A THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE CONCEPT OF COMPETENCIES IN GENERAL AND RESEARCH COMPETENCIES IN PARTICULAR.

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Resumen.

This article emerges from the development of the first specific objective "To identify the conception of competencies and investigative competencies that are accredited in the Law Program of the University of Nariño, part of the ongoing research project entitled "Training of investigative competencies in the Law Program of the University of Nariño, 2024: realities and prospects" which has as its general objective to analyze the training in investigative competencies that is developed in the Law Program of the University of Nariño, starting from the identification of the concept of competencies and investigative competencies that are considered in the Law Program (First objective), the investigative training of teachers, the teaching strategies in research training and the expectations of students in relation to their training for research. Then, an approach to the theoretical foundation in relation to competencies in general and specific competencies in particular is presented, taking as a basis different bibliographical reference.

Palabras Clave: Competencies, research competencies, research training, investigation, Higher Education.

Abstract.

Este artículo emerge del desarrollo del primer objetivo específico "Identificar la concepción de competencias y de competencias investigativas que se acreditan en el Programa de Derecho de la Universidad de Nariño, del proyecto de investigación en curso titulado "Formación de competencias investigativas en el Programa de Derecho de la Universidad de Nariño, 2024: realidades y prospectivas" que tiene como objetivo general analizar la formación en competencias investigativas que se desarrolla en el Programa de Derecho de la Universidad de Nariño, partiendo de la identificación del concepto de competencias y competencias investigativas que se considera en el Programa de Derecho (Primer objetivo) , la formación investigativa de los docentes, las estrategias de enseñanza en la formación en investigación y las expectativas de los estudiantes con relación a su formación para la investigación. Se presenta, entonces, una aproximación a la fundamentación teórica en relación con las competencias en general y las competencias específicas en particular, tomando como base diferentes referencias bibliográficas.

APROXIMACIÓN TEÓRICA AL CONCEPTO DE COMPETENCIAS EN GENERAL E INVESTIGATIVAS EN PARTICULAR.

Palabras Clave: Competencias, competencias investigativas, formación investigativa, investigación, educación superior.

I. INTRODUCTION.

In this 21st century, the educational challenge and opportunity lead to competency-based training as essential components for the comprehensive development of the student, the strengthening of academic and research development in the different higher education training programs, the enhancement of the social and professional skills and abilities of future graduates, and coherence with the mission set out in the institutional educational projects (PEI).

Tobón, in the introduction to the first edition of his book "Comprehensive training and competencies. Complex thinking, curriculum, didactics and evaluation" (2004) states, among other ideas, that competency-based training constitutes a proposal that starts from meaningful learning and is oriented towards comprehensive human development, promoting autonomous learning, strengthening the ethical life project and the development of the entrepreneurial spirit (2010, p. 19).

To work within the competency paradigm, it is evident that there is a need for conceptual clarity regarding what competencies mean and the processes they encompass. Generally, competencies are understood as "a reflective and functional interaction of knowledge—cognitive, procedural, attitudinal, and metacognitive—framed within valuable principles, which generates articulated evidence and enhances actions transferable to different contexts, supported by situational knowledge identified through evidence that transforms reality" (Cázares A. L., & Cuevas J. F., 2009, p. 18). According to Velázquez et al.

(2019), research competencies cover several dimensions: knowledge, which involves theoretical knowledge; know-how, related to the application of scientific methodologies; being, which addresses ethical and professional attitudes; and living together, which highlights the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and teamwork. Thus, they not only benefit the academic field, but also contribute to the creation of a broader scientific culture in society.

The above considerations and professional experience allow us to express that in the search for quality and relevance in current higher education it is essential to investigate the processes of development and training in general and specific competencies, giving relevance to research competencies, as is the purpose of the aforementioned research in the field of Law.

II. METHODOLOGY.

Methodologically, a descriptive bibliographic investigation is carried out, considered as Sambrano Jazmin (2020) proposes, as the review of written materials published by different media, in order to have a panoramic view of a situation or clarify some issues through the comparative and interpretive analysis of the material collected.

III. CONCEPT OF COMPETENCIES.

According to Tobon (2004), to discuss competencies, it is necessary to go back to antiquity, especially to Greek culture. Competencies are proposed as complex processes that people activate to solve problems and act in different contexts, integrating being, knowing, and doing, with autonomy, critical thinking, creativity, and responsibility, oriented toward transforming reality and promoting human well-being.

Competencies are a complex capacity that allows one to acquire and transfer knowledge, applying it to new situations, with the aim of solving problems or creating new knowledge, engaging the ethical, emotional, aesthetic, and technical dimensions. They involve the ability to construct mental models of problem situations and to coherently combine relevant knowledge" (Palacios & Villa, 2020:44). Charria Ortiz et al. (2011), in summary, state that for Bogoya, D., & Torrado, M. C. (2000), competence is "knowing how to do something in context" (p. 11), and for the Ministry of National Education (2000) it is "(...) a set of acquired knowledge, approaches, methodologies, attitudes, values, and beliefs that enable relevant actions in a work context (...)" (p. 68). Ignacio A. Montenegro (2003), cited by Cázares & Cuevas de la Garza (2009), describes that "being competent is knowing how to do something and knowing how to act, understanding what one is doing, comprehending how one acts, responsibly assuming the implications and consequences of the actions taken, and transforming contexts in favor of human well-being." (p. 17). According to Medina Manuel and Barquero José Daniel, a professional competency is comprised of: "knowledge that is learned, skills that are developed, abilities that are built, and values that are generated; these elements are demonstrated in action and evaluated through evidence in the results, which allow for their assessment and certification" (2012, p. 23).

From the preceding statements and others, it can be inferred that competency-based education is not only a challenge demanded by the complexity of the 21st century, but also, with its mission focused on "learning to learn," strengthening a model of autonomous and meaningful learning through active methodologies, engages administrators, teachers, and students in order to achieve a comprehensive level of academic and personal development in the acquisition of specific, basic, and generic competencies that guarantee entry into the world of work and professional life.

Typology of Competencies

A review of the literature reveals multiple ways of classifying competencies. Aubrun and Orifiamma (1990), cited by Zabalza (2013, pp. 71-72), distinguish third-level competencies into several categories, including those related to professional and social behavior, attitudes, creative activities, as well as existential and ethical competencies. Tobón (2004, pp. 64-70) notes that one of the most widely recognized classifications groups competencies into basic, generic, and specific. Essential basic competencies for life in society and performance in any work context include communicative competence, mathematical competence, self-management of one's ethical life project, proficiency in new information and communication technologies, and competencies for adapting to change and exercising leadership,

among others (pp. 64, 66). Generic competencies are common to various occupations or professions, such as entrepreneurship, resource management, teamwork, information management, systems thinking, problem-solving, and work planning (pp. 69, 70). Specific competencies are "those competencies specific to a particular occupation or profession. They have a high degree of specialization, as well as specific educational processes, generally carried out in technical programs, vocational training, and higher education" (p. 71).

The Tuning Project for Latin America discusses specific competencies and generic or transversal competencies and classifies the latter into: instrumental competencies associated with the development of instrumental thinking: a. analytical and synthesis skills, b. organizational and planning skills, c. basic general knowledge, d. basic professional knowledge, e. oral and written communication in one's native language, f. knowledge of a second language, g. basic computer skills, h. Information management skills (ability to search for and analyze information from diverse sources), i. Problem-solving, j. Decision-making; interpersonal skills related to the expression of emotions, the development of critical thinking, and the capacity for self-evaluation: a. Critical and self-critical thinking, b. Teamwork, c. Interpersonal skills, d. Ability to work in an interdisciplinary team, e. Ability to communicate with experts from other areas, f. Appreciation of diversity and multiculturalism, g. Ability to work in an international context, h. Ethical commitment; systemic skills, focused on the abilities and skills necessary to understand and manage systems as a whole: a. Ability to apply knowledge in practice, b. Research skills, c. Ability to learn, d. Ability to adapt to new situations, f. Ability to generate new ideas (creativity), g. Leadership, h. Knowledge of other countries' cultures and customs, i. Ability to work independently, j. Project design and management, k. Initiative and entrepreneurial spirit, m. Concern for quality, n. Achievement motivation (Maldonado, M. A. 2006).

Educational Research

It cannot be denied that education "is one of the most important aspects of the world. Without education, society would be completely lost; there would be no scientific, technological, or economic progress, among others. Thanks to education, we can become professionals in any of the existing disciplines" (Lara M. Erica, 2013, p. 41). Given this dimension and significance, education, for its improvement and innovation, has identified and implemented, time and again, a series of research paradigms as fundamental elements and strategies to revitalize teaching and learning methods and contribute to the goals of schools and society. Albert Gómez, M.J. (2006) stated that educational research is the application of concepts such as scientific knowledge, science, the scientific method, and scientific research, all applied to the pursuit of knowledge in the educational field. Guillermina Baena Paz (2017), as a valid guideline for developing research projects in different disciplines, such as Law, explains that research consists of an inquiry process aimed at obtaining information and systematically answering specific questions such as what, who, when, where, how and why events occur, such as what is happening?, what could happen? and how can we act if it happens?

Other elements include the paradigm under which the study will be conducted (quantitative, qualitative, mixed), the approach to analysis (empirical-analytical, historical-hermeneutical, critical-social), the use of techniques and instruments for data collection, the knowledge and use of techniques or strategies for the presentation, analysis, interpretation, and understanding of the results, the report writing styles, the research modality related to the purpose (basic, applied, evaluative), the temporality (longitudinal, cross-sectional), the objective (exploratory, descriptive, explanatory), the development setting (laboratory, field), the conception of the educational phenomenon (nomothetic, idiographic), and the final and prospective scope or purpose of the research being carried out (Calvache L. J.E., 2015). In short, as Quintana Díaz José et al. (2018) state, citing Hernández Pina (1995), educational research can be said to consist of the study of "the Methods and Procedures

Research Competencies

The concept of research and research competencies is recognized as a generic competency in various international policies, such as the Tuning Project in Europe and Latin America. Similarly, it is incorporated into national and regional development plans, institutional educational projects in higher education, and some curricula through courses, seminars, workshops, research groups, and research lines. This competency involves the development of generic, metacognitive, specific, and methodological skills linked to the research process.

Pastora et al. (2020) argue that research competencies are highly valuable in personal, professional, social, and

cultural spheres, as they allow individuals to put into practice the knowledge acquired during their university education in order to address, analyze, and solve concrete problems in the society in which they live. Therefore, the importance of research training for academic processes and the various members of higher education cannot be ignored, where the focus should not only be on teaching. The methodology is not the only objective; it is to cultivate minds eager for knowledge, creativity, and innovation, capable of confronting and solving problems with research as a fundamental tool. According to Rubio et al. (2018), research competence is related to the stages of the scientific research process, requires cognitive (comprehensive, critical, and creative) and metacognitive thinking, includes consideration of teamwork, interpersonal relationships, and interdisciplinarity, and emphasizes the use of technology in the research process (p. 339). Dipp (2013) defines research competence as the integration of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and abilities essential for carrying out a research process. Its development involves a formative process in which philosophical, epistemological, methodological, and technical foundations are acquired, facilitating the construction of scientific knowledge in a given field, the effective communication of results both orally and in writing, and the application of this knowledge in practices that generate transformation.

IV. IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

The implementation and practice of research, in any area of knowledge, must be undertaken with a thorough understanding of both the concepts of competence and research competence, as well as the essential steps for structuring a research project. This includes contextualizing the problem, establishing a theoretical foundation, developing a methodology for fieldwork, and implementing strategies for analyzing and interpreting the findings. Regarding these considerations, the reviewed and analyzed literature reveals several academic trends that are not contradictory but rather complementary, depending on the research paradigms and approaches. These trends motivate us to seek answers and address questions such as: What are the general definitions or conceptions of competence? What are the general typologies of competence? How are research competences defined? What methodological processes have been studied for developing research competence? Questions that are magnified, according to the search in different databases, and are systematized in coherence with the purpose of the objective studied, allowing the presentation of the topics that are theoretically described in this text.

V. CONCLUSION.

It is extremely important to understand in detail the academic and practical relevance of research skills and competencies, which are fundamental for academic and professional development in higher education. Their comprehensive approach encompasses everything from basic and generic skills to specific and research competencies, all interrelated to train individuals capable of confronting and solving complex problems. Training in research competencies not only promotes deep and meaningful learning but also fosters a critical, reflective, and creative attitude, essential for adapting to the challenges of a constantly changing society.

The literature review demonstrates that research competencies, within the disciplinary contexts and objectives of academic programs, can be developed through guided activities and processes following predetermined frameworks or methodological outlines that align with the Institutional Educational Project (PEI) and the Program Educational Project (PEP). It is essential to learn to conduct research by conducting research within the framework of a relevant, viable, and reliable methodology.

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