

**University governance: the challenge of having ethical leadership****Gobernanza universitaria: el desafío de contar con liderazgos directivos éticos**

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**Abstract**

This academic article addresses the issue of university governance in the 21st century, and the need for ethical leaders in the management of higher education institutions. In this way, some primitive, perfectible and situated guidelines are proposed, which allow progress towards reflection and formalization, of qualities and attributes that management leaders must have, attending to the demands and interpellations that society as a whole makes to The universities, it is not enough that who directs the institutions and the management team that accompanies them, have extraordinary highly qualified professional competences, but they must also have specific competences that allow them to address issues associated with ethics in the institutions they govern. In this way, from a descriptive qualitative methodological approach based on documentary analysis and empirical approaches to successful models, it is revealed what is an ethical leadership, its qualities and attributes, as well as some strength ideas of how a managerial leader can move towards an ethical leadership in its management. As a result, the article proposes some guidelines referring to sensitivities, principles, values, and personal dispositions, which allow the leader to face and live ethical conflicts, even when his own values are put into play.

**Governance, Leadership, Ethics, Competition, Management****Resumen**

El presente artículo académico, aborda el tema de la gobernanza universitaria en el siglo XXI, y la necesidad de contar con líderes éticos en la gestión de las instituciones de educación superior. De esta manera, se proponen algunos lineamientos primigenios, perfectibles y situados, que permitan avanzar hacia la reflexión y formalización, de cualidades y atributos que deben tener los líderes directivos, atendiendo a las demandas e interpelaciones que la sociedad en su conjunto, hace a las universidades, puesto que no basta que quién dirige las instituciones y el equipo de gestión que le acompaña, cuenten con extraordinarias competencias profesionales altamente calificadas, sino también deben tener competencias específicas que les permitan abordar temas asociadas a la ética en las instituciones que gobiernan. De esta manera, a partir de un enfoque metodológico cualitativo descriptivo basado en análisis documental y la entrevista a tres directivos superiores, se devela como resultados, las cualidades y atributos de un liderazgo ético, así como algunas ideas fuerza de como un líder directivo puede avanzar hacia un liderazgo ético en su gestión, se proponen lineamientos referidos a las sensibilidades, principios, valores, y disposiciones personales, que permiten al líder enfrentar y vivir conflictos éticos, aun cuando se pongan en juego sus propios valores.

**Gobernanza, Liderazgo, Ética, Competencias, Gestión**

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## Introduction

This article addresses university governance from the point of view of the need for ethical leaders in charge of higher education institutions. Indeed, management, and particularly management in the universities of the 21st century, is a determining element of the quality of educational institutions and their units, especially as the decentralization of decision-making processes increases, based on quality assurance models that promote continuous improvement. Notwithstanding the above, it is highly necessary to deepen the figure of the managerial leader on whom lies the responsibility of management, as well as the success and failure of his or her organization. In this sense, beyond aspects associated with the professional competencies of the person who directs the institution and the team that supports him/her. It is in this context that this article delves into aspects so far little addressed, which are those related to the ethics of management teams, particularly in ethical leadership, for this, the state of the art of ethical leadership is reviewed, operational aspects that the ethical leader must face in their daily management are analyzed and some strong ideas that allow a managerial leader to move towards ethical leadership in their management are proposed.

The challenges facing university governance in relation to the new scenarios facing higher education emphasize the relevance of university governance and the need to promote strategic thinking and professionalism in the management of decision-making, based on the need for ethical leaders.

To begin with the meaning of governance, is to refer to a set of institutional processes (formal and informal) that are carried out in an organization, which implies a set of actions and decision making, by those who lead the institution, (Alcántara, 2012). Similarly, a distinction is made between external and internal university governance. Regarding the former, it refers to the relations that higher education institutions have with the bodies that supervise them. For example, in the case of Chile, university governance may be linked to quality assurance processes, institutional accreditation and training programs, where accreditation is mandatory, as in the case of medicine, pedagogy and dentistry careers.

Therefore, this relationship between universities and supervisory bodies is reflected in the asymmetrical relationship between the National Accreditation Commission (CNA) and Chilean universities.

Similarly, in the field of internal university governance, reference is made to the organs of power that structure relations within higher education institutions. For this reason, the concept of university governance highlights the importance of university management and administration processes, as well as the relevant role played by management teams in decision-making, which characterizes the distribution of power in the institutions, the way in which management teams relate to the different strata, and their commitment to the institutional project.

A condition for governance is to establish a good organizational climate, to build a healthy and motivating environment. For this, it is necessary to work and consolidate the development of social competencies among all members of the educational community. Encouraging among the members of the institution, some actions such as greeting, thanking, saying goodbye, is a first step forward, the culture of respect should prevail over individual differences.

It is relevant that institutions learn and practice self-regulation in the management of emotions and communication (González, 2017), but this requires learning and accompaniment. Governance demands negotiation skills, starting with who leads educational institutions. Obviously, at some moments it is required to give in on actions, so the possibility of practicing tolerance in the institutions, implies learning to manage frustration.

Thus, the figure of the leader emerges strongly within the educational institutions, the professional who is responsible for directing the institutions towards the achievement of their vision, mission and strategic planning. Empirical evidence shows that participatory strategic processes, which follow a bottom-up methodology, are transferable to the organization. Rodríguez and Pedraja (2010).

The decisions adopted in institutional planning must be nuanced by a high degree of strategic relevance, which articulates the aspirations of the higher authorities and what society expects from its institutions of higher education. This demands that the institutions must respond, depending on the national and local reality, to the needs that arise from society and the various groups that make it up.

It is in this context, which is highly relevant to illustrate the reality that Chile is currently experiencing, after the conflict and social outbreak of October 18, 2019, where issues such as equity, inclusion, gender equality, multiculturalism, respect, dignity, and the need to meet social demands, promoting equality and opportunity for all, challenges the management and consideration of higher education institutions, as well as the professionals who govern them.

Situating ourselves within university institutions, it is not at all trivial that the style of governance of the management team leading the institution, or at least that is to be expected, translates into the effectiveness of undergraduate and graduate teaching processes, research, linkage with the environment, internationalization, among others, towards the fulfillment of formally established goals and indicators.

The style of university governance is characterized by the leadership style of the senior management and its management team. Indeed, leaders who are not very assertive and communicative with the various groups that make up the institution, with unilateral decision making without being consulted, with little information flowing within the institution, creates uncertainty and an abysmal distance between the authority and the various strata, are two worlds that move in different rationalities and interests, this tension in the institutions, brings distrust and generates isolation and resignation, which contribute little or nothing to an institutional project, which is supposed to belong to all those who make up the organization.

The question is whether this type of leadership is compatible with a style of university governance in the 21st century, which is not free of tensions, of demands on universities, and with questions about the effective involvement of universities in issues of social responsibility, inclusion, multiculturalism, integration of minorities, native cultures, respect for diversity, the environment, among other relevant aspects at the present time.

This shows, therefore, the need to stress the style of governance in universities in Chile today, the qualities and attributes of the leaders on whom the responsibility falls, so that, in addition to complying with aspects related to rather technical issues such as compliance with the strategic planning of the institutions themselves, to comply with the regulations and mandates of state bodies, ensuring to move forward effectively and efficiently.

However, in this scenario, it is important not to forget, as is emphasized in the so-called intelligent organizations, that the human resource is the most valuable part of any organization, and this is the people who give the organization its own mystique and identity, which make it unique and unrepeatable.

In this way, a style of governance that incorporates ethical leaders in its management, translates into quality results that will transcend in time, since it involves others in a dignified and respectful manner. In view of the above, it seems then, that it is not enough to have highly qualified professional leaders in university governance, but also that they have the skills and sensitivity to work with and for others, where ethics is a substantive aspect of their management and that of the management team that accompanies them. Ganga-Contreras, F., & Navarrete-Andrade, E., & Suárez-Amaya, W. (2017).

Indeed, a style of university governance, which ensures healthy work environments and the welfare of all strata, involves ethical management, that is, defining and giving life to the guiding values of an organization, in order to create an environment conducive to ethically respectful behavior, as well as instilling a sense of shared responsibility among all the actors that make up the organization.

In university governance, the behavior of leaders, including everything they say and do, can affect the environment and culture of their organization, explicitly or subtly. Indeed, leaders through their words and actions shape organizations, we refer to what they pay attention to, measure and control on a regular basis; how they react to critical incidents and organizational crises; the observed criteria by which leaders allocate resources, assign rewards and status; the observed criteria according to which leaders recruit, select, promote, remove and exclude organizational members, among other aspects. Ganga-Contreras, F., & Quiroz, J., & Fossatti, P. (2017).

University governance in the 21st century, requires an experiential ethical leadership and not merely rhetorical and discursive, this goes beyond, high ideals and good intentions; it requires commitment and proactive effort. An ethical environment and culture does not arise spontaneously, it must be developed and nurtured. Leaders need to treat ethics in the same way they treat other organizational priorities. That is, they need to use all the tools at a leader's disposal to influence organizational performance, such as defining lines of accountability, establishing and using formal program structures and processes; formal and informal communication with staff, aligning incentive systems with results; and allocating adequate staff, resources and time.

Now, if leaders are to meet the challenge of fostering an ethical environment and culture, it is essential that they cultivate the specific knowledge, skills and habits required to demonstrate true ethical leadership. The message that leaders send through these primary mechanisms listed above are reinforced through additional means such as organizational design and structure; systems and procedures; physical space design; organizational rituals, stories, legends and myths about people and events.

The influence of leadership behavior on the ethical environment is not minor, since the actors in educational institutions tend to adjust their own ethical orientations to the behavior they observe among themselves. In fact, research has shown that, surprisingly, leaders are much more likely to lower the ethical standards of their subordinates than to raise them. To counter this trend, leaders must take proactive steps to foster an ethical environment and culture.

Leaders play a critical role in creating, maintaining or changing all aspects of organizational culture. Specific ethics-related actions by leaders, such as talking about the importance of ethical behavior or setting a good example of ethical practice, are strongly associated with desired outcomes, which can translate into low observed rates of ethical misconduct, a decrease in situations that lead to ethical misconduct, and increased stakeholder satisfaction.

Leaders are role models both by virtue of their status and function within the organization, their power will affect others, by their personal character or leadership style. Thus, to promote effective ethics, the leader must be seen as a role model, attractive and credible, fully involved in the work of the organization, with a normatively appropriate behavior, with clear and explicit messages about the relevance of ethics in the organization; from a personal point of view, the leader must be morally correct.

One of the most important things for leaders to understand is how their actions influence the ethical environment and culture of the organization, as they may encourage or inadvertently support unethical behavior, despite their best intentions and even without being aware that they are doing so. This can happen in a number of ways, for example: not linking performance incentives to ethical practice. When leaders create strong incentives to perform in certain areas without creating equally strong incentives to adhere to ethical practice in achieving desired objectives, they establish ethical lapses. Unbalanced incentives can leave employees feeling pressured to do whatever it takes to achieve what is expected, even if it encroaches on and affects others.

When leaders become unrealistic or set unattainable goals, they invite their staff to game the system or misrepresent results. When leaders fail to take into account organizational barriers to achieving performance expectations, they may inadvertently set up situations where the only thing that matters is "achieving success", even though their behavior is at odds with the ethics of their actions, in such cases, employees know it is wrong, yet they are recognized for their performance.

Employees are responsible for their actions in the organization. But when leaders blame their subordinates for results, it also sends a message that ethics don't matter much, giving the impression that leaders care more about overprotecting themselves than being fair.

A relevant issue, within the responsibility as a senior manager of an institution, is precisely how these institutional leaders are able to face daily situations in their institutions, which puts them in front of ethical dilemmas in their management. The leader integrates personal values, in this way, both organizational and professional standards require a commitment to ethics, de facto, in the guiding principles, some institutions express it in their institutional project, in their vision and mission.

Thus, some of the challenges are aimed at supporting and demonstrating consideration for the personal needs and well-being of each person in the institution. Facing an ethical dilemma as a leader of an institution requires particular competencies, since, if the leader faces a critical incident or situation that requires his/her capacity for resolution and decision making, it may happen that this managerial leader is not sure which path to follow, taking care not to harm others, from an approach that considers ethics from social justice as an essential and fundamental part of educational justice.

The ethical decision-making and leadership skills of those who lead educational institutions require courage and risk-taking, not being exempt from the dilemma of facing their own personal codes of ethics and values, putting their own interests before those of others. Remolina (2016).

### **Materials and methods**

The study arises from an interpretative paradigm with a descriptive qualitative methodological approach based on documentary analysis and interviews with three managers of higher education institutions in Chile responsible for strategic management in their institutions and who voluntarily participated, with prior informed consent to protect their identity and confidentiality of the information provided.

During the second semester of the year 2020, each of them had held various management positions for more than ten years in their institutions. Within the documentary analysis, the institutional project, the strategic planning of the unit, as well as the delegation of responsibilities in decision making were considered, which was later deepened with a set of four individual questions asked to each manager virtually, using the zoom platform for windows, each interview lasted approximately one hour and twenty minutes. Of the questions initially asked, we should point out the following:

1. 1.- What is for you as a manager an ethical leadership in higher education institutions?
2. 2.- Is ethical leadership possible in institutions of higher education? If so, in what way could it be manifested and how would this impact on decision making?
3. 3.- What do institutions of higher education require to install ethical leadership?
4. 4.- Do you perceive yourself as an ethical leader?

Each interview was recorded, which was later transcribed verbatim, the analysis was carried out from an inductive approach, through a constant method of comparison, using Atlas T qualitative analysis software, taking into account the criteria of scientific rigor: credibility, transferability and confirmability.

### **Results**

With the purpose of deepening the characterization of ethical managerial leadership, based on the interviews conducted, it was possible to generate four descriptive categories and 47 units of meaning relevant to the managers interviewed, as illustrated in Table 1.

Descriptive categories	Number of meaning units
1. Ethical leadership a priority.	10
2. Qualities and attributes of ethical leadership.	15
3. Acting as an ethical leader.	12
4. Decision making from an ethical leadership.	10

**Table 1** Categorization and units of meaning relevant for managers

Source: Own elaboration, (2021)

Similarly, to look for similarities in content, structure and theory, 3 meta-categories were formed from the descriptive categories, as shown in Table 2.

Meta-categories	Coding
Ethics in leadership.	ETIC
Effective communication.	COMU
Decision making.	TDEC

**Table 2** Meta-categories, codes and definition

Source: Own elaboration, (2021)

From the meta-categories stated above, these are defined, described and operationalized, as illustrated below.

### Meta-category 1: Demonstrating that ethics is a priority

The priority that ethical leadership must demonstrate is to foster an ethical environment and culture, that is, to make the various levels of leadership aware that ethics is something that matters to everyone, including management teams.

Leaders may not fully appreciate how their day-to-day activities communicate their priorities to staff. Unless leaders, through their actions, demonstrate that they do not care about ethics, then staff would likely conclude that ethics is not highly valued in the institution. Most leaders are likely to say that they are committed to ethics in speech, but not in action.

But what we mean when we suggest that leaders -talk about ethics- is to avoid perpetuating misconceptions or certain installed myths, as illustrated in Table 1, which refers to installed myths about ethics in organizations, such as identifying ethics with bad behaviors, personal opinions, or becoming a dogma. While from reality, ethics values what is right and expected, it is a reasoning that considers respectfully all points of view within the organizations.

Myths	Reality
Ethics is about identifying misconduct.	Ethics considers what is right or what should be.
Ethics is about following your conscience or gut instincts.	It must deal with uncertainty or conflict over values.
Ethics is a matter of personal opinion.	Ethics involves analytical reasoning and is informed by specific knowledge and skills.
Ethical behavior is determined solely by training and background.	Ethics is a form of reasoning that takes into account a variety of viewpoints. a variety of points of view.
Ethics is dogmatic.	

**Table 3** Myths and reality about ethics in organizations

Source: Own elaboration, (2021)

In view of the above, and considering ethics as a priority for the leader within the organizations, the directors interviewed stated:

"...for me it is important for a leader in an educational institution to be consistent with his words and actions, it is not enough to write it, to say it, but it is necessary to practice it..."

"...who leads and makes decisions associated with a power structure must ensure compliance with the established regulations..."

"...in today's times we need leaders who are inclusive and respectful of diversity..."

"... it is necessary in the institutions to form or train ethical leaders..."

"... for me an ethical leader is honest, transparent and practices by example..."

"... we must be careful what we say, how we say it, the emphasis we put, because this generates rapprochement or rejection in the strata..."

"... it seems to me that referring to ethics in educational institutions, of ethical leaders, is highly powerful, the issue is how to put it into practice..."

Furthermore, it is also important for leaders to avoid making comments that could give the impression that they do not care about ethics. For example: "...all that really matters is the bottom line..."

Leaders may also inadvertently convey that they are willing to tolerate unethical behavior, often without even realizing it. For example, the phrase "...proceed until apprehended regardless...", this could be interpreted to mean that it is okay to do something unethical, as long as you are not caught; a manager's expression "...I shouldn't tell you this, but.... ", could suggest disregarding confidentiality; and the expression, adding "...you didn't hear it from me...", could imply a lack of integrity because the leader is unwilling to take responsibility for his or her own words and actions. To support ethical practices, the ethical leader, should explicitly refer to -ethics-, -mission-, -values- and -principles-, using inspiring words such as -integrity-, -justice-, -equity-, -inclusion-, -collaboration-, -respect-, -dignity-, -well-being-, -tolerance- and "truth", some examples: "...it seems to me that in the university ethics is a priority ..."; "...everyone deserves to be treated with respect and fairness . ..."; "...everyone is important at this university...".

It seems that leaders must demonstrate that they care about ethics and must also move down that path, i.e., they must demonstrate a commitment to ethics through their actions as well as their words. A role model for a leader's ethical practice might be:

- Commitment and accountability at all times to the organization they lead.
- Demonstrate respect and consideration for others.
- Maintain composure and balance even in times of crisis.
- Be honest, straightforward and trustworthy.
- Be caring, treat everyone fairly and do not favor only some.
- Keep promises and commitments.
- Exercise self-control and restraint.
- Take challenges and risks even when others do not.

Among the characteristics of ethical leadership is the courage to act on one's own values and take the risks necessary to fulfill those values. In a healthy, wholesome organization that promotes the well-being of all, leadership creates an environment where open communication is welcomed and encouraged. Staff can speak up without fear if they make comments that differ from their superiors, respect and tolerance prevail, and it is a morally safe environment, so staff are less likely to be unethical in their behavior.

### **Meta-category 2: Communicating clear expectations for ethical practice**

To foster an ethical environment and culture, it is important for leaders to generate clear expectations about ethics in the organization. In addition to demonstrating that they are genuinely committed to ethics. Leaders must also translate that commitment into explicit and practical guidance on what the various strata should do, thus, what is expected of an ethical leader that:

- Communicate clear expectations for ethical practice.
- Recognize when expectations need to be clarified.
- Be explicit, give examples, explain underlying values.
- Anticipate barriers to meeting expectations.

In this way and from some of the interviews conducted, you can illustrate:

"... it is necessary that each member of an institution is clear about what is expected of him or her, what is the expected performance, hopefully it is written, and the evaluation is carried out jointly, that speaks well, it is ethical to make the results transparent, it is ethical that the other is clear about how he or she has been evaluated, what has been looked at, what has been considered and that there is the possibility of making contributions in a respectful and face to face manner...."

"... we all need to be clear about what is expected of us.... is the minimum..."

"... institutions are required to train, qualify, update their personnel in ethical leadership..."

"... sometimes I think I am not very clear and that everyone understands me what is expected..."

Leaders often assume that the various strata know and understand what ethics is in educational institutions. For there is a tendency to believe that the people we work with, with whom we share values, think the same way we do. It is suggestive then, that leaders communicate their expectations for ethical practice in a variety of ways, from formal institutional policy, to resolutions, briefings and speeches, to performance standards, to informal conversations with individual staff members.

It is therefore a matter of being explicit, of giving examples, of explaining underlying values, of recognizing when expectations need to be clarified. The only way to ensure that staff understand is to explicitly communicate those expectations about ethical practice through concrete, situated examples. It is equally important for leaders to explain why they have particular expectations, and that means explaining what values underlie those expectations. Finally, leaders must ensure that their expectations are reasonable and achievable. They need to visualize the situation from a personal perspective and anticipate problems that staff may have.

### **Meta-category 3: Practicing ethical decision-making**

All leadership decisions have an ethical component, i.e., they are based on assumptions about what is right or wrong, good or bad. When leaders make decisions, it can generally be assumed that they are trying to -do the right thing. But this is sometimes easier said than done. In practice, ethical decision making requires identifying and rigorously analyzing ethical values. In this way and from some of the interviews it can be illustrated:

"...in the institutions unilateral decision making is installed, we must move towards more participatory systems, many times there is no time left for consultations, of course when the staff is committed and consulted about a decision, a greater commitment to work is appreciated, I think we must move along this line, more inclusive, democratic, participatory systems and where emotional intelligence prevails over impulsiveness in decision making....."

"in today's world, we need ethical leaders, but it is not easy, it implies an important change from oneself and in the organizations, many times I wonder if I am doing well, and on the other hand I wonder if my decisions contribute to me personally, in my work in what they think of me and my work..."

"...sometimes I wonder if I have been fair in my decisions, if I have considered that everyone is benefited, I have listened to them, I have considered their interests, opinions, proposals... I don't know, if maybe I had consulted them, it could have been better..."

It seems that, in order to move towards ethical decision making, it is suggestive to address the following aspects:

- Identify decisions that raise ethical concerns in the institution.
- Systematically address ethical decisions based on data and information.
- Explain decisions to the entire community in a reasoned manner.

Leaders are faced with making a variety of decisions every day. While all decisions have an ethical component, only a subset of decisions raise significant ethical concerns. Being able to recognize when a decision raises such concerns and being able to define these concerns clearly is critical to ethical decision making. The difference between common decisions and ethical decisions lies at the point where accepted rules no longer apply, and the decision maker is faced with the responsibility of evaluating values and arriving at a judgment of a situation that is not exactly the same as the one he or she has faced in previous situations. Ethical concerns could be by way of example:

- Uncertainty about how to interpret or decide between important values.
- An intuition that something is not right.
- An issue that keeps you awake at night.
- A complaint or expression of dissatisfaction about how someone is being treated.
- A substantial difference of opinion about the right course of action.



- The prospect of a harmful or inequitable outcome.
- Withholding information from others.

Leaders must systematically address ethical decisions, that is once leaders determine that a decision raises a potential ethical concern, they must address the decision systematically, either individually or as a team. The more the decision relates to ethics, the more systematic the decision making process must be. This is because ethical decision making is a complex process that includes gathering relevant facts, identifying stakeholders and taking into account the different values of the parties involved, thinking about the possible benefits and problems of various courses of action, and employing analytical reasoning tools in a logical, clear and coherent process.

Similarly, leadership decisions on ethical issues can have a significant impact on the entire organization, managers, teachers, students, staff in general, so it must be done through an open, reflective and consistent process of the decision to be taken. However, without a systematic and transparent process, decisions may be wrongly perceived as capricious, arbitrary and unfair.

Different models suit different situations and leadership styles. The models differ in their accuracies, but in one way or another, all are intended to lead, sharing the following aspects:

- Be broadly informed: the more value-laden a decision is, the greater the uncertainty about the right course of action. Leaders must ensure not only that they have gathered the full range of facts that influence a given decision, but also understand the views of those who are (or should be) involved in making the decision and those who will be affected by it.
- Generate the participation of diverse constituencies: As far as possible, people who have an interest and who are involved in decision making should be involved. This not only generates acceptance, but provides useful information and demonstrates respect for those who will be affected by the decision.

- Values-based: By values, we mean strongly held beliefs, ideals, principles. The values at stake in a decision, such as fairness, stewardship or fidelity to the mission, should be explicitly clarified and considered. To make values-based decisions, leaders must be familiar with various types of ethics-related materials and resources and use them to inform decisions.

Ethical decision making requires leaders to consider the short-, medium- and long-term consequences for the institution they manage, both positive and negative, and to ensure that the benefits of the decision outweigh the potential harms that may occur. This involves balancing, in a fair manner, the different interests of an organization's stakeholders. Leaders may find it useful to consider best and worst case scenarios as a way of thinking about the impact a decision will have.

Ethical decision making should include an examination of the underlying issue(s) that may contribute to the analysis of ethical concerns; the decision should prevent similar situations from occurring again. It may also help the decision to set a precedent for similar cases.

Finally, leaders should consider how their decisions will be perceived from different quarters, from those affected by the decisions and other stakeholders in the organization. In such a way as to ensure that decision-making is based on a process, on sound reasoning and that all aspects have been carefully considered, and that the decision taken is ethically justifiable.

## **Discussion**

The reflection in universities on the best model of university governance cannot be exempt from making explicit the type of leadership required, which undoubtedly represents a set of specific qualities and attributes of who leads the organization and its management team that accompanies him, this certainly goes beyond highly qualified professional skills. We refer to aspects related to the dimensions of being, from where to promote an environment and an ethical culture in organizations, this being a substantive responsibility of the leaders.

However, ethical leadership must be lived and breathed, and not merely discoursed, since ethics is a priority in the organizations of the 21st century, as well as in universities, the communication of clear expectations for ethical practice, informed ethical decision making. Thus, the first step for any leader is to critically reflect on his or her own behavior, which implies self-evaluation, as it challenges him or her to continuously improve his or her own performance. The results of the study, confirm the approaches of Ganga-Contreras, F., & Quiroz, J., & Fossatti, P. (2017), regarding the need to incorporate in higher education institutions, professional ethical leaders with competencies and sensibilities to work with and for others, where ethics is a substantive aspect of their management and that of the management team that accompanies them.

Similarly, Remolina's (2016) statements are confirmed, in that the ethical decision-making and leadership skills of those who lead are not exempt from the dilemma of facing their own personal codes of ethics and values. Currently, the new challenges facing university governance, confirm the results of the study, these in line with Alcántara's (2012) statements, regarding the need for ethical leaders who promote strategic thinking and professionalism in the management of decision making. Indeed, issues such as inclusion, equity, gender identity, multiculturalism, are part of the new educational scenarios and for this, leaders are required to assume these challenges in all the complexity and depth required.

Going deeper into the subject of ethical leadership, without a doubt, aspects related to commutative social justice come into play, as long as the managerial leader promotes equality and equity among the different actors that make up the institution, that is, it refers to the equality between what is done and what is received in return, in this sense, we can point out as an example of a not very fair act from the commutative aspect, when a career manager manages to accredit the career he/she directs above the national average, it could happen that this achievement is not recognized by the institution's senior management, let alone by the other members of the institution; rather, it is an achievement that is reached in silence, thus losing the possibility of generating collaborative learning communities among the members of the institution.

Similarly, distributive social justice is contextualized when the managerial leader is able to make decisions, considering that all strata have the same opportunities to feel benefited. Both commutative and distributive social justice require ethical leadership, competencies associated with the dimension of being, such as justice, temperance, contemplation, wisdom, empathy, respect for diversity, inclusion, multiculturalism, gender diversity, which goes beyond mere instrumental aspects of management and professional competencies.

It seems that the ethical leader needs to genuinely want and take the time to ask himself some questions and give himself the possibility to generate a specific and personalized action plan, some of the questions:

Do I have all the important facts relevant to the decision?

Have I involved everyone who should be part of this decision?

Does this decision reflect the organizational, professional and social aspects?

What values are involved in my decision?

Do the likely benefits of the decision outweigh any potential harm?

Will this decision prevent the problem from recurring or set a good precedent?

How would this decision look to someone outside the organization?

Finally, this topic, as pointed out in the presentation of the article, is still little addressed in Chile today, and the challenge remains to continue working and deepening, and installing research to analyze the ways of managing an ethical managerial leader in universities, from the discourse and from its practice.

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