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# Influence of Sociodemographic Factors and Knowledge in Pedagogy on the Labor Market Insertion of Education Science Professionals †

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**Abstract:** The profile of the pedagogy student is polyvalent, the motivations, competencies, attitudes, and necessary aptitudes are also varied and suitable for developing the exercise of their profession in different labor scenarios, ranging from the educational-training context to the business context. The aim of this research has been to analyze the influence of sociodemographic factors and knowledge in pedagogy on labor market insertion, expectations about the degree, and employability of students of the degree in pedagogy at the University of Granada, Spain. The methodology used was based on a cross-sectional study design through a survey administered to a total of 334 students. The results obtained show that there are differences between the two genders. Regarding the year of study, no significant differences were found. Knowledge about the profile of the pedagogue is a factor that does influence expectations about the degree, job placement, and employability. However, expectations about the degree did not influence job placement, although employability did. It is concluded by stating that there is a lack of knowledge about the role of the pedagogue, which needs to be alleviated, as well as highlighting the need to reinforce the curricular, academic, and practical training of this degree.

**Keywords:** pedagogy; education sciences; labor market; pedagogue; higher education



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## 1. Introduction

The development of a country depends, fundamentally, on the level of education of its citizens. Formal and informal education prepares them with certain qualities and competencies that enable them to face life and integrate into society successfully. This function is left in the hands of teachers who, in turn, must be adequately trained [1]. Therefore, the perspective of student teachers on their own training processes, teaching practice, and construction of their professional identity is very important to shape the perception of their ability to practice this profession and influence the expectations that students form of their future profession [2]. However, on many occasions, university students, when they finish their studies, do not find work or get jobs that do not meet their expectations and, as soon as possible, university institutions should transmit to their students that labor market insertion, understood as the achievement of a quality job and its maintenance and improvement throughout life, depending on personal factors and the environment, such as the university in which they have been trained.

In this formative role, teachers are supported by pedagogues. Their professional profile and the competencies required to develop their profession are characterized by their great variety, valid to practice in different work contexts, influencing the different motivations that drive students to choose this degree, which are still unknown to most of society.

In recent times, widespread concerns around credentialism and the declining value of the degree for obtaining graduate-level employment are being recognized [3]. This is particularly true for more generalist degree programs, such as arts, humanities, and social sciences, as compared to professional degrees (e.g., engineering, education, and health) that are associated with better employment outcomes [4]. Tomlinson [5] found that students understand the diminishing role their academic qualification plays in the "congested labor market", aligning with others who reported that students recognize the need to create positional advantages to improve employment prospects [6]. Recent studies have suggested that students are reasonably positive in their perceptions of their own employability [7], but this may be attributed to low awareness of saturation in the graduate labor market [8].

According to these studies, there is a gap in how uncertain students perceive the labor market during their studies, how active or passive they are in their attitude toward their careers and career planning, and how students should be engaged in their extracurricular training to gain more positive prospects for labor market insertion or to develop intentional strategies to manage their training [9]. Likewise, the most appropriate didactic resources to impart to students the employability skills demanded by the teaching labor market and the strategies that higher education institutions should have to improve the employability of their graduates are being evaluated [10].

The main objective of this research is to know the profiles of pedagogues in order to know to what extent demographic factors influence labor market insertion, expectations about the degree, and employability are related.

### *1.1. Theoretical Framework*

#### 1.1.1. Profile of Pedagogy Student

The choice of a professional career is an important and, on many occasions, definitive decision. The motivations for exercising a teaching profession are divided into three types: intrinsic motivation, which comes from within the person and is related to the pleasure of exercising (interest and enjoyment for teaching and childhood, having skills for this function, etc.); extrinsic motivation, where the reasons for performing this teaching task come from the outside (working hours and working day, job security, family reconciliation, climbing the social ladder, etc.), and for an altruistic or prosocial motive, where the person is motivated by the desire to help (interest in contributing to society, helping people, etc.) [11].

Several studies have confirmed that people who choose this degree for intrinsic and altruistic motivations show greater commitment and efficiency than those who do it for extrinsic reasons such as economic reasons, family tradition, etc. [12]. According to Avendaño-Bravo and González-Urrutia [12], the research conducted indicates that, in general terms, the motivations for choosing a teaching profession lie in the fact of wanting to work with the child or youth population, the taste for teaching, for the specialty, and for education in general. These are people who consider that education has an important role to play in society and want to give their teaching practice a social meaning and projection. Therefore, they attend to intrinsic and altruistic motivations [13,14].

The profile that student teachers must acquire at the end of their studies, focusing on the labor purpose, is based on the promotion of four aspects: the generic or global training competence, where the objectives of the educational project are contemplated, together with the competencies to function effectively in society; the curricular axes, related to academic and administrative management; transversal or attitudinal competencies, such as empathy, training, citizenship, teamwork, critical thinking, etc, and the specific or disciplinary competencies that will be necessary to practice the profession [15].

#### 1.1.2. Influence of Sociodemographic Factors

Various studies show that when choosing a career, young people are influenced by numerous aspects, such as personality, context (family influence, reference models, social trends, etc.), the desire to satisfy needs, etc. [12].

There are studies that indicate that many students do not show intrinsic interests, but do show cognitive and professional interests. They are usually people who opt for pedagogy because they have fewer academic possibilities to pursue other careers of greater social recognition and valuation. Sometimes they are influenced by personal reasons such as family pressure to study a university career [16].

The majority of pedagogy students tend to be women. This fact is justified because they usually choose a career by vocation and other intrinsic and altruistic factors, so they stand out in degrees of the social and humanities branch [17]. In the case of men, the motives are extrinsic, related to salary, career opportunities, professional projection, etc., so they tend to choose scientific and technical degrees [12].

This degree is also characterized by a student body with a modest socio-cultural background and a low family educational level. They generally come from the middle- and lower-middle class [18]. Therefore, this degree is identified with the poorest university students, with a low formative heritage, who are usually the first generation to access university studies [11]. Schilling et al. [19] affirm that the historical trajectory of the person and their social life mark the experience that influences their interests and work projections and, consequently, their decision-making.

#### 1.1.3. Knowledge in Pedagogy

Pedagogy is the science of education [20–22]. Libâneo [20] indicates that pedagogy is concerned with "investigating the nature, purposes, and processes necessary for educational practices in order to propose the realization of these processes in the various contexts in which these practices occur" [20] (p. 513). In this sense, pedagogy is extended as the generating science of educational scientific knowledge and the pedagogue as the figure who exercises the profession of pedagogy [22].

For Touriñán, pedagogy, as a scientific discipline is:

> "*Theory, technology and practice or active research of education and pedagogical intervention; it is subject to the principles of research methodology as any scientific discipline. Pedagogy, as a career, is the set of subjects that are studied according to a study plan adjusted to official guidelines and national validity, with the objective of obtaining a degree that enables the professional exercise of pedagogical functions in accordance with the provisions in force. Pedagogy is not only Pedagogy as a discipline. Pedagogy as a discipline is broken down into subjects of the curriculum and, in addition to Pedagogy as a discipline, in the pedagogy career other formative subjects are studied that interpret education from their own scientific developments. Thus, in the career, next to subjects derived from Pedagogy, there are applied subjects derived from Psychology, Anthropology, Philosophy, Biology, History, etc.*" [23] (p. 100)

Nowadays, the concepts related to pedagogy, its pedagogical function, pedagogical intervention, pedagogues, and education professionals are part of a common language within the field of educational sciences. In Spain, all the curricula of the degree in pedagogy talk about the pedagogical function and the core of pedagogical knowledge that is part of the professional curriculum of specialists in pedagogical functions [24].

The professional figure of the pedagogue is that of an expert in education and training processes [22,25] aimed at any population and in different fields.

The performance of pedagogy is not limited to the child population (formal education), ranging from the school institution to the business environment. If we compare the job opportunities within non-formal education, the part corresponding to schools is minimal compared to the wide range of professional opportunities outside it [22,26]. These data agree with those highlighted in the White Paper [25] on the labor market insertion of

pedagogues, where it is highlighted that with regard to the type of placement of pedagogy professionals, 60% are employed in private companies, while 28% are in the public administration and 10% in NGOs, as well as with the results obtained in the research by Ruiz and García de la Barrera [27], where they highlight that the vast majority (73.1%) of the sample studied (pedagogues graduated from the Complutense University of Madrid (2006–2012)) are employed in the private sector.

#### 1.1.4. Labor Market Insertion of Pedagogues

The professional of pedagogy is framed within a professional profile related to the occupation of teaching techniques and methods, the continuous process of improvement of these, and an advance and research with respect to the teaching–learning processes. Currently, the field of work of a graduate in pedagogy is still closely related to the formal educational field, analyzing aspects related to the training and education of people throughout their lives, studying the teaching–learning processes, educational systems, their history, and the organization of the educational process, both on the part of students and teachers [28,29].

The labor insertion of the pedagogue is an interesting issue since it involves a multidisciplinary profile, encompassing three specialties: school, social, and labor. The pedagogue has a polyvalent figure and very different professional opportunities [27].

In order to conceptually delimit the areas in which a pedagogue can develop professionally, we define formal education as that corresponding to the school institution (from early childhood education to university), regulated by the state, and leading to an officially recognized degree. Non-formal education is that which takes place in an area outside the school environment, which aims to supplement the learning that has not been acquired in school or requires renewal [22]. On the other hand, it also corresponds to any activity that produces in the person the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, through experience [30].

Within the pedagogical functions of support to the educational system, framed within the formal educational environment (formal education), these respond to the difference between knowing, teaching, and educating and are, as in all areas of reality that have the dual condition of knowledge and action (in the case of education), of two types: the technician support to the realization of the pedagogical intervention (such as the education inspector or the director of an educational center, among others) and the specialist technician in the realization of the intervention (such as the pedagogue who builds educational environments and educational designs, the formative-educational counselor, the school pedagogue, the environmental pedagogue, the labor pedagogue, the social pedagogue, the family pedagogue, for example) [24].

According to the Spanish National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) [25], the functions most performed by graduates in pedagogy are teaching (language teacher, special education, support teacher . . . ); school and family counselor; educator in different areas (elderly, minors, marginalized, etc.); coordination and management (program coordinator, teachers, pedagogical cabinets, health, etc.); training (continuing education, adult, companies, etc.), and in therapeutic pedagogy (difficulties, cognitive support, psychomotor skills . . . ).

On the other hand, Tejada-Fernández [26], advocates the inclusion of subjects related to the business world in the pedagogy degree, in order to be able to address the tasks that a pedagogue could perform in the business environment. García-Aguilera and Aguilar-Cuenca [31] (p. 15), point out that pedagogy has evolved to society and its demands, becoming a transversal degree, which can be applied to different contexts of action outside the school environment, highlighting the creative learning of professionals through people management models that allow them to develop their competencies (knowledge and skills).

Fernández-Cruz [32] points out a new job possibility related to the oversaturation of the training offer, proposing as necessary the figure of the training counselor, as a

professional who discriminates between the different offers and guides the consumer on the training activities most in line with what is demanded.

The pedagogue's professional opportunities are diverse and cover a large number of different fields of work, but with something in common: the inclusion and activity that a pedagogue can carry out. The training of this professional and his or her acquired skills, such as the ability to diagnose and evaluate the different needs and deficiencies and to design a training plan, make him or her essential and useful to act in several of the areas mentioned and included in this document. With the specialization of the pedagogue and his professional outlets, it is possible to obtain a specific profile that allows him to access a job in accordance with his knowledge and the knowledge demanded, serving as an attraction for job positions that until now have not been recognized as belonging to the pedagogue [22].

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the professional and social profile of pedagogy students at the University of Granada (Spain) to determine the degree of perception and knowledge about the figure of the pedagogue. The hypothesis is that there is a lack of knowledge about the professional profile of the pedagogue in society and that this even reaches the students enrolled in the degree of pedagogy.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Research Design and Participants

A cross-sectional study design was adopted using a self-administered survey in the population of university students enrolled in the degree in pedagogy at the University of Granada during the 2019/2020 academic year. Therefore, the research was carried out on the basis of non-probability purposive sampling. The sample was finally formed by 334 students. Thus, all respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and the anonymous treatment of their data.

Specifically, the sample was defined by 47 males and 287 females, aged between 17 and 25 years (M = 22.73; SD = 2.68). Sampling imbalance between men and women is common in education degrees in Spain, where the female population is much larger than the male population [33]. Table 1 shows the sociodemographic data of the participants.

**Table 1.** Sociodemographic data.

| Variables | *n* | % |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 47 | 14.1 |
| Female | 287 | 85.9 |
| Educational level | | |
| University | 232 | 69.5 |
| Vocational training | 14 | 4.2 |
| Baccalaureate | 88 | 26.3 |
| Year of study | | |
| First | 107 | 32 |
| Second | 61 | 18.3 |
| Third | 85 | 25.4 |
| Fourth | 81 | 24.3 |
| Employment situation | | |
| Employee | 42 | 12.6 |
| Unemployed | 292 | 87.4 |

### 2.2. Measure

The Questionnaire for the Analysis of the Profile of the Pedagogue and his or her Labor Market Insertion (QAPPI) was used to evaluate the professional and social profile of the pedagogue [34]. The scale measured knowledge, expectations, labor insertion, and employability through 40 items, with a 4-point Likert response mode (1 = strongly disagree; 4 = strongly agree). The scores ranged from 40 to 160 points, with higher values on the scale

indicating a higher degree of perception and knowledge of the figure of the pedagogue. The scale has adequate psychometric properties; the reliability obtained in this study through Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was adequate ($\alpha = 0.944$).

The variables on knowledge valued the curricular contents of the pedagogical studies, in comparison with their professional opportunities in order to improve, update and integrate new subjects to enable students to assume the new jobs demanded by society.

The items on expectations inquired about the expectations of the student body, as well as other agents of the educational community and/or society with respect to the work of the pedagogue.

The variables on employability asked about labor market insertion, professional fields of action, and human resources. The items inquired about the capacity of the graduates to define their labor future, how they would enhance the professional development of the pedagogue in both educational and non-educational fields (business and human resources management).

### 2.3. Data Analysis

Statistical-descriptive values were established for the mean and standard deviation of each sociodemographic factor with respect to the scale. In turn, the possible existence of significant differences between the sociodemographic factors was analyzed with the T-test for independent samples, when they were dichotomous (gender, employment situation), and the ANOVA test when more than two groups were established (educational level, year of study). Finally, a structural equation model (SEM) was constructed from the path analysis, where the relationships between endogenous and exogenous variables were established.

The different analyses were carried out with the IBM SPSS and IBM SPSS Amos, version 25 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA) statistical packages.

## 3. Results

The statistical-descriptive data show the mean scores with respect to the pedagogue profile, obtained for each of the sociodemographic factors of the study. At the same time, the possible significant differences were collected (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistical data and differences between groups.

| Sociodemographic Data | M | SD | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | | | |
| Male | 117.77 | 28.20 | 0.036 |
| Female | 109.39 | 24.82 | |
| Educational level | | | |
| University | 111.94 | 27.20 | |
| Vocational training | 103.36 | 16.50 | 0.268 |
| Baccalaureate | 108.09 | 21.30 | |
| Year of study | | | |
| First | 112.66 | 26.77 | |
| Second | 113.17 | 23.31 | 0.247 |
| Third | 113.77 | 25.60 | |
| Fourth | 114.06 | 24.20 | |
| Employment situation | | | |
| Employee | 106.17 | 22.14 | 0.231 |
| Unemployed | 111.20 | 25.86 | |

In terms of gender, the highest mean score was found in the group of men, with significant differences with respect to the group of women ($p = 0.036$). The level of study was a factor with scattered scores (higher mean university studies), although without significant differences ($p = 0.268$). On the other hand, the year of study had similar scores and therefore was not significant ($p = 0.247$). Finally, employment status also showed

no significant differences ($p$ = 0.231), although unemployed students obtained a higher mean score.

For the preparation of the SEM, it was essential to verify the hypothesis of multivariate normality of the data. For this purpose, univariate normality values were established with the Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K–S) test. Skewness showed a positive skewness curve (1.235) and kurtosis took a leptokurtic distribution (1.195) [35]. The K–S test showed that the data did not follow a normal distribution (K–S = 0.149) since it was below 0.05 ($p$ = 0.000). Although the univariate normality hypothesis was not met, multivariate normality was confirmed through Mardia's coefficient. A value of 13.162 was obtained, which was less than p*(p+2), where p was the number of variables observed (40, corresponding to the total number of scale items) [36]. The existence of multivariate normality confirmed the adequacy of the data for the construction of the SEM. The goodness-of-fit indices of the model were adequate [37] (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Goodness-of-fit measure.

| Fit Indices | Obtained Values | Criteria |
|---|---|---|
| $\chi^2$ | 17.22 | |
| $df$ | 13 | |
| $\chi^2/df$ | 1.32 | ≤3 |
| GFI | 0.986 | ≥0.90 |
| RMSEA | 0.031 | <0.05 |
| NFI | 0.962 | ≥0.90 |
| CFI | 0.990 | ≥0.90 |
| AGFI | 0.969 | ≥0.90 |
| SRMR | 0.033 | <0.08 |

Note: GFI: goodness-of-fit index; RMSEA: root mean squared error of approximation; NFI: normalized fit index; CFI: comparative fit index; AGFI: adjusted goodness-of-fit index; SRMR: standardized root mean square residual.

Regarding the path analysis, the dimensions that make up the profile of the pedagogue in the QAPPI scale were broken down. Thus, connections were established between the sociodemographic factors and the dimensions of the scale. The relationships established were between gender, educational level, and employment situation with knowledge. At the same time relationships were established between knowledge with expectations, labor market insertion, employability, and expectations with labor market insertion, and employability with labor market insertion (Table 4). Significant values were established between knowledge and expectations ($p$ = 0.023); knowledge and labor market insertion ($p$ =≤ 0.001); knowledge and employability ($p$ = ≤ 0.001); employability and labor market insertion ($p$ =≤ 0.001).

**Table 4.** Parameter estimates of the final model.

| Associations between Variables | RW | SE | CR | $p$ | SRW |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender → Knowledge | −1.340 | 0.795 | −1.682 | 0.092 | −0.092 |
| Educational level → Knowledge | −0.397 | 0.315 | −1.263 | 0.206 | −0.069 |
| Employment situation → Knowledge | 0.768 | 0.834 | 0.921 | 0.357 | 0.050 |
| Knowledge → Expectations | 0.093 | 0.041 | 2.279 | 0.023 | 0.124 |
| Knowledge → Labor market insertion | 0.329 | 0.069 | 4.749 | *** | 0.285 |
| Knowledge → Employability | 1.142 | 0.061 | 18.719 | *** | 0.716 |
| Expectations → Labor market insertion | −0.119 | 0.064 | −1.849 | 0.064 | −0.078 |
| Employability → Labor market insertion | 0.300 | 0.043 | 6.944 | *** | 0.416 |

Note: RW: regression weights; SE: standard error; CR: critical radio; SRW: standardized regression weights; *** $p < 0.001$.

The graphical expression of the path analysis showed the relationship of factors, where the main constructs were knowledge, expectations, labor market insertion, and employability (Figure 1). The percentage of variation of each construct established by the coefficient

of determination was 1.6% for knowledge ($R^2$ = 0.016), 1.5% for expectations ($R^2$ = 0.015), 41% for labor market insertion ($R^2$ = 0.419), and 51% for employability ($R^2$ = 0.513).

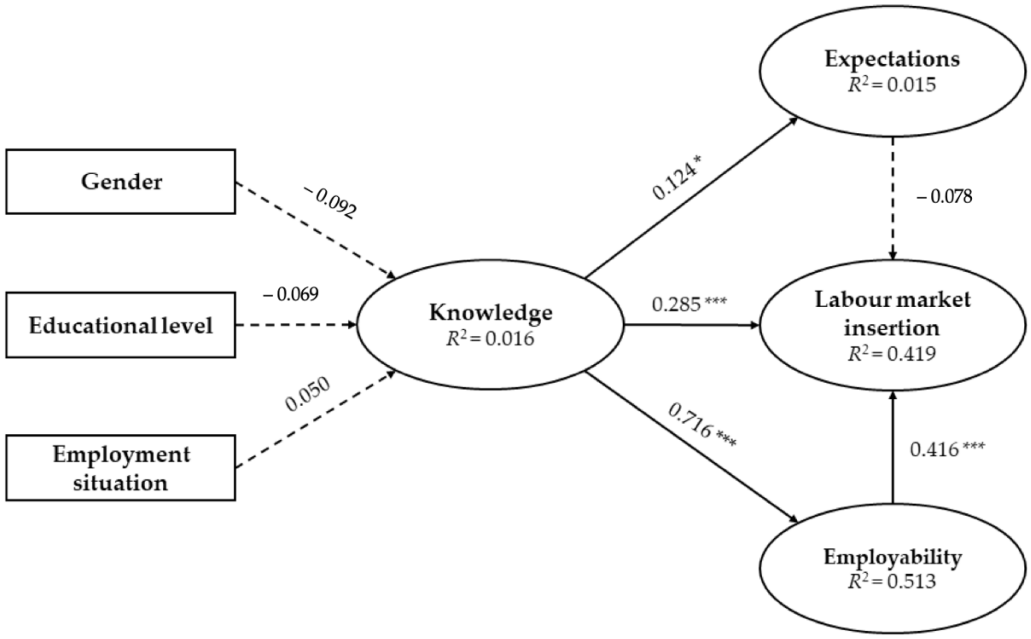


**Figure 1.** Path analysis. Note: * significant at $p < 0.05$; *** Significant at $p < 0.001$. Discontinuous arrow: not significant.

## 4. Discussion

The results obtained indicate that a significant part of the students of the pedagogy degree are not sufficiently aware of the figure and professional development of the pedagogue. This is an important limitation since modern society does not require a pedagogy that goes beyond the needs of society and meets its requirements too late (after the students are already graduates and try to reach the labor market), but an anticipatory pedagogy as a system of intellectual and psychological development and forming the stable individual components of a creative thinking style [38]. With this limitation, the educational system must ask itself how can pedagogues be adequately trained to become highly effective educators and act simultaneously as pedagogues and educators. Abramovich and Miedijensky [39] have suggested physical conditions (where and at what time during the year teaching takes place), economic conditions (sociodemographic characteristics), student qualifications (knowledge and beliefs), subjects (curricula), and so on. In our study, however, the scores obtained were not significantly different in relation to the course, employment situation, or level of study. Nevertheless, what some authors agree on is the need for pedagogues to gain long-term experience in the acquisition and effective application of new teaching and assessment strategies in collaboration with other colleagues [40,41], so it is necessary to promote practical teaching during the degree and to introduce training activities aimed at early inclusion in the labor market.

The highest mean score was found in the group of men, with significant differences with respect to the group of women ($p$ = 0.036), indicating that although the number of men is much lower than that of women (14.1% compared to 85.9%), the degree of knowledge, expectations, labor market insertion, and employability was higher in men. This opens the possibility that the males who studied were more motivated to study the pedagogy degree. In other studies, male and female motivations are similar and generally more positive in STEM studies that employ blended and nontraditional pedagogies [42], while females perceive more advantages in academic programs as reasonably successful in aiding workplace readiness [43].

Once the students were already immersed in the development of the degree, there were no significant differences in relation to the year of study ($p = 0.247$), the level of study ($p = 0.268$), and the employment situation ($p = 0.231$), which clearly indicates the homogenization of their levels of expectations with respect to their training as pedagogues. In the United Kingdom, Paterson [44] indicates that in pedagogy studies there are significant tensions that arise between participants and members of the community, including colleagues, families, and employers, related to issues of gender discrimination, student participation in activities that do not contribute to progression, and cultural norms that may impact student participation in the labor market unrelated to the year or level of study. These tensions were not identified in our study and opens the door to future studies in this area.

Regarding the degree of knowledge, we did find significant differences in relation to expectations ($p < 0.124$), insertion in the labor market ($p < 0.285$), and employability ($p < 0.716$). This does not coincide with Álvarez et al. [45], for whom the students of the pedagogy degree do not find a stable link between the training received and the labor market, a fact that implies that a very high percentage of them do not feel qualified to undertake, existing a gap in their training that should be corrected with the increase of training actions that promote their access to employment. Discrepancies of this type should be considered according to the different study plans of the university institutions and their different ways of contemplating the application of teaching resources.

Central to the training of pedagogues is the importance of supervision and evaluation, socialization and mentoring, education, training, and reciprocity [46]. These requirements can be summarized in four core competencies (pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competence) but they need supervision and mentoring in order to create effectiveness and efficiency (a wise way to create a smart and prosperous society) [46]. In other words, these four recommendations can be maximized if all elements collaborate with each other. It means that every teacher understands his or her profession as an educator, so they are not only required to be smart and fun, but they can also become a role model for students. Likewise, educational institutions must create a system that supports the development of teachers' professionalism.

## 5. Conclusions

Students belonging to the pedagogy degree are not sufficiently aware of the professional figure and professional development of the pedagogue, perceiving their profession as ambiguous and confusing.

It is very necessary that pedagogues or pedagogy students contribute to alleviating the lack of knowledge about their work in order to feel identified with their future profession.

In relation to the level of study, the most chosen route to access the pedagogy degree is the baccalaureate with respect to other entry routes such as vocational training.

The employment status shows that the vast majority of students are unemployed, given that they are focused on their training in the higher studies chosen as a transition measure to working life.

In the future, it would be necessary to reinforce the curricular, academic, and practical training in tasks oriented toward research, improvement, and innovation with the objective of generating knowledge in the university pedagogical field, including the profile of human resources manager. It would be necessary to reinforce the curriculum in this itinerary to generate more opportunities in the labor market in the business sector as a transition to postgraduate studies or private extra-university training. It would also be necessary to reinforce pedagogical training in new information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the use of ICTs as a tool since the pedagogue could contribute to the educational processes aimed at empowering and attracting users with the correct use of the most efficient digital and communication media.

Finally, the functions of direction and management in formal and non-formal educational entities could be another attractive job niche for which new curricular lines would be required.

Regarding the degree of knowledge about the profile of the pedagogue, it has been a factor that influenced expectations about the degree, job placement, and employability. In turn, expectations about the degree did not influence job placement, while employability did have an influence.

The lack of information and guidance on future employment, professional opportunities, choice of itineraries, and fields of action of the pedagogue is a factor that generates confusion in the student body and can influence the academic performance of the students.

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