

Review of: "Generic Competences in University Students from Barranquilla, Colombia"

Sofia Antera¹

¹ Stockholm University

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This article is an empirical study with a focus on importance and acquisition levels of generic competence according to higher education students in Colombia. The topic is of high relevance to higher education and to competence research. The article shows the authors' awareness of previous research in the field and although it is well written, it would benefit from some additional proof reading.

Regarding the core concepts, there is a good description of competence that includes not only what it is, but also how it is perceived in modern societies. Nevertheless, there is a confusion around concepts like *basic* and *generic* competence, as well as *transversal* competence. *Basic* competence is presented as a type of competence, but it is not defined. *Generic* and *transversal* competence, on the other hand, are in some parts used as synonyms, but in other as complementary. The typology of competence varies widely between different contexts. Hence, defining these concepts in every article is a valuable contribution to decreasing the confusion around competence.

With reference to *Methods*, the instrument applied is already validated in a large scale study and the sample size is sufficient. That raises the trustworthiness of the upcoming findings. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to know how the ranking of the competence items was calculated (for example the value 3.66 in Table 1). That could support further transparency and help the reader understand results like 3.0, which is later used as a standard value to which other values are compared.

Moving to *Results*, the greatest surprise is that other studies are presented in this section. This might create confusion over which study's results support which argument. It would be easier for the reader if the results from the present study were described in this section and then a comparison to other studies was made, under *Discussion* or a different heading.

This study includes a comparison with a former study, *Proyecto Alfa Tuning América Latina*. While this on its own entails some interest, some further argumentation about the importance of this comparison could be included. For example: Is it a validation of previous research? Is it a control that has a longitudinal character (10 years between the two studies)? Does this comparison show if the results of the bigger project (broader geographical area) apply to the local context of

Baraquila?

In addition, there are some questions emerging from the results of the current study that can be further discussed:

- Can a relationship between the importance and development scales be statistically supported?
- Why are some competencies more important than others?
- Why are abilities in second language and mathematics so low in the ranking?
- Why quality (very generic way of phrasing the item) is so high? Is that related to the phrasing of the item? What does quality refer to in that survey?
- Are there any trends present in this ranking? For example, it seems that items related to working in international contexts, speaking a foreign language and diversity or multiculturalism are lower in the ranking. Is there a pattern there?
- Can items be clustered?

Finally, in *Conclusions* it would be beneficial for the study if the main conclusion/contribution of the study was highlighted.

Thanks for an interesting read!