,2
	Musician	23	12,7
	Cultural Manager	22	12,2
	Singer	21	11,6
	Accordionist	20	11
	Folklorist	17	9,4
	Composer	12	6,6
	Researcher	9	5
	Singer-songwriter	7	3,9
	Journalist	4	2,2
	Producer	2	1,1
	Verse-maker	2	1,1
	Total	181	100

When interpreting the descriptive statistical results, including range, mean, and standard deviation, to summarize the data and uncover patterns and trends in the responses (Wakeyo et al., 2019) (see Table 4), it was observed that the

participants in the study had a positive perception of the safeguarding of traditional Vallenato, the creative ecosystem, and the roles of actors in its preservation.

Regarding the safeguarding variable, a response range of 3.25 was observed, indicating that participants presented different levels of perception in this aspect. The mean value obtained was 4.4682, suggesting a generally high level of safeguarding traditional Vallenato. Additionally, a standard deviation of 0.63903 indicated some variability in the participants' responses.

Concerning the creative ecosystem, a response range of 2.30 was obtained, indicating that participants had a relatively homogeneous perception in this aspect. The mean of 4.1884 reflects a high level of perception of the creative ecosystem in the context of traditional Vallenato. The low standard deviation of 0.60224 suggests that the responses were concentrated near this mean.

Regarding the role of actors, a response range of 2.83 was identified, indicating that participants presented different perceptions of the roles played in the safeguarding of traditional Vallenato. The mean obtained was 3.9767, indicating that, on average, participants had a favorable perception of different actor roles. A standard deviation of 0.61897 indicated some variability in the responses.

Tab. 4: Descriptive Statistics. Authors' own elaboration

Variable	N	Range	Mean
Safeguarding	181	3,25	4.468
Creative Ecosystem	181	2,3	4.188
Role of Actors	181	2,83	3.977
Valid N (from list)	181		

The descriptive statistics in the correlation analysis employed to examine the relationship between variables (Wu et al., 2021) (see Table 5) revealed the relationships between the variables of safeguarding, creative ecosystems, and the role of actors. A significant positive correlation was found between the Creative Ecosystem and Safeguarding ($r = 0.433$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that as the level of the Creative Ecosystem increased, so did the safeguarding of cultural heritage. This supports the idea that a favorable creative

environment positively influences the preservation of traditional Vallenato.

Furthermore, significant positive correlations were found between the Role of Actors and both the Creative Ecosystem ($r = 0.367$, $p < 0.01$) and safeguarding ($r = 0.552$, $p < 0.01$). These findings indicate that greater involvement and participation of actors in the Creative Ecosystem is related to a higher level of safeguarding cultural heritage. This suggests that the active engagement of actors is crucial for keeping traditional Vallenato alive.

Tab. 5: Correlation Analysis. Authors' own elaboration

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlations		
			S_ICH	EC_ICH	RA_ICH
Safeguarding (S_ICH)	44.682	0,63903	1		
Creative Ecosystem (EC_ICH)	41.884	0,60224	,433**	1	
Role of Actors (RA_ICH)	39.767	0,61897	,367**	,552**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

According to the results obtained in the regression analysis to predict interaction effects between variables, facilitating the analysis of how the relationship between two variables changes based on the value of a third variable (Hartmann & Moers, 1999) (see Table 6), the relationship between the predictor variables Safeguarding and Role of Actors and the dependent variable Creative Ecosystem in the context of traditional Vallenato as intangible cultural heritage was examined.

In summary, it was found that the model explained approximately 36.6% of the variability in the dependent variable Creative Ecosystem. This indicates that the predictor variables Safeguarding and Role of Actors together contribute to explaining a significant part of the observed variability in creative ecosystems.

The coefficient of determination (R-squared), which measures the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be predicted by the independent variables (Lesik et al., 2021), reveals that 36.6% of the variability in the dependent variable is explained by the predictor variables.

Additionally, the adjusted R-squared value, which considers the number of predictor variables, shows that 35.9% of the variability in the dependent variable is explained, taking this adjustment into account.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a statistical technique employed to contrast the means of multiple groups, allowing for comparison between them (Chen, 2011), it indicates that the model is significant (p < 0.001), suggesting that the predictor variables have a significant contribution to the variability of the dependent variable Creative Ecosystem. This supports the relevance of considering Safeguarding and Role of Actors in the analysis of the creative ecosystem necessary for safeguarding traditional Vallenato.

Examining the coefficients, it is observed that the constant has a value of 1.309, indicating that when the predictor variables are zero, the value of the dependent variable Creative Ecosystem is expected to be 1.309.

The standardized coefficient of the safeguarding variable (S_ICH) shows that, for every one-unit increase in this variable, there is an expected increase of 0.266 units in the Creative Ecosystem. This coefficient is significant (p < 0.001), suggesting that safeguarding has a positive influence on the Creative Ecosystem necessary for safeguarding traditional Vallenato.

Similarly, the standardized coefficient of the Role of Actors variable (AR_ICH) indicates that for every one-unit increase in this variable, there is an expected increase of 0.454 units in the Creative Ecosystem. This coefficient is also significant (p < 0.001), implying that the Role of Actors has a significantly positive relationship with the Creative Ecosystem.

Tab. 6: Regression Analysis. Authors' own elaboration

Summary of the Model	Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate		
	1	,605a	0,366	0,359	0,48218		
	a Predictors: (Constant), RA_ICH, S_ICH						

ANOVA	Model	Sum of Squares		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	1	Regression	23,901	2	11,951	51,401	,000b
		Residual	41,384	178	0,232		
		Total	65,286	180			
	a Dependent variable: EC_ICH						
	b Predictors: (Constant), RA_ICH, S_ICH						

Coefficients	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	1	(Constant) 1,309	0,294		4,447	0
		S_ICH 0,251	0,06	0,266	4,149	0
		RA_ICH 0,442	0,062	0,454	7,085	0
	a Dependent variable: EC_ICH					

4. Discussion

In the analysis of the reliability of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, a high value of $\alpha = 0.904$ was obtained, indicating the consistent and reliable measurement of the studied dimension by the questionnaire's questions. This robust reliability is essential for ensuring the validity and accuracy of the research findings. However, it is worth considering complementary approaches to reliability analysis, such as the omega coefficient, which could offer additional insights into the instrument's reliability (Ventura, 2017).

The frequency analysis of the sample revealed a diverse age range among the participants, with a significant representation of individuals in the middle stage of their lives. Older and younger participants were also present, albeit to a lesser extent. The careful selection of a representative sample is a critical aspect of population studies (Otzen & Manterola, 2017).

Upon examining the descriptive statistical results, it becomes evident that participants held a positive perception of various aspects, including the safeguarding of traditional Vallenato, the creative ecosystem, and the roles of actors in its preservation.

Likewise, the analysis of correlations between variables uncovered significant positive associations. Specifically, positive correlations were identified between the creative ecosystem and safeguarding, as well as between the role of actors and both the creative ecosystem and safeguarding. These findings indicate that a favorable creative environment and active engagement of actors positively influence the preservation of traditional Vallenato. However, it is essential to acknowledge that correlation does not imply causality, and further research is warranted to explore causative relationships (Roy et al., 2019).

The conducted regression analysis yielded valuable insights, highlighting the joint contribution of the predictor variables, safeguarding, and the role of actors, in explaining a significant portion of the observed variability in the creative ecosystem. These results underscore the importance of considering both safeguarding efforts and the active involvement of various stakeholders when analyzing the creative ecosystem necessary for preserving traditional Vallenato. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the inherent limitations associated with regression models in providing causal explanations (Aggarwal & Ranganathan, 2017).

5. Conclusions

The present research analyzed the factors determining the creative ecosystem necessary for safeguarding traditional Vallenato as an intangible cultural heritage. The results provide a more precise understanding of the factors contributing to the cultural sustainability of traditional Vallenato, which is essential for its preservation and promotion.

The study found high internal consistency among the elements of the questionnaire used, indicating that the questions forming the scale were highly correlated with each other and reliably measured the same dimension. This finding reinforces the reliability of the instrument used for data collection.

The participants in the study showed a positive perception of the safeguarding of traditional Vallenato, the creative ecosystem, and the roles of actors in its preservation. These findings demonstrate the community's interest in and appreciation for traditional Vallenato as a cultural heritage site.

A significant positive correlation was found between the creative ecosystem and the safeguarding of traditional Vallenato, suggesting that a favorable creative environment positively influences the preservation of this cultural heritage.

Likewise, significant positive correlations were identified between the role of actors and both the creative ecosystem and safeguarding of traditional Vallenato. This highlights the importance of active engagement by the actors involved in the preservation and promotion of traditional Vallenato.

The regression analysis revealed that the safeguarding variable and the role of actors jointly contributed to explaining a significant part of the observed variability in the creative ecosystem. These results underscore the relevance of safeguarding and actor involvement in the analysis of the creative ecosystem necessary for the preservation of traditional Vallenato.

Overall, the findings of this study provide a solid foundation for designing effective strategies

and recommendations for safeguarding traditional Vallenato. It emphasizes the importance of promoting a favorable creative environment, fostering active engagement by actors, and strengthening existing preservation initiatives. These actions are fundamental to ensuring the sustainability and cultural legacy of traditional Vallenato as intangible heritage.

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