

Formation of professional competencies from the perception of the students of the Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration



Formación de las competencias profesionales desde la percepción de los estudiantes de la Licenciatura de Administración de Empresas

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Abstract

University education is oriented to develop competencies to respond to current educational, labor and social challenges. The objective of this research was to evaluate the perception of the students of the Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration - University of Guayaquil regarding the competencies developed in their professional training. For the application of the exploratory-descriptive methodology, the comparison of the surveys conducted in two academic periods 2019-2020 CII and 2020-2021 CI to the students of the Business Administration degree was carried out through the application of the survey of the Tuning project that evaluates the generic and specific competencies. Despite the difficulties that may have been generated in the students'

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environment during and after the confinement by covid-19, the perception of the development of the specific competencies necessary for business administration has increased. However, the need to deepen the analysis of the legal framework for business management, the analysis of the social environment and the use of information and communication technologies is evident.

Keywords: Generic Competence, Specific Competence, Higher Education, Tuning Project.

Resumen

La formación universitaria se orienta a desarrollar competencias para responder a los retos educativos, laborales y sociales actuales. La presente investigación tuvo como objetivo evaluar la percepción de los estudiantes de la Licenciatura de Administración de Empresas - Universidad de Guayaquil respecto a las competencias desarrolladas en su formación profesional. Para la aplicación de la metodología exploratoria-descriptiva se realizó la comparación de las encuestas realizados en dos periodos académicos 2019-2020 CII y 2020-2021 CI a los estudiantes de la carrera de Administración de Empresas mediante la aplicación de la encuesta del proyecto Tuning que evalúa las competencias genéricas y específicas. A pesar de las dificultades que pudieron generarse en el entorno de los estudiantes durante y posterior al confinamiento por el covid-19, la percepción del desarrollo de las competencias específicas necesarias para la administración de empresas ha incrementado. Sin embargo, se evidencia la necesidad de profundizar el análisis del marco jurídico a la gestión empresarial, el análisis del entorno social y el uso de las tecnologías de la información y comunicación.

Keywords: Competencia Genérica, Competencia Especifica, Educación Superior, Proyecto Tuning.

Introduction

In Ecuador, the national education system will have as its purpose the development of individual and collective capacities and potentialities of the population; being the center the subject who learns, and will operate in a flexible and dynamic, inclusive, effective and efficient way (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008, p. 168). Quiñonez (2017) in his comparative analysis of higher education between Ecuador and Spain evidences that the service-learning methodology is a teaching and learning strategy that

facilitates the integration of community service and allows the student to practically apply the knowledge acquired. For Aguilar (2017) the professional training, the lines of research and the commitments of linkage with society in Ecuadorian universities form values such as: responsibility and social sensitivity, respect for the individual, appreciation of diversity, political commitment and work as a mechanism of social institution.

The Lisbon European Council 2009 highlighted the need for citizens to acquire key competencies as an indispensable condition for economic development and their ability to compete in the international arena, achieving personal, social and professional development. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) promoted the DeSeCo project (Definition and Selection of Key Competences), analyzing the scope of the term competence:

It involves a combination of practical skills, knowledge, motivation, ethical values, attitudes, emotions, and other social and behavioral components that are mobilized together to achieve effective action. Competencies are conceptualized as a "know-how", a knowledge that is concretized in actions and that is capable of adapting to a diversity of contexts.... (National Center for Educational Innovation and Research (CNIIE), 2013, pp. 17-18)..

Romero Fernández, Álvarez Gavilanes, & Murillo Párraga (2014) relate professional competence to knowing, knowing how to do, knowing how to be, knowing how to be and knowing how to be and wanting to be linked to the professional activity that the person develops in order to obtain the desired results (p. 6). For Correa Correa, Delgado Hurtado, & Conde Cardona (2011) competencies are permanent behavioral and functional characteristics of people, which are demonstrated in the successful performance of an activity in a given context and responsibility; they have a causal relationship with job performance and the job position in the organization. In short, competence is the set of knowledge, values and attitudes that enable a person to solve a task in a given context.

According to Kubessi (2015) learning outcomes and competencies are statements of what a student is expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate after completing a learning experience. Consequently, it is transcendental to know the perception of the students of the Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration at the University of Guayaquil in relation to their formation of professional competencies, an evaluation that will serve as a basis for improving educational offerings and assessing learning outcomes.

As a reference is the research by Ferreras-Garcia, Sales-Zaguirre, & Serradell-López (2021) on the level of perception of the of students enrolled in the business specialization of the last year of the degree in Business Administration and Management at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya during the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 academic years. The generic competencies best valued by students were drawing conclusions, persistence and perseverance, finding, identifying, identifying, organizing and using information appropriately, and relating information or data. The most notable specific competencies that students developed were planning, managing and evaluating business projects, efficient management of the company or organization, understanding competitive and institutional position and identifying strengths and weaknesses, and processing and analyzing financial information. The most highly valued entrepreneurial competencies were analysis of the environment, generation of ideas, and identification and definition of a viable market niche.

The Tuning project methodology considers competency as the combination of knowledge, understanding and skills that the student is expected to master, understand and demonstrate after completing a learning process. They are divided into competencies related to an area of knowledge (specific to a field of study) and generic competencies (common to different courses). (Beneitone, et al., 2007, p. 37). The implementation of this project aims to contribute as a model for the rapprochement of higher education systems between universities in Latin America and Europe, for the development of quality, transparency and recognition. (Bugarín Olvera, 2019).

The economic crisis, post-covid logistical and commercial restrictions, large information flows, the complexity of the digital society and cultural changes require universities to train professionals who can adapt quickly to demanding environments and identify new opportunities. During the pandemic, in order to control the level of contagion by the coronavirus, higher education institutions postponed face-to-face classes and replaced them with online methodologies.

Cardona (2017) in his doctoral thesis on organizational change in higher education institutions identified that from the organizational perspective the adaptation of Higher Education Institutions is related to several factors, such as:

- Preparation for virtual and/or distance education.
- Technological resources to meet the new style of teaching

- Training offered to teachers for the new tasks.
- Clear and timely communication to teachers about new strategies.

Gazca's research (2020) on the implications of the covid-19 coronavirus on teaching processes in higher education at the Universidad Veracruzana found that there is a significant association between the variables of age and technological training with the competencies to teach online classes and the age of the professors with the effects they have had on their health.

In Ecuador, in view of the declaration of COVID-19 pandemic by the World Health Organization, the Council of Higher Education through resolution RPC-SE-03-No.046-2020, dated March 25, 2020, issues the transitional regulations for the development of academic activities in Higher Education Institutions, which in its Article 4 approves the continuity of academic activities through other study modalities. Article 69 of the Organic Law of Humanitarian Support establishes that the curricular planning of the degree program will determine the conditions for the implementation of learning environments, whether face-to-face, virtual or mixed; the forms of teacher-student interaction; the use of convergence of educational media and information and communication technologies; and other relevant elements, according to the modality of study. (National Assembly, 2020).

Teachers are obliged to develop creative initiatives to help overcome the limitations of virtual teaching. The analysis of higher education in times of pandemic in two private universities and one public university in the Central Valleys of Oaxaca, Mexico, evidenced a disparity between technological advances and the competencies for learning and teaching them (Miguel, 2020). Both students and teachers required support to master the virtual modality and develop digital competencies to guarantee the quality of education and the assurance of classes. In the view of Pokhrel & Chhetr (2021) the affordability and accessibility for all students of various economic levels is identified as a challenge, and there are different educational tools prepared by many educational companies that have been free to learn during this pandemic.

Consequently, the University of Guayaquil prepared an adaptation guide for the online modality, developing strategies for the student to acquire knowledge and develop competencies, making use of technological tools and the Moodle institutional platform. The methodology consists of synchronous activities in contact with the teacher and practical-experimental learning: video conferences,

forums; tutoring: chats, forums, questionnaires; and asynchronous activities: autonomous learning and revision and follow-up of the evaluation of the activities. (University of Guayaquil, 2020).

Diaz, Peña, Ruiz, & Macias (20220) in the research conducted in the academic period 2020-2021 Cycle I, identified that the perception of the students of the University of Guayaquil about virtual education was not good, due to several factors that had to be overcome, among which stand out economic, poor connectivity, low quality of the internet signal, teaching methodologies and didactic models.... (p. 13). The aforementioned evaluation was carried out in the first cycle of adaptation to the new methodology, concluding that students had not understood the autonomous nature of the e-learning model.

In relation to the object of study Diaz, Ruiz and Macias (2021) in their article "Impact of ICT: Challenges and opportunities for Higher Education in the face of COVID-19" which focuses on analyzing the impact on the use of ICT in the development of academic activities under the online modality of the University of Guayaquil, during the pandemic, for the scope of this objective the project was field and its non-experimental cross-sectional design, for which the survey technique was applied to collect information directly from the object of study, with a sample of 246 teachers and 276 students, taken from the total population of the institution.

Consequently, it is a challenge for the teacher to generate adequate material to guide student learning that responds to the demands of this new educational scenario. After the adaptation period and after 3 academic cycles have elapsed under the online modality, it is important to know the students' perception regarding their professional training. According to Bedregal et al. (2019) students are willing to use the virtual classroom implemented in the Moodle platform, as long as they find that the activities to be performed favor their learning, and are consistent with the effort invested.

Materials and methods

The present research consists of a quantitative study of non-experimental descriptive type, of longitudinal cut, for which the questionnaire of the generic and specific competences of the Tuning Project was used as an instrument, inquiring the students' perception of the development of the competences on the part of the career. The data collection was carried out through primary sources by means of the instrument consisting of 47 items to measure the development of generic and specific competences that administrators should have, evaluation with a Likert-type scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is totally

disagree and 5 is totally agree. The collection of information was coordinated through the degree work of the School of Administrative Sciences.

The population was delimited as students of the Business Administration career who are studying in the evening with different time slots, i.e., the same subject of study that has advanced in their academic training. The first evaluation during the academic period 2019-2020 CII used a self-administered questionnaire that was distributed in the classroom; for the second evaluation during the academic period 2021-2022 CI the questionnaire was provided through Google forms. The sampling applied was probabilistic with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient analysis obtained a reliability greater than 0.9, which allowed obtaining reliable results.

Table 1. *Population and Sample*

| Source | Academic Cycle | Semesters | Population | Sample |
|--|----------------|------------------|------------|--------|
| Prospective Analysis of the Business Administration Career of the University of Guayaquil to 2030 | 2019-2020 C II | 1st, 2nd and 3rd | 214 | |
| Perception of the students of the Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration - University of Guayaquil regarding their professional training. | 2021-2022 C I | 4th, 5th and 6th | 191 | |

Results

The greatest participation in the present research, through the response to the questionnaire was on the part of 5th semester students representing 52.9%, while 23.9% are from 6th semester and lastly from 4th semester with 23.9%. When comparing the results of the sample for the year 2021 versus the year 2019, a slight increase in the development of generic competencies is evident in the average evaluations. In general terms, in the case of the perception of the development of specific competencies, there has been a significant increase, a congruent result due to the knowledge acquired in the new subjects.

The students who attended the academic period 2021-2022 CI in the fourth, fifth and sixth semesters perceive a better development mainly in: the ability to work autonomously; ethical commitment; ability to learn and update themselves, to identify, pose and solve problems, and to motivate and lead towards common goals. However, the perception of the capacity for decision-making has diminished: Perception of the students of the Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration - University of Guayaquil regarding their professional training. (Pin Loor & Moran Figueroa, 2021)

Taken from: Perception of students of the Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration - University of Guayaquil regarding their professional training (Pin Loor & Moran Figueroa, 2021).

When analyzing the perception of the least developed specific competencies in the second sample, it is important to take into consideration that the students have not taken the subjects of strategic planning and marketing management, in which they receive guidance on the analysis of the environment, inter-functional and operational relations of the organization. In contrast, despite receiving training in relation to aspects of law and management information systems, there are weaknesses in evaluating the legal framework and technological aspects.

Tuning Methodology and Beer's 4Cs

Considering that professionals must be prepared for the evaluations of the work environment, it is important to take into consideration similarities in the parameters for measuring professional competencies. Sanchez Lima (2021) developed a theoretical proposal for a performance evaluation model focused on marketing companies or financial entities that incorporate commercial positions in their organizational structure. The instrument is an adaptation of Beer's 4Cs model, which evaluates the effectiveness of human resources management results based on 4 components or

dimensions: commitment, congruence, competence and cost-effectiveness.

The comparison made between the competencies evaluated through the Tuning project and the adaptation of Beer's 4C's model shows that the students of the Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration demonstrate a high perception in relation to the training to meet the requirements in commercial positions. The students' perception of training oriented to the dimensions of competence, cost-effectiveness and congruence is higher than the indicators of the dimension of commitment, the latter being related to the behavior acquired through experience and putting into practice the knowledge acquired.

The commitment with the socio-cultural environment is the competency that students perceive they have less developed, a capacity that will be formed through pre-professional internships and activities of linkage with society that have been programmed in the following academic semesters. In the aforementioned curricular projects, students will be in contact with people in different social and work contexts; circumstances that represent a possibility to become aware of adverse moments and reinforce interpersonal skills.

Discussion

Iglesias & Chang (2021) suggest further research related to the contextual factors that condition the formation of competencies at the university level and the analysis of new technologies for the formation of competencies at the university level.

For Cardona (2021) the strategies for change are based on dialogic communication, monitored and controlled participation of all actors, and training for the new tasks to be assumed. The opinion of teachers is important to define training plans so that they can be adjusted and adapted to the needs of students. Consequently, it is recommended to complement the present research with the perception of teachers on the training of professional competencies.

Chávez, Rivera and Haro (2021) recommend following up with the teacher in relation to teaching tactics and forms of teaching to verify the level of student learning and improve their knowledge. For Kubessi, (2015) the faculty could be unaware of the transversal competencies marked by the university and how they are measured and evaluated, which generates discontent and lack of motivation.

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