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**STUDENT PERCEPTION ABOUT THE GENERIC
COMPETENCES OF TUNING PROJECT FOR LATIN AMERICA**

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Abstract

This research article aims to present the main findings from the study on the perception of college students about the formation and the development of their professional skills from the guidelines and standards, formulated for the generic competences in the Tuning Project (2011-2013). Latin America has identified the need to develop different studies to uncover know the perceptions of college students, on the levels of recognition and potential impact about the generic competences of Tuning project for their professional performance. The study was developed from the empirical-analytic paradigm with a descriptive design. The sample consisted of 384 college students in the Colombian Caribbean region, with a 95% confidence level and 5% sample error. The level of reliability was estimated with the Cronbach's alpha method (α : .904), and the correlation indexes item - scale ranged from (r : .38 and r : .74). The Mean of recognition (3.83) was minor that the mean of potential impact perceived (4.34) about the generic competences. A significant correlation and directly proportional between recognition and potential impact perceived (r : .63; $p < .05$) was found. It is necessary to strengthen the coordination processes and curriculum management in undergraduate programs, with a view to creating greater levels of standardization and certification of the training programs in the framework of the European Higher Education.

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Keywords: Tuning Project; generic competences; Latin America; college students.

1. Introduction

The Tuning Project for Latin America, arises in a framework of reflections on the standards of training in generic competences for higher education. In this regard, taking as reference the ongoing process of integration and standardization of the processes associated with the development of the generic competences, which constitute the basis of professional training in the European Community.

Referring to the conceptualization of generic competences and the Tuning project, Palma, De los Ríos & Miñán (2011, p. 584) argue that:

The definition of the European Higher Education Area has conducted to a codification of generic competences that, without taking off importance to the technic ones, must consider the development of contextual and behavior skills, in a holistic approach, indispensable for the graduate in actual higher education.

Tuning project in Europe meant a great challenge for institutions of higher education, as it allowed the creation of a working environment for academics could reach benchmarks, understanding and common ground (González, Wagenaar & Beneitone, 2012; Rodríguez, 2014).

Villa (2013) presents a complementary perspective to understand the meaning of the Tuning Project, under which could be understood as a network of interconnected communities of academics and students; participatory scenarios for reflection, debate, research, assessment and analysis of the results derived from their joint research, integrating knowledge in a synergistic relationship of trust and mutual support.

Madariaga & Lozano (2016) in your study about the social support in college students and its relationship with face to face and mediated by (ICT), analyze the importance of the development of collaborative learning environments that promote the development of social skills in interaction with the development of digital skills, which are strategic in the generic competences of Tuning Project.

Conde, Frias & Rico (2015) in his analysis of the role of narrative in understanding teaching practices, emphasize the need to promote reflective teaching practice as a stage facilitator significant, critical, active and constructive learning. In this sense, the implications of this study are articulated with research trends Tuning Project on educational innovation processes and didactics applied to the development of generic and specific competences.

From elsewhere, Cortés, Abello, Denegri & Pérez-Acosta (2015, p. 1623), argue that “The economic thinking in college students is a strategic topic of research, in the framework of higher education, given its critical impact on the development of skills, competences and professional standards expected for development of the scientific and technological innovation”.

OECD (2014) has been emphatic in enacting the need to advance the development of research, programs and projects implemented to promote the professional skills of an articulated manner to the promotion of the culture of environmental conservation, quality of life and encouraging entrepreneurship processes that aim to fully human, economic, social and sustainable development.

Consequently, the generic competences of new professionals, with advanced training in master's and doctoral degrees, is facing the challenges of globalization and must respond to the problems and needs of society in a context of widespread crisis at the social level, environmental, economic and educational (Halse, & Mowbray, 2011).

2. Problem Statement

In Latin America, has identified the need to develop different studies to know the perception that have the college students, on the levels of recognition and potential impact about the generic competences of Tuning project for their future professional performance.

3. Research Questions

What is the perception of college students on the levels of recognition and potential impact about the generic competences formulated in the Tuning project for their future professional performance?

4. Purpose of the Study

This study attempts to describe the levels of recognition and potential impact perceived by college students regarding generic competences of Tuning project for Latin America.

5. Research Methods

The study was developed from the empirical-analytic paradigm, with a descriptive design. The sample consisted of 384 college students in the Colombian Caribbean region, with a 95% confidence level and 5% sample error.

The instrument designed for this study was previously validated with the method of expert judges and earned a level of consistency of 82%. In the psychometric analysis of the perceptual scale of recognition and potential impact of the generic competences was estimated the reliability level with the Cronbach's alpha method (α : .904). Additionally, the correlations (item-scale) ranged from (r: .38 and r: .74).

6. Findings

In Table 1, presents the mean scores obtained from the perceptual rating scale (1.0 to 5.0) for each of the 27 generic competences of the Tuning project, depending on the level of recognition and the potential impact for the future professional performance perceived for the college students.

Table 01. Perceptual rating scale of generic competences: Recognition and potential impact perceived

GENERIC COMPETENCES TUNING PROJECT	RECOGNITION	POTENTIAL IMPACT
1. Capacity for abstraction, analysis and synthesis	3,5	3,8
2. Ability to apply knowledge in practice	4,0	4,6
3. Ability to organize and plan time	3,5	4,0
4. Knowledge of the area of study and profession	4,2	4,6
5. Social responsibility and civic engagement	4,5	4,8
6. Communication skills oral and written	3,4	4,0

7. Ability to communicate in a second language	4,2	4,5
8. Skills in using information technologies and communication	4,0	4,5
9. Research capacity	4,3	4,4
10. Ability to learn and continually updated	3,6	3,9
11. Ability to search, process and analyze information from various sources	3,8	4,4
12. And self-critical capacity	3,7	4,1
13. Ability to react to new situations	4,2	4,0
14. Creative	3,9	4,5
15. Ability to identify and solve problems	4,5	4,5
16. Ability to make decisions	3,8	4,3
17. Teamwork capacity	4,0	4,2
18. Interpersonal Skills	4,0	4,0
19. Ability to motivate and work towards common goals	3,6	3,9
20. Commitment to environmental preservation	3,7	4,3
21. Commitment to socio-cultural	4,2	4,6
22. Value and respect for diversity and multiculturalism	4,5	4,6
23. Ability to work in international contexts	4,2	4,5
24. Ability to work autonomously	4,0	4,4
25. Ability to formulate and manage projects	4,0	4,6
26. Ethical commitment	4,5	4,5
27. Commitment to Quality	4,4	4,6

The Mean of recognition (3.83) was minor that the mean of potential impact perceived (4.34) about the generic competences. There are a significant correlation and directly proportional between recognition and potential impact perceived ($r: .63; p < .05$).

In summary, the results allow to identify that the perception of college students about the levels of recognition and the potential impact of the generic competences are related functionally, and can be increased with the design of virtual environments for meaningful learning.

7. Conclusions

College students have a basic level of recognition about the implications of generic competences of Tuning project for Latin America in their future professional performance. It is necessary to strengthen coordination processes and curriculum management in undergraduate programs, with a view to creating greater levels of standardization and certification of the training programs with the framework of the European Higher Education.

The contributions of Cortés, Pinto & Atrio (2015) focus the strategy of E-portfolio as constructionist tool for development of the generic competences from the design of a custom path of

virtual learning environments with standardized processes and indicators associated with each of the competencies and in turn tailored, to the needs and expectations of the specific needs of each area or problem-oriented context.

From this perspective, the perceptual assessment of recognition and potential impact of the generic competences, would have the E-portfolio as a strategic ally that allows each student to design a virtual environment to integrate the development of their establishing a synergistic relationship between technologies for the information and communication (TIC) that promote the development of technologies for the learning and knowledge (TLK) and finally its articulation with the use of technologies for the empowerment and participation (TEP). This dynamic applied to the development of skills is called by Cortés, Pinto & Atrio (2015) as the Spiral Competency Model (TIC-TLK-TEP).

The findings of this study establish a strategic relationship with new trends in meta-profiles of Tuning Project research, from studies of González & Beneitone (2014, p. 28) who argue that: “The concept of the meta-profile steadily gained strength and highlighted the importance of this structuring of competences as an enabler of understanding among universities when engaging in dialogue about recognition”.

From the above approaches, the strategic importance of the development of cross-cultural research, aimed at strengthening the processes of standardization in the formulation and development of generic skills, understood as an articulating bridge between international standards highlights Higher education and the particular needs of each educational environment under the global context of the knowledge society.

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