

# Propuesta de las competencias profesionales en turismo desde el enfoque del empleador

*Proposal of Professional Competencies in Tourism from the employer's approach*

*Proposta de competências profissionais em turismo a partir da abordagem empregadora*

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## Resumen

En virtud de que la industria turística evoluciona debido a los efectos de la globalización y la innovación de los productos y servicios que ofrece, el objetivo de la presente investigación fue conocer la opinión de cinco titulares de organismos, instituciones y asociaciones oficiales que regulan la actividad turística en México, esto con el fin de proponer un esquema de las competencias que un profesional del sector turismo debería adquirir y desarrollar en las instituciones de educación superior. Para indagar en la opinión de los informantes se empleó una entrevista semiestructurada, la cual estuvo diseñada con base en cinco planteamientos

que tomaron en cuenta las notas metodológicas de la base de datos de estadísticas de la Organización Mundial de Turismo (2017). Los temas sobre los cuales se indagó fueron los siguientes: aptitudes, valores, competencias y actitudes del desempeño profesional de los profesionales en turismo. Según la opinión de los entrevistados, las competencias, características y aptitudes requeridas en la industria del turismo en México son heterogéneas en las categorías del “saber” (cognitivas, disciplinarias y conceptuales) y del “saber hacer” (procedimentales e instrumentales), pues cada una de estas dependen de la subindustria turística en la que se labora. Aun así, se pudieron determinar ciertas coincidencias en diversos aspectos cognitivos (p. ej., dominar otra lengua, desenvolverse en el área de mercadotecnia, etc.), actitudinales (p. ej., empatía, trabajo en equipo, etc.) e incluso en determinados valores (p. ej., honestidad, ética, etc.).

**Palabras clave:** competencias educativas, competencias profesionales, educación superior, turismo.

## Abstract

Given that the tourism industry is evolving due to the effects of globalization and the innovation of the products and services it offers, the objective of this research was to know the opinion of five owners of organisms, institutions and official associations that regulate the activity tourism in Mexico, this in order to propose a scheme of the skills that a professional in the tourism sector should acquire and develop in higher education institutions. To investigate the opinion of the informants, a semi-structured interview was used, which was designed based on five approaches that took into account the methodological notes of the statistics database of the World Tourism Organization (2017). The subjects on which it was inquired were the following: aptitudes, values, competences and attitudes of the professional performance of the professionals in tourism. According to the opinion of the interviewees, the competencies, characteristics and aptitudes required in the tourism industry in Mexico are heterogeneous in the categories of "knowledge" (cognitive, disciplinary and conceptual) and "know-how" (procedural and instrumental), since each of these depend on the tourism sub-industry in which they work. Even so, certain coincidences could be determined in various cognitive aspects (eg, mastering another language, functioning in the

marketing area, etc.), attitudinal (eg, empathy, teamwork, etc.) and even in certain values (eg, honesty, ethics, etc.).

**Key words:** educational competences, professional competences, higher education, tourism.

## Resumo

Dado que a indústria do turismo está evoluindo devido aos efeitos da globalização e inovação de produtos e serviços oferecidos, o objetivo desta pesquisa foi conhecer a opinião de cinco titulares de agências, instituições e associações de oficiais que regulam a atividade turismo no México, este, a fim de propor um resumo das habilidades que um sector de turismo profissional deve adquirir e desenvolver instituições de ensino superior. Para investigar a opinião dos informantes foi utilizado um entrevista semi-estruturada, que foi concebido com base em cinco abordagens que levem em conta as estatísticas do banco de dados notas metodológicas da Organização Mundial de Turismo (2017). As questões sobre as quais nós investigados foram: aptidões, valores, habilidades e atitudes de desempenho profissional dos profissionais do turismo. Na opinião dos inquiridos, habilidades, características e habilidades necessárias na indústria do turismo no México são heterogêneos nas categorias de "conhecimento" (cognitivo, disciplinar e conceitual) e o "know-how" (processual e instrumental), como cada um deles dependem de sub-indústria do turismo em que ele trabalha. Ainda assim, certas semelhanças poderia ser determinado em vários cognitiva (p. G., mestre outra função da linguagem na área de marketing, etc.), de atitude (p. G., empatia, trabalho em equipe, etc.) e mesmo em certos valores (p. g., honestidade, ética, etc.).

**Palavras-chave:** as qualificações educacionais, habilidades profissionais, de ensino superior, turismo.

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## Introduction

Derived from the importance and growth of the world tourism activity, it is necessary to analyze the competencies of the tourism professional, since according to the data provided by the barometer of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2018a), this economic sector has grown in 2017 a remarkable 7%, which means a total of 1322 million people, well above the sustained and constant growth trend of 4% in recent years. In this regard, the Secretary General of the WTO, Zurab Pololikashvili (2018a), explains the following:

International travel continues to grow strongly, consolidating the tourism sector as a key driver in economic development. As the third export sector in the world, tourism is essential for job creation and the prosperity of communities around the world. However, as we continue to grow we must work closer to ensure that this growth benefits all members of each host community, and is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. (párr. 5).

However, according to the UNWTO classification, Asia and the Pacific have been at the head of the aforementioned growth, with an increase of 9% in international arrivals, above Africa (+ 8%) and America (+ 3%). . In Europe (+2%) the results have been mixed, while the data available for the Middle East (-4%) point to a decrease in arrivals.

On the other hand, in terms of income from international tourism, it can be indicated that these increased 2.6% in real terms (taking into account fluctuations in exchange rates and inflation). In this sense, the United States and Spain stand out, followed by Thailand, which climbed to the third position from the sixth, and China, which occupies the fourth position. In the specific case of Mexico, and specifically in terms of the number of arrivals, our country climbed one position to be in eighth place, while taking as a reference the economic income, it was placed in the position fourteen (two positions above the last measurement), all of this motivated, in part, by the large number of American tourists who visited the country thanks to the favorable exchange rate of their currency.

According to the Study of the Tourism Policy of Mexico of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2017), tourism is a very important economic sector in Mexico, since in 2014 it directly represented 8.5% of GDP, 5.8% of full-time paid

employment and 77.2% of service exports. This means that this economic area contributes positively to Mexico's balance of payments and generates a higher than average value for the economy. For example, in 2015 a record 32.1 million international tourists contributed 246 100 million pesos (15.5 billion dollars) to the country.

On the other hand, and according to the information from the Datatur Monitoring System of the Ministry of Tourism (Sectur) (2016), consumption due to domestic tourism in the country (expenses incurred by visitors residing in Mexico) was 82.3%, and 17.7% for receptive tourism (expenses that visitors from other countries make within Mexico).

Also, in January 2017 the head of the Presidency of the Republic stressed that the dynamism of tourism in Mexico has not depended only on foreign visitors, since between 85% and 88% of the pesos spent on the tourism sector come from the National tourism. Likewise, he pointed out that more than 7 million formal and informal jobs in the country depend on this sector, and indicated that the Government of the Republic has promoted policies to strengthen this area, such as the program Viajemos Todos por México, launched last year. , 2016; with the participation of the private sector "to optimally utilize unoccupied spaces, offering better rates, or in the stage of low tourism to boost domestic tourism" (paragraph 11). Likewise, he explained that this program has served so that the affluence of national tourists grew 8.4% in the low season since its launch (Presidency of the Republic, 2017).

### **Conceptual framework of educational competences in the university**

The concept of competence comes originally from linguistics, based on the ideas of Chomsky (1983), who in trying to explain the acquisition of the mother tongue by the child defined as linguistic competence the inherent capacity of the individual and the kind of learning the language. From your perspective, the competition has two elements: knowledge and action. "The competence is the theoretical knowledge of the language; acting is the real use of the language in everyday life. The prayers have a deep structure and a superficial one; the superficial structure is related to the performance and the deep structure with the competition "(Maldonado, 2002, p.8).

This implies that competence (linguistic) is related to the individual's ability to learn and also to social experience, since the existence of a speaker without a functional social domain of their language is impossible.

However, the concept of competence with an emphasis on the educational field appears initially in the 1970s supporting the idea that the academic curriculum of people, the results of aptitude and intelligence tests, or the effective adaptation to the problems of daily life is insufficient to predict professional success (Center for Research and Documentation on Problems of Economics, Employment and Professional Qualifications [Cidec], 2004).

Then, this term began to be used in the labor field, which is why different conceptualizations have been developed on this subject. Therefore, and with the purpose of schematizing the conceptual evolution of the concept of educational competence, then, in Table 1, a synthesis of the conceptions of some authors that have addressed the concept of competence and educational competence is offered.

**Tabla 1.** Exploración de la conceptualización *competencia* y *competencia educativa*

Autores	Definición del concepto <i>competencia</i> y <i>competencia educativa</i>
McClelland (1973, p. 1-14)	Las competencias están ligadas a una forma de evaluar aquello que realmente causa un rendimiento superior en el trabajo, y no a la evaluación de los factores que describen confiablemente todas las características de una persona, en la esperanza de que algunas estén asociadas con el rendimiento en el trabajo.
Legendre (1993, p. 223)	Habilidad adquirida gracias a la asimilación de conocimientos pertinentes y a la experiencia; dicha habilidad permite detectar y resolver problemas específicos.
Raynal y Rieunier (1998, p.76)	En el diccionario de conceptos claves de la pedagogía, presentan la competencia como un conjunto de comportamientos potenciales (afectivos, cognitivos y sicomotores) que permiten al individuo el ejercicio eficaz de una actividad considerada como compleja.
Díaz Barriga y Rigo (2000, p. 81)	Capacidad para resolver problemas que se aplica de manera flexible y pertinente, adaptándose al contexto y a las demandas que plantean situaciones diversas. La competencia no se limita a los aspectos procedimentales del conocimiento, a la mera posesión de habilidades y destrezas, sino que se ve acompañada necesariamente de elementos teóricos y actitudinales.
OCDE (2002, p.8)	Una competencia es la capacidad para responder a las exigencias individuales, sociales, para realizar una actividad o una tarea. Cada competencia reposa sobre una combinación de habilidades prácticas y cognitivas interrelacionadas, conocimientos (incluyendo el conocimiento tácito), motivación, valores, actitudes, emociones y otros elementos sociales y de comportamiento que pueden ser movilizados conjuntamente para actuar de manera eficaz.
Braslavsky (2006, p. 84)	Desarrollo de las capacidades complejas que permiten a los estudiantes pensar y actuar en diversos ámbitos. Consiste en la adquisición de conocimiento a través de la acción, resultado de una cultura de base sólida que puede ponerse en práctica y utilizarse para explicar qué es lo que está sucediendo.
Perrenoud (2007, p. 9)	Facultad de movilizar un conjunto de recursos (saberes, capacidades, informaciones, etcétera) para solucionar con eficacia una serie de situaciones conectadas a contextos culturales, profesionales y condiciones sociales.
SEP (2008, p. 2)	Una competencia es la capacidad de responder a diferentes situaciones, e implica un saber hacer (habilidades) con saber (conocimiento), así como la valoración de las consecuencias de ese hacer (valores y actitudes).
OCDE (2013, p.3)	Una competencia es más que conocimiento y habilidades. Implica la capacidad de responder a demandas complejas, utilizando y movilizando recursos psicosociales (incluyendo habilidades y actitudes) en un contexto particular.

Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de las obras de los autores citados

As can be seen, the subject of educational competences involves a wide range of material that the various authors have developed to expose this subject. In this regard, it should be noted that each degree develops competences, some of them specific to the corresponding career, while others are transversal or shared with other degrees.

According to Gairín Sallán (2009), the specific competences are specific to a field or degree, which are aimed at achieving a specific profile of the graduate. These are close to certain formative aspects, areas of knowledge or groupings of subjects, with longitudinal projection in the degree. On the other hand, generic (or transversal) competences are common to most degrees, although with a different incidence, and are contextualized in each of the degrees in question. Within this block are personal competences, which are linked to time management and the responsibility of learning itself; as well as interpersonal skills, related to teamwork, leading an action or negotiating a conflict, or instrumental competencies, associated with information management, language proficiency, technology, etc.

### **Framework of reference for higher education competencies**

Next, a synthetic framework of conceptualizations related to higher education competencies is presented. According to Cano (2008, p.2), training by competence at this academic level involves articulating conceptual, procedural and attitudinal knowledge, and relies on personality traits of the subject to build learning; In addition, it demands reflexive action, it is functional and it moves away from standardized behavior.

On the other hand, according to Jiménez (2009, pp1-25), these competences seek to interweave the work of the educational world with the work environment, which is due to the fact that the labor market requires agents of change, hence the universities must train flexible, autonomous and entrepreneurial graduates, as pointed out by different authors and public and private institutions in charge of regulating higher education.

For example, the World Conference on Higher Education (UNESCO, 2009) discussed the need to promote lifelong learning that allows the construction of adequate skills to contribute to the cultural, social and economic development of society. It was also indicated that the main tasks of higher education have been and will continue to be linked to four of its main functions: a generation with new knowledge (research functions), the training of highly

qualified people (education function), provide services to society (social function) and social criticism (ethical function).

On the other hand, the Draft Definition and Selection of Competences (Deseco) of the OECD (2006) provides a framework that can guide an extension, in the long term, of evaluations of new competence domains. The objective of the PISA report, for example, is to monitor how students who are at the end of compulsory schooling have acquired the knowledge and skills necessary for their full participation in society.

Also, according to the science and technology portal of the Museum of Metals (2014), the conceptual framework of the Deseco Project for key competences classifies them into three broad categories. First, individuals must be able to use a wide range of tools both physical (use of information technology) and sociocultural (language use) to interact effectively with the environment. Secondly, people need to be able to communicate with others, because we are in an increasingly interdependent world. And, third, individuals must take responsibility for managing their own lives to act autonomously.

In accordance with this idea, the Tuning Project (2003) began to promote a broad reflection on higher education by virtue of the accelerating rate of change in society. This project is framed in the process of the Bologna Declaration of May 25, 1998, which emphasized the central role of universities in the development of European cultural dimensions, among which the creation of the European Area stood out. of Higher Education as a key way to promote the mobility of citizens and the ability to obtain employment in function of the general development of the continent. A significant feature of the Tuning Project is its commitment to consider degrees in terms of learning outcomes and, particularly, in terms of generic and specific competences in each thematic area. In this project were contrasted a series of generic competences promoted in any degree and divided into instrumental, interpersonal and systemic competences. In short, the Tuning Project defines competence as "a dynamic combination of attributes, in relation to knowledge, skills, attitudes and responsibilities that describe the learning outcomes of an educational program or what students are able to demonstrate at the end of a educational process "(p.33).

### Framework of reference of the professional competences in tourism

Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon related to the movement of people to places that are outside their usual place of residence (UNWTO, 2018b). These people are called visitors, and are made up of tourists or hikers, residents or non-residents. This transfer of people, logically, directly and indirectly generates an increase in economic activity in the places visited, given the demand for goods and services that must be produced and provided.

To make an economic analysis of tourism, one must distinguish between the economic contribution of tourism (which refers to the direct effect of tourism and that can be measured by the Tourism Satellite Account) and the economic impact of tourism (a broader concept that encompasses to the direct, indirect and induced effects of tourism that must be estimated through the application of models).

Tourism, therefore, requires certain closely linked elements that constitute it as a functional system, as each one has a specific function and contributes significantly to the activity to occur. In this sense, Table 2 is presented below (Majó, 2005) in which the most valued competences in the tourism sector are indicated.

**Tabla 2.** Competencias mejor valoradas en el sector turismo

Responsables académicos	Sector turístico	Titulados en turismo
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Trabajar en inglés como lengua extranjera.</li><li>■ Orientación marcada de servicio hacia el cliente.</li><li>■ Utilizar y analizar las TIC en los distintos ámbitos del turismo.</li><li>■ Manejar técnicas de comunicación.</li><li>■ Comprender los principios del turismo.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Orientación marcada de servicio hacia el cliente.</li><li>■ Trabajar en inglés como lengua extranjera.</li><li>■ Definir objetivos, estrategias y políticas comerciales.</li><li>■ Utilizar y analizar las TIC en los distintos ámbitos del turismo.</li><li>■ Manejar técnicas de comunicación.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Trabajar en inglés como lengua extranjera.</li><li>■ Comunicarse de forma oral y escrita en una segunda lengua extranjera.</li><li>■ Dirigir y gestionar los distintos tipos de entidades turísticas.</li><li>■ Orientación marcada de servicio hacia el cliente.</li><li>■ Evaluar los potenciales turísticos y el análisis prospectivo de exploración.</li></ul>

Fuente: Majó (2005)

On these aspects, it is worth noting that the Tourism Secretariat of Mexico (2014) has developed the Guide for tourism education institutions with the aim of informing about the educational offer of each institution in this area in four different educational levels: basic or training for work, upper secondary level, upper level and diplomas. In fact, it can be indicated that in Mexico tourism education is structured in four levels of education and in most cases the institutions and study programs show typologies of elementary linkage with public and private organizations. However, there is no precision and framing of the knowledge, profile, characteristics and competences that that professional must have to achieve effectiveness in their work.

### **Objective of the investigation**

The objective of the present study was to know the opinion of five owners of organisms, institutions and official associations that regulate the tourist activity in Mexico, this with the purpose of proposing a scheme of the competences that a professional of the tourism sector should acquire and develop in the Higher education institutions.

### **Methodology**

The methodological process for the purposes of this research was of a qualitative, descriptive, transversal and non-experimental nature, with a focus on the analysis of the labor sector composed of the heads of agencies, institutions and official associations that regulate tourism activity in Mexico, specifically responsible for training and training human capital in the industry. Specifically, emphasis has been placed on the following aspects: graduation profile, educational competences, relevance of the tourism professional in the work environment and educational quality requirements in the tourism industry.

### **Participants**

The participants were five owners of organisms, institutions and official associations that regulate the tourist activity in Mexico. In the first place, the institution responsible for planning and coordinating public policies for the development of tourism activity in Mexico, that is, the Tourism Secretariat (Sectur), was taken into account. Of the sub-industry of

lodging for visitors, the holder of the Mexican Association of Hotels and Motels. Of the sub-industry of passenger transport by water, the holder of the Mexican Association of Companies for the Attention of Tourist Cruisers (Amepact). Also, of the sub-industry of cultural activities, the holder of the National Association of Mexican World Heritage Cities. And the sub-industry of sports and recreational activities, the owner of the Mexican Association of Adventure Tourism and Ecotourism, A.C.

### **Instrument**

The instrument used was a semi-structured interview, which was designed based on five approaches supported by the methodological notes of the statistics database of the World Tourism Organization (2017). The subjects on which it was inquired were the following: aptitudes, values, competences and attitudes of the professional performance of the professionals in tourism (table 3).

**Tabla 3.** Categorización de variables

Familia	Núcleo teórico	Pregunta / reactivo
<b>Desempeño laboral</b>	Competencias Procedimentales Instrumentales	Descripción del desempeño laboral de los egresados de la licenciatura en Turismo: capacidad de análisis, habilidad en manejo de tecnologías de información, comunicación en lenguas extranjeras, etc.
<b>Competencias</b>	Competencias Cognitivas Disciplinares Conceptuales	¿Cuáles son las competencias relevantes para el licenciado en Turismo en el área de...?
<b>Actitudes y valores</b>	Competencias Actitudinales Valóricas	¿Cuáles son las actitudes y valores que el licenciado en Turismo debe poseer para el eficaz desempeño laboral en el área...?
<b>Formación profesional</b>	Actualización profesional	¿Cuáles son las exigencias de formación que son necesarias para el mercado laboral en el área...?
<b>Vinculación del sector laboral con la formación académica</b>	Pertinencia laboral	¿Actualmente la formación académica de los licenciados en Turismo satisface las necesidades del sector laboral? ¿Por qué?

Fuente: Elaboración propia

### Organization of information

The answers obtained through the applied instrument were organized in a summarized and standardized format according to the questions posed. The standardization of the information was assisted according to table 4:

**Tabla 4.** Estandarización de la información recabada

Pregunta / reactivos
<b>Secretaría de Turismo</b>
<b>Respuesta</b>
Asociación Mexicana de Hoteles y Moteles
<b>Respuesta</b>
Asociación Mexicana de Empresas para la Atención de Cruceros Turísticos
<b>Respuesta</b>
Asociación Nacional de Ciudades Mexicanas del Patrimonio Mundial
<b>Respuesta</b>
Asociación Mexicana de Turismo de Aventura y Ecoturismo, A. C.
<b>Respuesta</b>

Fuente: Elaboración propia

## Results

According to the opinion of the informants, the competences, characteristics and aptitudes required in the tourism industry in Mexico are heterogeneous in the categories of "knowledge" (cognitive, disciplinary and conceptual) and "know-how" (procedural and instrumental), because each of these depend on the tourism sub-industry in which they work. Even so, certain coincidences could be determined in the criteria mentioned below:

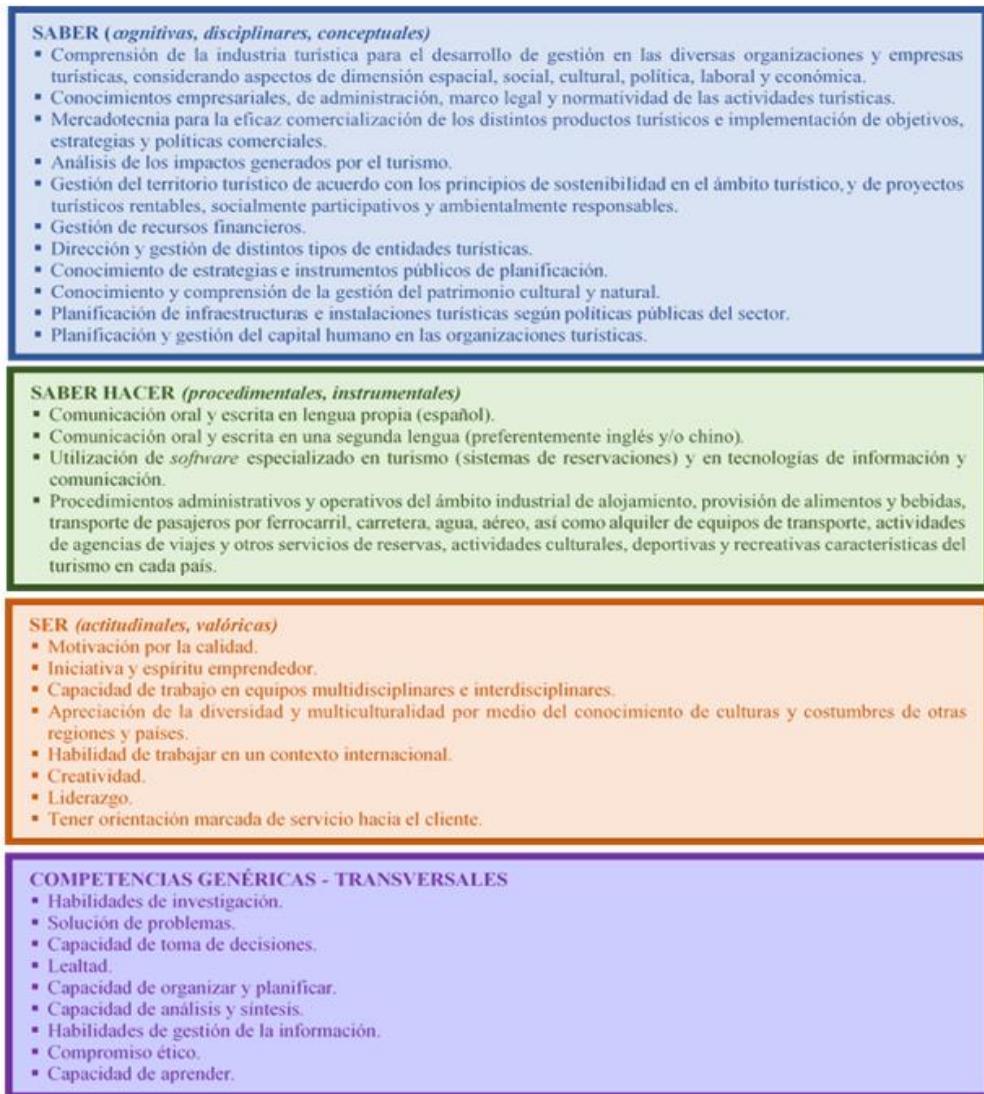
1. Bilingual training, specifically in the English language, since it is considered basic and universal for the provision of tourist services.
2. Understanding of the tourism industry for the improvement of management in various tourism companies and entities.
3. Knowledge of marketing for the effective commercialization of the different tourist products.
4. Competencies in the use of communication and information technologies with emphasis on tourist software packages.
5. Administrative and decision-making skills.
6. Knowledge of legislation and sustainability in the tourism field.

7. Ideal profile in terms of the competences of "being" (attitudes and values), which are related to empathy, ethics, teamwork, honesty, creativity, discipline and, above all, positive attitude for the tourist service and attention.

#### **Proposal of the synopsis of professional competences in tourism**

Figure 1 lists the skills required of the graduate in the tourism career. These have been synthesized from the analysis and exploration in various sources of information.

Figura 1. Competencias profesionales en turismo



Fuente: Elaboración propia a partir de datos recabados en las fuentes consultadas en esta investigación

## Conclusion

Based on the data gathered in this study, it can be concluded that the tourism professional must acquire and develop a wide variety of cognitive, attitudinal, etc. competencies in order to be able to perform successfully in this work area, which must be addressed and promoted by higher education institutions. In this sense, special emphasis should be placed on the formation of various cognitive aspects (mastering another language,

developing in the area of marketing, etc.), attitudinal (empathy, teamwork, etc.) and even in certain values (honesty , ethics, etc.).

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