

Original article

## Heritage education, theoretical symphony/dysphonia



La educación patrimonial, sinfonía/disfonía teórica

Educação patrimonial, sinfonia/disfonia teórica

Gricell Aurora Santana Sarduy<sup>1</sup>  0009-0002-4222-1373  [gricellaurorass@gmail.com](mailto:gricellaurorass@gmail.com)

Mercedes González Fernández-Larrea<sup>1</sup>  0000-0003-1914-6002  [mercedes.gonzalez@rect.uh.cu](mailto:mercedes.gonzalez@rect.uh.cu)

<sup>1</sup> University of Havana. Havana, Cuba.

**Received:** 29/01/2024

**Accepted:** 4/05/2025

### ABSTRACT

Theoretical references are essential for undertaking academic studies, understanding research topics and results. They allow for focusing research objectives and dialogue with other authors; they open horizons for the design of new educational concepts; and heritage education is consolidated as a recent discipline within educational and heritage management, a concept defined as patrimonialization. The objective of this study suggests proposing an approximation to theoretical approaches to heritage education, through which its appropriation in the educational sphere in universities is achieved, and fostering a triangulation of criteria that, in some cases, reduce it to the extracurricular sphere, omitting the opportunities it offers as a sustainable educational concept that develops critical thinking. The study was conducted from a theoretical research perspective with a dialectical-materialist approach, utilizing theoretical-level methods, logical procedures of analysis-synthesis, induction-deduction, historical-logical, and documentary analysis. This work proposes an approach to authors who take advantage of the cognitive range offered by cultural and natural heritage to develop habits that preserve cultural identity and respect diversity.

**Keywords:** heritage education; cultural identity; patrimonialization.

## RESUMEN

Los referentes teóricos son imprescindibles para acometer estudios académicos, conocer temas y resultados investigativos. Permiten centrar los objetivos de la investigación, dialogar con otros autores; abre horizontes para el diseño de nuevas concepciones educativas, se afianza la educación patrimonial como una disciplina reciente dentro de la gestión educativa y patrimonial, como concepción que se define como patrimonialización. El objetivo del estudio sugiere proponer una aproximación a enfoques teóricos de la educación patrimonial, a través del cual se logra la apropiación al ámbito formativo en las universidades, y propiciar una triangulación de los criterios que en unos casos lo reducen al espacio extracurricular, omitiendo las oportunidades que ofrece como concepción educativa sostenible y desarrolladora del pensamiento crítico. El estudio fue realizado desde una perspectiva investigativa teórica con enfoque dialéctico-materialista, la utilización de los métodos del nivel teórico, los procedimientos lógicos de análisis-síntesis, inducción deducción, histórico lógico y el análisis documental. Este trabajo es una propuesta de acercamiento a autores que aprovechan el abanico cognitivo que ofrece el patrimonio cultural y natural, para crear hábitos de preservación de la identidad cultural y el respeto por la diversidad.

**Palabras clave:** educación patrimonial; identidad cultural; patrimonialización.

## RESUMO

As referências teóricas são essenciais para realizar estudos acadêmicos, conhecer temas e resultados de pesquisas. Elas permitem focar os objetivos da pesquisa, dialogar com outros autores; abrem horizontes para a concepção de novos conceitos educacionais, consolidam a educação patrimonial como uma disciplina recente dentro da gestão educacional e patrimonial, como um conceito definido como patrimonialização. O objetivo do estudo sugere propor uma aproximação às abordagens teóricas da educação patrimonial, através da qual se consegue a apropriação do âmbito formativo nas universidades, e promover uma triangulação dos critérios que, em alguns casos, a reduzem ao espaço extracurricular, omitindo as oportunidades que oferece como concepção educacional sustentável e desenvolvidora do pensamento crítico. O estudo foi realizado a partir de uma

perspectiva investigativa teórica com enfoque dialético-materialista, utilizando métodos do nível teórico, procedimentos lógicos de análise-síntese, indução-dedução, histórico-lógico e análise documental. Este trabalho é uma proposta de aproximação a autores que aproveitam o leque cognitivo que oferece o patrimônio cultural e natural para criar hábitos de preservação da identidade cultural e respeito pela diversidade.

**Palavras-chave:** educação patrimonial; identidade cultural; patrimonialização.

## INTRODUCTION

New schools of thought view science as a dynamic, systemic process with a distinctly historical character; it is a social construction whose results are permeated by accumulated knowledge and practices, through which they transform the world. In the case of the Social Sciences, various results are revealed by anthropological, sociological, communication, and cultural studies, all of which contribute to new, sustainable social constructions to immobilize the social crises of the postmodern era.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the international scientific community has spoken out against the imposition of colonizing and globalizing policies that distort cultural identity, depriving communities of the ability to transmit their cultural practices. In this context, educational experiences play a fundamental role, and results are evident from sociocultural and pedagogical studies. International organizations have also worked intensively to design and promote regulations for heritage protection as an axiom that preserves cultural identity and diversity. UNESCO conventions are projected toward sustainable educational practices; many signatory countries have created legislative bodies that include heritage education to shape heritage protection.

It is urgent to reconfigure educational concepts, displacing colonizing didactics and exalting respect for the self and the other, as a recognition of diversity. There are educational concepts that develop these good practices. Heritage education is distinguished by appropriating the knowledge accumulated by humanity and preserving it for new generations. It appeals to the development of emotions and sensitivity, generating respect for humanity's cultural heritage, creating understanding, commitment, and respect for cultural identity and diversity, while upholding a decolonizing discourse.

From a cognitive perspective, cultural and natural heritage shapes the current state of science education, demonstrating results. Heritage education has positioned itself as a key area for the institutional, social, and sustainable management of cultural and natural heritage; therefore, in recent years it has also proliferated as a disciplinary field, with a wealth of theories and experiences on the subject. At the dawn of the 21st century, research results are emerging, including those by Cuenca (2018, 2020); Fontal *et al.* (2021); and Calaf (2009), among others, which demonstrate the role of heritage education as a discipline, an epistemological foundation for the interpretation of heritage. These authors set the standard for studies of this educational concept, serving as benchmarks.

Currently, attention is focused on the educational dimension of heritage on the island. Undergraduate specialists are trained at the University of the Arts in Conservation Arts; at the University of Havana and the University of Camagüey in Heritage Management and Preservation. In all cases, training programs are provided in Master's and Doctoral programs. Other Cuban higher education institutions also focus on the topic with research projects that contribute to the development of heritage education at all educational levels. An analysis of the presence of heritage education in research is carried out by Rodríguez *et al.* (2022):

Through analysis in this category, it is determined that one work (4%) is addressed to Early Childhood Education. Primary Education is represented by three articles (12%). Three articles (12%) address Basic Secondary Education, and only one (4%) is directed toward Pre-university Education. The largest number of studies are focused on the university context, totaling eight (32%). Of the works carried out at this last educational level, four address the undergraduate curricular context (50%), three address postgraduate studies (37.5%), and one is aimed at Heritage Education from a university extension perspective (12.5%) (p. 60).

The trajectory and development of heritage education and its management are reflected in international organizations, setting the guidelines for its work. UNESCO's role in the World Heritage Convention is particularly noteworthy, emphasizing the role of education in fostering respect and appreciation for cultural and natural heritage among the population. Subsequent international conventions have deepened this link between education and heritage, either by broadening the understanding of what is meant by heritage education or by reinforcing its importance.

The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, held in 2005, reaffirmed the fundamental role that education plays in raising public awareness.

For its part, the Code of Ethics of the International Committee of Museums (ICOM), affiliated with UNESCO, establishes as a principle the direct and stable links that the museum must maintain with the school and vice versa, as well as with other related institutions that carry out educational work independently of their mission and vision (ICOM, 2017).

This regulatory document establishes the importance of research results as contributions to education and the construction of collections, resulting from academic activity in universities, based on the ethical precepts it establishes. Collections in university museums have unparalleled educational value as essential testimonies of the evolution and historical development of the sciences; by their very nature, they are knowledge contributors to various disciplines of scientific knowledge.

The aforementioned conventions serve as a basis in the national context for adopting regulations for the protection of heritage, with a strong focus on the link with educational systems. Since 1978, with the enactment of Law No. 1, created to protect Cultural Heritage, and Law 2 on Monuments and Historic Sites, work has been encouraged with the various subsystems of the Cuban General Education System.

Today, Cuba has a privileged regulatory framework for heritage education: Law 155, the General Law for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage (2022), and its Decree 92 (2023), which came into force in March 2024. This legislative body recognizes the importance of heritage education by regulating the responsibilities of different educational systems. This decree provides in its Article 116 twelve actions that must be undertaken to promote the knowledge and appreciation of cultural and natural heritage at the different levels of education, among which the one referred to in its section a) stands out, aimed at establishing the subject of Cultural Heritage in the curricular programs of Higher Education.

The same article of this law sets forth regulations for other areas of higher education training, including work placements and university outreach activities. This, in the case of higher education, is a unique feature introduced as a novelty in this legislative body, since previous regulations recognized work with the preceding teachings, particularly in museums, and conceptualized it as sociocultural activities.

Law 155 extends to all forms of heritage; it is not limited to museums. Therefore, Cuban universities face the challenge of adapting their curricula by creating courses in programs that do not have them in their curriculum and exploring all the potential that is opening up in the remaining areas of university training, research, and outreach.

However, there is still a lack of research on the topic and educational initiatives related to heritage that impact awareness and sensitivity for its conservation and preservation. In this sense, "there are several obstacles facing teachers that reflect their limited understanding of heritage sustainability at the university. Among these, the implementation of more traditional methodologies that conceptually saturate the undergraduate curriculum stands out" (Molinas Torres and Ortiz Urbano, 2021, p. 208).

In the prologue of the text "Heritage Didactics: Epistemology, methodology and case studies", a proposal for defining heritage is referred to, from a conceptual perspective, which, due to its relevance, is proactive for heritage education:

*Heritage* is intra and interdisciplinary, studying it, teaching it and interpreting it always implies a challenge, it is exposed from plurality, it is object and subject, and for this reason it studies identity and cultural diversity at the same time, placing them in the right balance, to preserve it for the human groups that we call community (Calaf, 2009, p. 17).

Based on this concept, heritage, due to its scope, expressions, and nature, encompasses the diverse cognitive aspects of the sciences. It enthrones a new, innovative, and transformative didactic approach that uses heritage to inspire feelings, sensations, and conciliatory patterns of behavior, raising awareness necessary to preserve the traditions and customs of ancient peoples and communities. Therefore, the authors define heritage education as that didactic resource, methodology, and conception that uses heritage in all its expressions and scopes to make its message more accessible, interactive, and inclusive. It is intra- and interdisciplinary, presented from a perspective of plurality and sustainability, and has a symbolic and holistic character that defines it.

Consequently, it is imperative that heritage education be understood as:

pedagogical, permanent, systematic, interdisciplinary and contextualized process, intended in turn to the knowledge, valuation, preservation and diffusion of cultural heritage in any of its aspects, as well as directed to the formation and development of

values, is inserted in the educational strategies of the university and allows the university student to identify, value, preserve and disseminate the cultural heritage of the nation in which they live, as well as the elements that make up the cultural heritage of the university in which they are trained (Rodríguez *et al.*, 2022, p. 57).

Heritage education covers all areas of knowledge and is, therefore, an indispensable component of Cuban universities. Intellectual production on the subject is constantly being constructed and deconstructed, and it connects with other educational trends, such as popular education and education through the arts, which center their foundations on safeguarding socially excluded and discriminated communities, promoting inclusion and respect for the knowledge, customs, and traditions of these social groups as part of the treasured knowledge of humanity.

In October 2005, the Council of Europe organized the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society in Faro, Portugal. This Convention proposes a new understanding of cultural heritage in which people and human values play a central role. It underscores the value and potential of heritage as a resource for sustainable development and for improving people's quality of life. It also defends the right of all people to connect with cultural heritage, emphasizing the importance of heritage education to promote dialogue between cultures and encourage access to and democratic participation in heritage.

The agreement also expresses the need to develop the use of new technologies in the dissemination of its content, for interactive and inclusive interpretation. Among other issues, educational programs are highlighted, taking into account both formal and informal curricula, with the aim of promoting knowledge and understanding of cultural heritage. When the plural nature of heritage and the possibilities offered by heritage education have been emphasized, it is because, given the diverse nature of heritage, its expressions, and scope, it allows for an impact on training as an instructional process; this advantage, this epistemological possibility, is only offered through heritage education.

Jiménez and Peñate (2022) reiterate in their most recent works the need to transform the vision we have of the use of technology and to put digitalization and augmented reality into dialogue with heritage to transform both teaching and interaction with heritage.

Consequently, the objective of this study is to propose an approach to the theoretical approaches to heritage education, through which it can be appropriated for the educational sphere in universities, and to foster a triangulation of the criteria that, in some cases, reduce it to the extracurricular sphere,

omitting the opportunities it offers as a sustainable educational concept that develops critical thinking.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study offers an initial approach to heritage education, combining theoretical and empirical methods and techniques, but based on a general methodological conception grounded in Materialist Dialectics as a general method of scientific knowledge and as a rationale for applying specific research methods at the theoretical and empirical levels. Part of the results of the doctoral studies of the article's main author are presented, with a qualitatively theoretical focus.

The use of the historical-logical method proved beneficial for the analysis, definition and characterization of heritage education and its antecedents in university training and for determining the areas of action of the research object.

The analytical-synthetic method allowed us to characterize the heritage education process, the concepts that precede and are binding in different contexts, and to analyze practical experiences as a social laboratory, which contribute to the work of training university professionals today.

The inductive-deductive approach was used in the process of characterizing heritage education, based on observation and the collection of empirical data that, based on the analysis of the theory, allowed specific conclusions to be reached.

The systemic approach allowed for the ordering of the relationships established between heritage and the university as a social institution and facilitated the identification of trends.

The use of the empirical method of document analysis proved to be valid for verifying the state of the art through source analysis, for assessing teaching trends, case studies, and the experiences of various authors, as well as for consulting documents from the broad regulatory framework related to the subject.

Among the main documents consulted are those referring to:

- Law No. 155/2022. General Law for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage. (GOC-2023-758-O84), National Assembly of People's Power.

- Decree 92/2023 Council of Ministers. Regulations of Law 155, General Law on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage. (GOC-2023-759-084).
- UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Movable Property of 1972.
- Convention on Cultural Diversity of 2005.
- ICOM Code of Ethics 2017.

The recently approved laws for the protection of cultural and natural heritage were also analyzed. In Cuba's case, these laws demonstrate the constant concern and call to pay attention to heritage education from educational institutions, museums, science centers, among others, due to the great responsibility they have as a vital regulatory element, ensuring that the message of protecting the historical memory of peoples reaches everyone, raising awareness and sensitizing them regarding the social responsibility we have toward future generations.

## RESULTS

The study of different authors, including the search for other educational concepts that articulate with heritage education, allowed us to identify what are considered to be foundations, around the 1930s, when European migrants settled in regions of Latin America.

In this sense, concepts such as that of educators through art, developed primarily in Argentina, Mexico, and Brazil by educators, artists, and intellectuals, including Rui Barbosa, Pedro Figari, Ana Mae Barbosa, Jesualdo, Luis F. Iglesias Martín, Malharro, and the Cossettini sisters, are intertwined. Meanwhile, in Cuba, Arturo Montori and Eduardo Abela, during a period of traditionalism and pedagogical rigidity, are educating from their classrooms in the development of sensations and emotions. The classroom outside, through listening to the community and recognizing signs and symbols, is an education of opportunity.

Within this group, the pedagogue Paulo Freire, who developed popular education, is recognized as an educator through art. The foundations of this second conception are directly intertwined, since both education through art and popular education uphold the need for learning to be systemic, holistic, plural, and accessible. An analysis of these theories and conceptions leads one to consider a trilogy, which has nourished one another until reaching the 21st century, with the development of a new conception: heritage education.

The authors present various classifications for heritage education, which fall somewhere between formal and informal education. In some cases, they are considered extracurricular activities, a questionable perception if there is a need to raise awareness internationally about the preservation and protection of the accumulated knowledge of science, the most important buildings, natural and cultural landscapes, traditions, and identity. It is no longer possible to maintain that it is a non-formal or informal educational activity.

Heritage education, as a conceptual hinge that encompasses a variety of perspectives, is realized in the educational process supported by a curriculum. In the case of universities, it provides an opportunity to analyze the phenomenon under study, using original objects or documents, without being influenced by the criteria of others. Currently, formal education cannot be identified by the space where knowledge is received, as there are learning spaces that extend beyond the classroom, where learning often fails to occur for various reasons.

Many universities have created collections as a result of research, and therefore university museums are unparalleled witnesses for timely comparison and examination of the object of study. Therefore, it is increasingly necessary to emphasize dialogue with museums and the training of teachers in heritage interpretation, communication, and heritage mediation. Heritage education is embodied in all educational areas of the various educational programs, and in the case of universities, it is present in academic, research, and university outreach settings, which comprise the professional training cycle. Only in this way can comprehensive training be achieved that contributes to the culture of the profession and its modes of practice.

These considerations reaffirm the university as an institution whose mission is to preserve, promote, and conserve cultural and natural heritage. This study takes into account the university's significant responsibility, with an emphasis on the culture of the profession, for the development of critical thinking; because heritage education is an educational strategy for the development of the critical thinking that today's society requires. This is one of the distinctive elements of heritage education in the educational configuration of human beings. It works from all dimensions: formative, investigative, and sensitive, without distinction; it is integrative, holistic, plural, and symbolic.

It is therefore the awareness-raising process that is essential for achieving the objectives of heritage education and requires planning, implementation, and measurement or evaluation of results.

The world today faces globalizing processes that seek to blur cultural identities, imposing models that have nothing to do with reality, from linguistic to culinary to artistic perspectives. Heritage education has the tools to, while respecting diversity, exalt the cultural values that make each human being unique; it is about building legitimizing identities, decolonizing discourses, without mimetic reproductions or identity props, when the goal is to dismantle colonizing discourses.

We cannot assume theatrical resources that, far from contributing, turn individuals into self-colonizers of culture and identity. It is about breaking down the myths of power and embracing the true legitimizing myths, myths of freedom that highlight each individual's face as an element of identity; no culture is superior to another; respect for diversity is necessary. Therefore, it is reiterated that heritage education has a pluralistic character because it analyzes and reaffirms respect for identity and diversity.

This is also the dynamism of heritage education, as a social construct that has developed throughout history; it is transformative and sustainable, allowing for diverse practices in different spaces.

Universities and educational centers should be seen as communities, as cultural meeting places, insofar as they have a cultural, regional, and national identity. They also have diversity, and this is also present in the educational center, where an identity permeated by a diversity of neighborhoods and even homes, in the most unique sense, converges. In this reality, it is a space of tolerance, complicity, recognition, and respect that converges as a buffer zone.

As a relatively new academic field, the literature contains a variety of proposals aimed at different educational levels, in diverse settings, from a wide variety of institutions, both in Cuba and internationally. Studies conducted primarily in Spain, Mexico, and other Latin American countries are particularly noteworthy.

However, the extensive literature survey fails to provide an integrative view of the academic, research, and extension components that influence the practice modes and culture of the profession as a whole. The topic of heritage education deserves multiple perspectives, based on the diversity it offers in terms of content, expressions, and scope; therefore, it is fair not to categorize it.

Current trends in heritage studies and education reflect an interdisciplinary approach and a growing concern for accessibility and community participation. In this regard, the role of heritage in the construction of collective identities and the integration of diverse communities is emphasized,

considering heritage education as a tool for inclusion. The use of digital technologies is encouraged as a means of teaching and interacting with heritage; traditional heritage narratives are challenged in the quest to incorporate more inclusive and representative perspectives from critical and decolonial approaches. The paper examines how heritage education can contribute to environmental preservation and the sustainable management of cultural resources, based on the correlation between heritage and sustainability.

## DISCUSSION

As a concept, the educational process plays a fundamental role in heritage education. Given that the cultural dimension is an important aspect of people's lives, they integrate it positively, fostering a sensitivity capable of creating new habits, knowledge, and uses of heritage. This attitude should result from the scientific, critical, and historical transmission provided by heritage education. "It can contribute to fostering respect and social appreciation, which must underlie any action related to cultural heritage" (Castro & López, 2017, p. 53).

The authors share the opinion of Fontal *et al.* (2021) in referring to the importance of heritage education in the development of sensations and emotions; the relevance of developing the sensitization process. That is, everything that makes sense in people, in human beings, is not an inherent or natural condition, but is acquired through human activity; it is not achieved spontaneously; it is learned. Naturally, we are sensitive to certain areas of knowledge and not to others, so developing emotions and sensations will raise awareness for preservation, conservation, and adequate heritage recognition.

Fontal *et al.* (2021) express: "This sequence of awareness and heritage assessment allows us to take a further step in its care and conservation. That is, everything that makes sense to people and to which they give value is understood as worthy of care by citizens" (p. 202).

Other authors reaffirm the value of heritage education in developing feelings and sensations, and identity with the territory. Reference is made to the best practices developed in several European and American countries in the school-museum relationship, as demonstrated in case studies from Chile, Argentina, and Spain.

In Valparaíso, Chile, a History, Geography, and Social Sciences teaching unit was used to address the connections between schools and the Natural History Museum. Two experimental units are being

conducted in Spain, in Isla Cristina (Huelva) and San Fernando (Cádiz). These teaching units are not typically connected to heritage, such as "Economic Sectors", at the El Pintado Tide Mill Ecomuseum (Ayamonte), and "Matter", at the San Fernando Tide Mill, within the Physics and Chemistry curriculum.

The research results obtained are satisfactory, objectifying heritage as a structuring axis for addressing the educational treatment of identities and the understanding of the territory, for the development of critical individuals capable of changing the environment.

Other theoretical approaches to heritage education systematize a state-of-the-art approach to the concept, addressing the diverse educational purposes that promote its implementation, the didactic models, the specificities, the spaces in which it is developed, and the types of practices identified in the literature. Furthermore, an assessment of the field of heritage education is undertaken, which allows us to understand how it has been consolidated, sparking great interest in recent decades. This has allowed us to visualize the lines of research in heritage education, focusing primarily on the cases of Cuba and Latin America.

A conception on the subject is addressed from Spain, by Cuenca (2020), by relating heritage education to those teaching-learning processes where cultural heritage can be an objective, content or resource for educational processes.

This definition of heritage education emphasizes symbolic value, the object, attributing connotation to it in the learning process regarding the various human dimensions (scientific, historical, environmental, artistic, ritual, among others). As proposed, heritage is valued and revalued as an educational resource, becoming a source of knowledge and learning that fosters understanding of its context. Therefore, a review of the literature reveals a variety of texts that offer theoretical and practical solutions for better conducting heritage education. Within the intellectual debate, different trends emerge in the analysis of the phenomenon.

One such trend is spearheaded by Allard and his team, based in the Department of Education at the University of Quebec, Montreal (UQA). These researchers value heritage education as an inspiration for modifying aspects of the school model, understanding that practices carried out in museums or heritage sites can change school methodology. This is seen as an opportunity to provide the foundation for museography, supporting the thesis from the dynamics of knowledge in the social sciences of interactive museography as an element of knowledge management.

Other contributions are identified, including those made by professors from the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Barcelona, as well as by Nuria Serra, who was responsible for *Projets* (a research group at *Parc Científic* de la Universidad de Barcelona). Research groups at the universities of Huelva, Seville, Valladolid, and Girona support a different thesis, considering heritage didactics as a construction that considers the public who view heritage as academic knowledge and as an object for the dissemination of culture in non-formal and informal contexts.

The latest proposal is presented by researchers from the University of Oviedo, who assess the potential complementarity between educational programs in museums and heritage teaching in schools. They also explore how, through dialogue between schools and heritage sites, both can exchange insights that serve to inspire and inform heritage teaching.

Teixeira (2006), following the ideas of previous theorists, proposes that heritage education constitutes a continuous and structured educational process, based on cultural heritage as an essential source of knowledge and enrichment, both personal and collective. He points out that it is a means of cultural literacy, which allows individuals to interpret their environment, understand the sociocultural context in which they develop, and recognize the historical and cultural evolution of their time and space, thus facilitating informed guidance in their actions.

From the perspective of Cantón and González (2009), Heritage Education is conceived as a conscious, structured, and systematic educational process aimed at educating individuals through the recognition and appropriation of their cultural, historical, political, and ethical-spiritual identity. In other words, it implies the appreciation of their uniqueness and the full, subjective, and emancipatory assimilation of their culture. This, in turn, is understood as a dynamic system that integrates values, beliefs, traditions, customs, and utopian aspirations, forming a unique and unrepeatable set of historically defined material and spiritual assets.

In a different vein, Zabala and Galtes (2006) consider it a subject in their attempt to teach heritage education. The authors believe that heritage education is an educational trend, an umbrella paradigm, that allows for broadening the content by positioning it in diverse contexts, thereby expanding the subject's interpretive capacity in relation to the object.

Other authors consider that heritage education is part of the hidden or informal curriculum, "A non-formal and systematic pedagogical action aimed at redefining the student's own space, based on his

or her heritage, with the aim of preserving it and stimulating intercultural understanding, tolerance and respect" (Godoy *et al.*, 2013, p. 26).

Such consideration is limited, as it links heritage education only to extracurricular or individual and spontaneous activities, which is defined as informal education. Heritage education is also the accumulated wealth of each particular science; it is the result of scientific knowledge; it is formal education.

Cuenca *et al.* (2018) recognize the plural and symbolic nature of heritage, which serves as the foundation for heritage education as an important vehicle for developing essential aspects of inclusion such as identity, citizenship and cultural relations.

The work of educators, in the particular context of Cuba, provides valuable information for understanding the institutions involved in the implementation of heritage education, its dimensions, what the pedagogical community understands by heritage education, and the practices through which it is being implemented.

There are studies and proposals aimed primarily at teaching careers, and how teachers can raise awareness of respect for heritage.

Some authors define heritage education in Cuba as part of environmental education. They do not conceive it as specific content for any degree program's curriculum; therefore, this content assumes the characteristics of cross-cutting themes, also known interchangeably as cross-cutting themes, core content, and general or global educational objectives; considered vital to comprehensive education.

Considering that transversality extends beyond the subjects to more general objectives and activities and permeates all the approaches, organization, and activities of the educational institution, when it is located in areas considered heritage, heritage education occupies important spaces in the pedagogical process to fulfill its social mission.

The contextualization of environmental education is an element of heritage education, based on natural heritage, which provides the characteristics of the natural environment, landscape, habits, and even habitat, which shape customs, traditions, behaviors, and personal experiences, closely related to the historical memory of the place.

Thus, the importance of context in the school pedagogical process, as stated in the Laws of Didactics, must be taken into account. For this reason, Gómez and Tadeu (2018) assert that Heritage Education in places declared as heritage sites takes on a different perspective, due to its relevance to the preservation of the identity of the place, as well as of tangible heritage.

Another essential aspect of analyzing the contribution of heritage education is the formation and development of values that foster an understanding of humankind's relationship with the natural and cultural legacy of previous generations, which can be appreciated today, and which are present and shape the future in the heritage-building process.

While there are some points of agreement with the positions of these authors, they are not entirely consistent. Heritage education is explicitly included in the curricula of higher education in Cuba in several programs (Philology, History, Art History, Tourism, Architecture), to name just a few, and in the curriculum of elective subjects in many others, including at the fourth level of education. Therefore, it is not considered appropriate to consider it solely as a cross-cutting theme, nor to limit its teaching to cities with World Heritage status or National or Local Monument status, since these positions restrict the study of the nation's cultural heritage to fiefdoms, a sort of geographical fatality. Nor is heritage education considered exclusive to environmental education; this is an aspect of heritage education as a concept, on which there are excellent studies.

Along with international conventions, the scientific output of academics, intellectuals, and educators in both the national and international contexts is a significant source of information for defining and problematizing heritage education. The diversity of approaches demonstrates the need to continue exploring the topic in greater depth, as it is essential to showcase all the possibilities offered by this educational concept and its contributions to the construction of cultural identity, respect for diversity, and prioritizing memory, "the past", to address the challenges of science for "the future".

This study shows that there is an emerging theoretical framework supported by legal, philosophical, educational, pedagogical, cultural, and didactic foundations that provide references to heritage education, as well as the existence of a conceptual systematization of heritage education as an epistemological, ethical, aesthetic, and identity contribution.

Heritage education in educational centers is considered a pedagogical process, which takes heritage as a reference, which exercises its action in a planned, systemic, intra and interdisciplinary way, of a plural and integrative, dialectical nature, with a high symbolic, interpretive and interactive content.

It is valued as a didactic resource that uses heritage for the construction of knowledge about the cultural heritage of humanity, whose design must adhere to the training needs, according to the level of teaching and / or specialties and careers, to contribute to the comprehensive training of citizens, through the critical analysis of facts and phenomena, in order to stimulate respect and appreciation of cultural and natural heritage, which coincides with the assumptions described by Gómez and Basquerote (2018).

In this sense, the authors adopt a position based on the recognition that heritage education in universities must be shaped from the culture of the profession, so that all the accumulated wealth of science, technology, and traditions contributes to changing the ways of acting and the sense of belonging to a profession, based on knowledge of the cultural and natural heritage that has shaped the nation's cultural identity, in interaction with the various spaces that contribute to education and its educational purposes.

The position of Calaf (2009) is taken up again, in relation to the plurality that heritage education confers on the training of university professionals, to adequately respond to the management and preservation of cultural and natural heritage, when he explains that "The different nature of heritage affects the set of knowledge, specific to the task to be interpreted. They are differential elements that serve as this knowledge, historical, in some cases artistic, in others industrial, landscape, etc." (Calaf, 2009, p. 21).

In this sense, it refers to the nature of the expressions and areas of heritage and their potential to contribute to the training of competent professionals, able to respond to the demands of preserving cultural and natural heritage. From this perspective, engineers, architects, biologists, geographers, communicators, educators, historians, and economists, to name just a few examples, are involved.

Several studies highlight professional training from the methodology offered by heritage education, and in a proactive sense, they emphasize the importance of training in teaching careers, considering that there is a cognitive gap from the curricular design, leaving it to the spontaneity of the teacher. "The theoretical-methodological conception presented has had a positive impact on the initial and permanent training of the Bachelor's Degree in Education, (...) by introducing it into the different substantive university processes that have an impact on heritage education" (Veitia *et al.*, 2023, p. 8).

The study of cultural and natural heritage, as a subject in the Tourism program at the University of Havana, Cuba, is a valid example, since for these professionals, heritage is a tourism resource. The subject is thus identified as a discipline in the Curriculum; however, the proposed program does not address the evaluative elements of how to protect and how to exploit this tourism resource. The current proposal is presented more from the perspective of Cuban culture than from the study and contributions of cultural heritage to the Tourism program. Therefore, a program proposal for this program is being developed.

In the heritage education program developed with students in the Social Communication program at this university, the symbolic nature of heritage was prioritized through the interpretation of heritage. This revealed codes that expand the analytical capacity to deeply assess a phenomenon or object and to convey the information it can provide, thereby raising awareness. In this way, it was revealed how to communicate and how to learn by bringing together other references for an active appropriation of knowledge. As a result of this program, a set of heritage communication products were created by the students, expanding the scope of content to be addressed through the different media that communication enables.

As a result of this research, an elective program focused on heritage communication has been designed and implemented for the Social Communication program, within the Communication and Society discipline, at the Faculty of Communication at the University of Havana. It has already received its initial validation.

Universities in general, and in Cuba in particular, have also created collections since their inception, resulting from academic activity and scientific research, which were established as University Museums. These institutions are an example that validates heritage education in the training of future professionals, as well as the plurality of the language of this educational concept. In Cuba, notable collections include the Felipe Poey Museum of Natural History, the Montané Anthropological Museum, and the Dihigo Archaeological Museum at the University of Havana. Also notable is the Universidad de Oriente with its Natural History Museum, Archaeological Museum, and Prat Puig Art Museum. Other universities in the country have museums or museum halls linked to their programs, providing an important scientific legacy for current and future generations.

However, the results obtained recognize, given the current state of heritage education, the need for the topic to occupy an important space in the training of future Higher Education professionals in

Cuba. They also demonstrate the need to deepen this educational concept, which promotes training based on a pluralistic approach in academic settings.

In the epistemological field, the difficulty in conceptualizing heritage, its expressions and areas, and its consideration from a reductionist perspective stand out, limiting its use to informal, extracurricular education, as a form of training decoration; when it has been demonstrated that there is a need to raise awareness among teaching staff about its importance.

## REFERENCES

- Calaf, R. (2009). *Didáctica del Patrimonio, epistemología, metodología y estudio de casos*. Ediciones TREA. Madrid, España. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/libro?codigo=375970>
- Cantón, V., & González, S. O. J. (2009). Notas para una aproximación a la educación patrimonial como creadora de identidad y promotora de la calidad educativa. *Revista CORREO del MAESTRO*, 161. <https://issuu.com/edilar/docs/cdm-161/s/12052542>
- Castro, F. M., & López, F. R. (2017). La educación patrimonial al servicio de la ciudadanía. En Gómez Carrasco, C. J., Rodríguez Pérez, R., & Miralles Martínez, P. (Coords.), *La enseñanza de la historia en el siglo XXI: Desarrollo y evaluación de competencias históricas para una ciudadanía democrática* (pp. 53-65). Universidad de Murcia, Servicio de Publicaciones. <https://publicaciones.um.es/publicaciones/public/obras/ficha.seam?numero=2574&edicion=1>
- Comité Internacional de Museos (ICOM). (2017). *Código de Deontología*. 25 Asamblea General del ICOM. Lisboa. Portugal. <https://icom.museum/es/recursos/normas-y-directrices/codigo-de-deontologia>
- Cuenca López, J. M., Martín-Cáceres, M., & Estepa, J. (2020). Buenas prácticas en la educación patrimonial. Análisis de las conexiones entre emociones, territorio y ciudadanía. *Aula Abierta*, 49 (1), 45-54. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7471614>
- Cuenca López, J. M., Molina Puche, S., & Martín Cáceres, M. J. (2018). Identidad, ciudadanía y patrimonio. Análisis comparativo de su tratamiento didáctico en museos de Estados Unidos y España. *Arbor*, 194(788), a447. <https://doi.org/10.3989/arbor.2018.788n2007>

- Fontal Merillas, O., Luna, U., & Ibáñez, A. (2021). Educación patrimonial: Clave de futuro para la gestión del patrimonio. *Pasos Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, Colección Pasos Edita No. 29. [https://pasosonline.org/Publicados/pasosoedita/PSEdita29/PSEdita29\\_11.pdf](https://pasosonline.org/Publicados/pasosoedita/PSEdita29/PSEdita29_11.pdf)
- Godoy, M. A., Hernández Ojeda, J. A., & Adán Alfaro, L. I. (2013). *Educación patrimonial desde el museo: iniciativas de promoción y puesta en valor del patrimonio cultural*. <https://www.doccity.com/es/docs/educacion-patrimonial-desde-el-museo/4686462>
- Gómes, Hernández, T. R., & Basquerote Silva, A. T. (2018). La educación patrimonial de los docentes universitarios en Remedios, monumento nacional. *Perspectiva*, 36(4), 1132-1148. <https://doi.org/10.5007/2175-795x.2018v36n4p1132>
- Jiménez, G. A., & Peñate, A. G. (2022). Tecnologías sociales en la gestión del patrimonio cultural de la Universidad de Matanzas. *ReNoSCol*, 1(3), 54-68. <http://www.eumed.net/rev/renoscol.html>
- Molinas Torres, M., & Ortiz Urbano, R. (2021). Educación sostenible y conservación del patrimonio cultural en la formación del profesorado universitario. *Formación Universitaria*. 14(1), 207-216. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4067/So718-50062021000100207>
- Rodríguez Vallejo, E., Valdivia Martínez, I., & Santos Abreu, I. C. (2022). Una visión de la Educación Patrimonial en Cuba desde la investigación. *Revista Varela*, 22(61), 57-66. <https://revistavarela.uclv.edu.cu/index.php/rv/article/view/1329>
- Teixeira, S. (2006). Educación patrimonial: alfabetización cultural para la ciudadanía. *Estudios pedagógicos (Valdivia)*, 32(2), 133-145. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0718-07052006000200008>
- Veitia Arrieta, I. J., González Hernández, G., Moré Estupiñán, M., Fusté Jiménez, M. A., Romero Bello, E., Gómez Hernández, T. R., Rodríguez Vallejo, E., Valdivia Martínez, I., & Gómez Morales, Y. (2023). La educación patrimonial en la formación del profesional de la Educación. *Anales de la Academia de Ciencias de Cuba*, 13(4). [http://scielo.sld.cu/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S2304-01062023000400016&lng=es&tlng=es](http://scielo.sld.cu/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2304-01062023000400016&lng=es&tlng=es)

Zabala, M. E., & Galtes, I. R. (2006). Reflexiones teóricas sobre patrimonio, educación y museos, *Revista de Teoría y Didáctica de las Ciencias Sociales*, 11(11),233-261.

<http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=65201111>

### Conflict of interest

Authors declare no conflict of interests.

### Authors' contribution

The authors participated in the design and writing of the article, in the search and analysis of the information contained in the consulted bibliography.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License