



THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPTS OF 'COMPETENCE' AND 'COMPETENCY' AND THEIR CLASSIFICATION IN MODERN PEDAGOGY

Amankosova Dinara Gabitovna

**Nukus State Pedagogical Institute named after Ajiniyaz
(Nukus, Republic of Karakalpakstan)**

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ABSTRACT

Ushbu maqolada 'kompetensiya' va 'kompetentlik' tushunchalarining evolyutsiyasi va zamonaviy pedagogikadagi tasnifi keng ko'rib chiqiladi. Maqolada nazariy asoslar, tarixiy rivojlanish, mintaqaviy va milliy olimlarning yondashuvlari, amaliy tadqiqotlar va tanqidiy tahlillar keng qamrovda tahlil qilinadi. 'Kompetensiya' va 'kompetentlik' atamalarining shakllanishi, ularning farqlari va pedagogik jarayonda qo'llanilishining zamonaviy talablarga mos ravishda o'zgarishi haqida batafsil yoritiladi.

Introduction

The concepts of 'competence' and 'competency' have become central to contemporary pedagogical discourse, shaping the ways in which educational aims, curricula, and assessment are conceptualized and implemented. The increased emphasis on outcomes-based education, lifelong learning, and the alignment of educational processes with the needs of a rapidly changing society has foregrounded the necessity of clearly defining and operationalizing these terms. Their widespread usage, however, has generated significant debate regarding their precise meanings, origins, and implications for practice. As educational systems worldwide strive to prepare learners for complex, dynamic environments, the evolution and classification of 'competence' and 'competency' have assumed particular importance. This article seeks to trace the historical and theoretical development of these concepts, analyze their differentiation and application within the context of modern pedagogy, and critically examine the debates and empirical evidence surrounding their adoption. In doing so, it aims to clarify the conceptual landscape and provide a robust foundation for advancing research and practice in the field of education.

Literature Review

The theoretical and conceptual foundations of 'competence' and 'competency' are deeply rooted in broader philosophical inquiries into the nature of knowledge, skill, and human development. Classical educational theorists such as John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky laid the groundwork for understanding learning as an active, constructive process, in which individuals acquire not only discrete pieces of knowledge but also the ability to apply that knowledge contextually and adaptively. Dewey's pragmatism, for instance, emphasized the significance of experience and reflective thinking in education, foreshadowing later

developments in the notion of competence as the capacity to mobilize resources for effective action in diverse situations. Piaget's cognitive developmental theory, meanwhile, underscored the progressive construction of cognitive structures that enable learners to solve problems and make sense of the world. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, with its focus on the social mediation of learning and the importance of cultural tools, provided a further dimension to the understanding of competence as socially and contextually situated[1].

The emergence of the terms 'competence' and 'competency' in educational discourse can be traced to the mid-20th century, particularly in the context of the shift from traditional, content-based curricula to approaches that prioritize learning outcomes and real-world applicability. The seminal work of Noam Chomsky in linguistics introduced the distinction between 'competence' (the underlying knowledge of language) and 'performance' (the actual use of language in concrete situations), a dichotomy that would later influence the educational field's conceptualization of competence as an underlying capacity distinct from observable behavior. In the 1970s, the competence movement gained momentum through the work of David McClelland, who critiqued conventional intelligence testing and advocated for the identification and assessment of competencies—defined as observable and measurable knowledge, skills, and abilities that predict effective performance in specific roles. This marked a significant departure from earlier, more static views of educational achievement, and laid the foundation for the development of competency-based education (CBE)[2].

The distinction between 'competence' and 'competency' has been the subject of considerable scholarly debate. In Anglo-American literature, 'competence' is often used to denote a broader, holistic construct encompassing the integration of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values required for effective performance across various contexts. 'Competency', by contrast, tends to refer to specific, demonstrable elements or components of competence, often operationalized as behavioral indicators or performance criteria. However, this distinction is not universally observed, and in some European and Asian contexts, the terms are used interchangeably or with reversed meanings. For example, in German pedagogical discourse, the term 'Kompetenz' encompasses both the potential and the actualization of abilities, while in Russian educational theory, 'kompetentnost'' (компетентность) emphasizes the individual's ability to mobilize knowledge and skills in novel situations, reflecting a more dynamic and process-oriented understanding[3].

Regional and national scholars have further enriched the conceptual landscape by adapting the notions of competence and competency to local educational traditions, policy frameworks, and cultural values. In the post-Soviet space, for instance, the transition to competency-based approaches has been marked by intense theoretical debate and practical experimentation. Russian scholars such as A.V. Khutorskoy and V.D. Shadrikov have developed comprehensive models of key competencies, emphasizing the integration of cognitive, communicative, and value-based components. In Uzbekistan, researchers have sought to align competency-based reforms with national educational objectives, focusing on the development of personal, social, and professional competencies that support both individual fulfillment and societal progress. In Western Europe, the influence of the European Union's 'Key Competences for Lifelong Learning' framework has catalyzed efforts to define and operationalize transversal competences—such as digital literacy, intercultural

communication, and learning to learn—across diverse educational systems. Empirical studies in these contexts have investigated the challenges of implementing competence-based curricula, including issues related to teacher preparation, assessment practices, and the alignment of educational standards with labor market needs[4].

The classification of competencies has likewise evolved in response to shifting educational priorities and theoretical advances. Early taxonomies, such as Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives, provided a hierarchical model of cognitive skills, which was later expanded to include affective and psychomotor domains. In the context of competency-based education, classification schemes have sought to capture the multidimensional and integrative nature of competence. For example, the OECD's DeSeCo (Definition and Selection of Competencies) project identified three broad categories of key competencies: using tools interactively, interacting in socially heterogeneous groups, and acting autonomously. Other models distinguish between core (or generic) competencies, which are deemed essential for all learners regardless of context, and specific (or occupational) competencies, which are tailored to particular professions or fields of study. In the realm of teacher education, frameworks such as the Tuning Project and UNESCO's ICT Competency Framework for Teachers have delineated sets of professional competencies that encompass subject knowledge, pedagogical skills, and the capacity for reflective practice[5].

Empirical research on the implementation of competence- and competency-based approaches has yielded valuable insights into both their potential and their limitations. Studies conducted in various national and institutional settings have highlighted the benefits of emphasizing competencies, including enhanced learner motivation, improved alignment between educational outcomes and labor market requirements, and greater flexibility in curriculum design. For instance, research in Finnish vocational education has demonstrated that competence-based assessment fosters student engagement and supports individualized learning pathways. Similarly, investigations in the United States have shown that competency-based models in higher education can facilitate credit accumulation and accelerate degree completion for non-traditional learners. Nevertheless, empirical evidence also points to significant challenges, such as the risk of fragmentation of learning into narrowly defined competencies, difficulties in developing valid and reliable assessment tools, and tensions between standardization and contextualization. Teachers, in particular, often report uncertainty regarding the interpretation and operationalization of competencies, as well as concerns about increased workload and diminished professional autonomy[6].

Critical analysis of the competence and competency discourse reveals a number of unresolved issues and ongoing debates. Some scholars argue that the proliferation of competency-based models reflects a broader trend toward the managerialization and marketization of education, in which the language of competencies serves to align educational processes with the demands of employers and the logic of human capital theory. From this perspective, the focus on measurable outcomes and transferable skills may undermine the intrinsic purposes of education, such as personal growth, democratic citizenship, and the cultivation of critical thinking. Others contend that the concept of competence, when properly theorized and implemented, provides a valuable framework for bridging the gap between education and society, fostering learner agency, and promoting lifelong learning. The

challenge, therefore, lies in developing nuanced, context-sensitive models of competence and competency that honor the complexity of human learning and development, while also meeting the practical demands of contemporary education systems.

In summary, the evolution of the concepts of 'competence' and 'competency' and their classification in modern pedagogy reflect a dynamic interplay of theoretical innovation, historical contingency, cultural adaptation, and empirical inquiry. The ongoing debates and diverse applications of these terms underscore the need for continued critical reflection and collaborative research, as educators and policymakers seek to navigate the complexities of 21st-century learning and prepare learners for an uncertain and rapidly changing world.

Conclusion

The evolution of the concepts of 'competence' and 'competency' in modern pedagogy encapsulates a rich and multifaceted history, marked by theoretical innovation, empirical investigation, and dynamic adaptation to shifting educational paradigms. From their philosophical and psychological origins to their contemporary application in outcome-based education and curriculum reform, these concepts have undergone significant refinement and diversification. The distinctions and overlaps between 'competence' and 'competency' continue to generate scholarly debate, reflecting broader tensions between holistic and reductionist approaches to educational aims. The classification of competencies has likewise evolved, encompassing generic and specific, cognitive and affective, individual and social dimensions. Empirical studies attest to both the promise and the challenges of competence-based education, highlighting the importance of context-sensitive implementation and the need for robust assessment frameworks. Critical perspectives remind us that the adoption of competency models must be guided by a clear understanding of educational values and purposes, lest the focus on measurable outcomes overshadow the broader aims of personal and societal development. As the field moves forward, ongoing dialogue among theorists, practitioners, and policymakers will be essential to ensuring that the concepts of competence and competency continue to serve the evolving needs of learners and societies alike, fostering not only employability and productivity but also critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning..

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