

**Responsible leadership: a comparative study between Peruvian national and private universities**

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ABSTRACT

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Purpose: A university community that works for and supports students along their developmental trajectory through responsible leadership is important for a sustainable and accountable educational environment. Public and private institutions differ in their student leadership responsibilities. In light of this, the objective of this study is to analyze the level of responsible leadership between public and private colleges in Peru in 2022. **Design/Methodology/Approach:** This study employs quantitative and descriptive-comparative research methods. This study's sample included 459 instructors from six public and private institutions in Peru. The survey-based method was used to collect data on responsible education leadership.

Findings: The study's findings emphasized the importance of responsible leadership in colleges. This study shows that private institutions in Peru have a better level of responsible leadership than governmental universities. **Practical Implications:** This study underlines that strong leadership should always seek innovation in the field of education, keeping current with the most recent achievements and collecting feedback from university teachers and students. To obtain a higher education level, institutions should therefore foster responsible leadership. **Originality/value:** This research contributes to a previously unexplored section of the literary canon. Several prior studies have researched responsible leadership; however, the context of the present study is neglected by those prior studies. Previous research neglected the significance of responsible leadership within universities. Rarely have past studies compared national universities in Peru to private ones. Therefore, this work made a substantial contribution to the corpus of knowledge.

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1. Introduction

The contribution of corporate management to sustainable development has attracted the attention of academics, managers, and policymakers as environmental problems such as global climate change and biodiversity loss have increased (Abbas, Chengang, & Zhuo, 2021; Bansal & Song, 2017; Moya, 2015; Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, Dacko-Pikiewicz, & Lis, 2015). Thus, responsible leadership develops as a potent response to society's various needs and challenges (Xuecheng et al., 2022). The current challenge for business managers is to lead their organizations in solving social and environmental sustainability concerns (Marques, Reis, & Gomes, 2018; Xuecheng et al., 2022). Sustainability objectives in all sectors today give attention to elements such as the socio-environmental responsibility of employees, environment, management, and social development, as opposed to focusing simply on the old management style of the time, costs, and quality. To implement these initiatives, organizations must ensure that their constituents share this purpose (García et al., 2022; Zhang & Ouyang, 2021).

To do this, it is of the utmost importance that the organization has a leader with socially responsible abilities (Muff, Delacoste, & Dyllick, 2022). Positive long-term social and environmental impact results in not just image benefits for the organization but also financial benefits for the business (Bouichou, Wang, & Zulfiqar, 2022). The commitment is becoming more apparent in the company, partly because of laws that impose greater accountability on both leaders and employees (Tian & Suo, 2021). Companies must comply with formal and legal environmental care and social responsibility standards (Bennis & Nanus, 1997; Jiang, Prokopovych, & DiStefano, 2021). Being at the nexus of dialogues about leadership and environmental responsibility for the past decade, responsible leadership has benefited from the increased academic interest in both subfields (Shi & Ye, 2016). Undoubtedly, the scholarly discourse has shed light on the precursors, processes, and multi-level results of responsible leadership. However, it has left several questions surrounding the nature and evolution of responsible leadership unsolved (Abbas et al., 2021). Figure 1 depicts the public's access to public and private universities in Peru.

(% of 19-22 year-olds with completed secondary education that had access to a university)

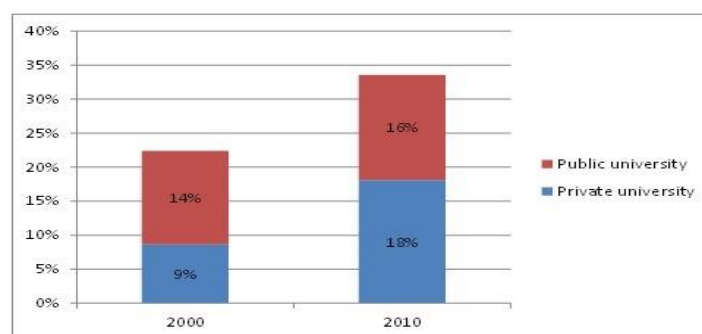


Figure 1. Public Access to Higher Education in Peru

Source: Recent higher education trends in Peru

So that the university can effectively act as a mentoring community and environment for its students, the university's community must exemplify the values it seeks to instill in its pupils (Anthony & Antony, 2017; Jiang et al., 2021). The vast majority of academics aspire to leadership positions in academic research, even though many feel unqualified for such positions and bemoan their lack of leadership skills (Haage et al., 2021). Concerning the pandemic and, in general, the global repercussions of weak educational leadership are especially frightening (Muff, Liechti, & Dyllick, 2020). Recently, French President Macron hinted at a future loss of free or affordable access to higher education, a potential setback to the fourth Sustainable Development Goal of the United Nations, which is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all (Xuecheng et al., 2022).

The Peruvian education system continues to face formidable hurdles in terms of money, infrastructure, quality of instruction, and student-to-teacher ratio. Over the past few years, significant progress has been achieved in allocating sufficient finances for education services. Due to the government's emphasis on digital education, schools must have the necessary infrastructure, especially in rural regions (González, Gallardo, & Chávez, 2022; Muñoz et al., 2022; Puma, 2022). Institutional leadership concerns include insufficient people and recruitment, the misuse of resources, the administration of online instruction, and the reliability of online evaluation of student learning. The educational system is significantly impacted by insufficient staffing. Increased class sizes strain the remaining teaching staff, causing institutions to hire part-time teachers to make up the shortfall. However, this does not resolve the issue entirely. Frequently, students cannot confer with their part-time teachers, denying them the essential teacher-student interaction necessary for the learning process. In Peru, the number of students seeking a quality education greatly exceeds the number of teachers and professors.

Consequently, the nation's kids must be educated by trained and accountable educators. If vocational training through responsible leadership and sustainable competencies were employed to move students toward their planned vocations and sustainable development, Peru's higher education would be more beneficial and ethical. Consequently, this study aims to assess the level of responsible leadership between public and private colleges in Peru in 2022.

Several prior studies have researched responsible leadership (He, Morrison, & Zhang, 2021; Lu et al., 2022; Tuan, 2022); nevertheless, the context of the present study is overlooked by the prior research. Previous research neglected the significance of responsible leadership within universities. Previous research conducted by Peruvian universities has mostly ignored this crucial subject. This study's significant contribution is also based on comparing public and private universities in Peru. Rarely have past studies compared national universities in Peru to private ones.

2. Literature review

Initially, responsible leadership was viewed as a social-relational and ethical phenomenon that emerges from social interaction processes and entails responsibilities that transcend the typical organizational bounds (Maak & Pless, 2009). A leader or

leadership team possesses a collection of characteristics that define responsible leadership. These characteristics include an ethical and value-driven perspective, establishing long-term relationships with stakeholders based on their needs, and recognizing the interdependencies between oneself and the system through initiating change in good faith and influence on society and the globe (Tal & Gordon, 2016).

According to the Leadership Model for Social Change, leadership is a purposeful, collaborative, and values-driven process that produces good social change (Muff et al., 2022). This definition aligns with post-industrial leadership methods prioritizing connections, processes, and social justice over management, production, and command and control. This leadership category covers leader-member exchange, transformative, and servant-based leadership. In addition, four often applied personal development methodologies in business are briefly discussed (Berkan, Leonardo, & Stefano, 2021; Jiang et al., 2021).

In addition to focusing on ethical considerations, responsible executives prioritize establishing relationships with stakeholders and creating long-term goals (Abbas et al., 2021; Riggio, Ciulla, & Sorenson, 2003). Following the essential notions of responsible leadership reflects the individual's ethical views and efforts to balance the connection between human society and nature while fostering sustainable stewardship. An accountable leader pushes an organization to establish environmental protection management practices and codes of conduct and outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviors (Torres & Riaga, 2006). Moreover, responsible leadership can boost employee performance in other areas, such as organizational citizenship behavior (Seemiller & Whitney, 2020).

Literature has identified three major aspects of RL: (a) effectiveness, as RL has been shown to increase worker productivity; (b) ethics, as RL has been shown to act ethically and set a good example for their followers; and (c) sustainability, as there is a greater emphasis on social, environmental, and economic performance. RL aids in environmental protection. RL encourages its members to realize their fullest potential through instruction, empowerment, involvement, equality, communication, and awards (Maak & Pless, 2006). Those who employ these strategies report feeling more in charge of their careers and loving their employment than those who do not (Maak & Pless, 2009). According to Maak (2007), responsible leaders emphasize the organization's basic principles and build an environment where individuals are encouraged to work together to achieve common goals. RL prioritizes the happiness of its employees and earns their trust, which contributes to their professional development.

2.1. Responsible leadership in education

Responsible leadership at universities is founded on particular ethical and pedagogical traits that are based on responsible education via respect for the environment, for other people, and for the promotion of programs that promote sustainable development (Smit, 2013). These are only a few of the complicated concepts. The implications of these principles for the future of management education are crystal evident. However, the

problem at hand involves more than wondering if the content and technique of instruction should be rethought. Since the middle of the twentieth century, universities have played an increasingly vital role in the evolution of management education's ethos, aims, content, and methods. This is not unique to universities. Universities must therefore emphasize the essential reform of management education, and the question is how to include the ideals inherent in responsible leadership into the management curriculum (Riggio et al., 2003).

Visionary, citizen, servant, and administrator are the four roles of a responsible university leader, each with its ethical repercussions. Responsibility begins with ethics to deliver teachings that are in line with the challenges that the world is experiencing and must also be visionary to project methods to prevent these problems and establish responsible, sustainable development initiatives. At this point, the instructor assumes a leadership role, leading students to make decisions that consider the environment and sustainable development (Smit, 2013). This concept is associated with a leader's dedication to ethics and a vision for long-term, sustainable growth (Chongyang & Asavisanu, 2022).

The authors suggest four positions for university leaders, each with its ethical implications: visionary, citizen, servant, and steward, in the following piece. It begins with a leader with a vision responsible for advocating measures to avoid future problems and behave responsibly in the face of environmental and social challenges. Teachers must portray their leadership to pupils to promote social responsibility through responsible behavior (Smit, 2013). This concept is associated with a leader's dedication to ethics and a vision for long-term, sustainable growth (Chongyang & Asavisanu, 2022). Considering the theoretical support demonstrated in the literature review, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study.

Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant difference in the level of social responsibility between public and private universities in Peru.

3. Methodology

Using a quantitative technique with a descriptive-comparative focus, this study establishes a population of 459 professors from all faculties of both universities, including 241 teachers from three public universities and 218 teachers from three private universities. The information was gathered using Google Forms and the recipients' institutional e-mail addresses to submit the forms.

The Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (Severy, 2017) was used as an instrument. The reliability of scales was investigated using Cronbach's alpha, the most prevalent metric of scale reliability. The eight constructs' means, standard deviations, and Cronbach alphas are presented in Table 2. All Cronbach's alphas were greater than .70, indicating that alpha scores were adequate. Four had remarkable Cronbach's alpha values above 0.80. These outcomes indicate the reliability of the SRLS as it pertains to leadership educators. The validity of the SRLS was tested using Principal Components Analysis and analyzing the relationship between each component and the individual items. Finally, correlations between the constructs were examined to discover their interrelationship.

To systematize the collected data, incomplete virtual questionnaires were omitted from the total count. After this was completed, the findings were transferred to Excel, where they were compiled using the average arithmetic mean and percentage values to generate descriptive statistics. IBM SPSS Statistics v25 utilized the normality test to evaluate hypotheses. The same method was used to sort and code the data to construct the statistical hypothesis test. This was performed with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%.

The study was carried out following the Helsinki Declaration. The research was done in conjunction with the management of each educational institution, which also allowed faculty participation. In light of this, providing each participant with complete information in advance was crucial, emphasizing the flexibility to accept or decline participation in the study. The names, positions, and other identifying information of the participants have been deleted from this article.

4. Results

The results in [Table 1](#) show that 61% of public universities have a normal level of responsible leadership, while 70% of private universities have a high level of responsible leadership.

Table 1

Level of responsible leadership in universities

Inclusive leadership	Public universities		Private Universities	
	F1	%	F1	%
Null	16	3%	4	1%
Low	49	11%	29	6%
Regular	279	61%	105	23%
High	115	25%	321	70%
Total	459	100%	459	100%

According to [Table 2](#)'s findings, the arithmetic mean for participants from private colleges was 68.34, whereas the mean for participants from public universities was 42.58. Based on the values, it can be assumed that individuals from the private institution had higher scores since the higher the score, the greater the level of responsible leadership.

Table 2

Group comparison statistics

Grupos		N	Mean	Deviation	Avg. error
Results	Private Universities	218	68.34	8.17464	1.74284
	Public universities	241	42.58	9.61851	2.15076

At a threshold of significance of 0.003, the null hypothesis is rejected. The research hypothesis is accepted because there is no significant difference between the study groups. There is a substantial difference between the study groups in that the level of responsible leadership in private colleges in Peru is higher than in in-state universities in Peru. [Table 3](#) provides the hypothesis test and student's t-test for comparing outcomes.

Table 3
Hypothesis test with student's t-test for comparison of results

		t-test for equality of means					
		gl	Sig.	Difference in averages	Standard error difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
						Lower	Upper
Results	Equal variances are assumed	38	0.003	9.58	2.95	2.48	13.12
	Equal variances are not assumed	34	0.002	7.58	2.68	2.59	13.16

5. Discussion

Public colleges in Peru strongly need individuals with superior organizational leadership skills. Several indices suggest that confidence in our business, government, and community leaders has never been worse. In response to these challenges, universities have significantly increased the number and complexity of their leadership-related programs (Bouichou et al., 2022; Cavagnaro & van der Zande, 2021).

Due to the emphasis on excellence and the challenges of tackling increasingly complex societal and environmental problems through global collaboration, leaders must have skills beyond the mere management of teams and quantities of time. Due to the increased emphasis on quality in recent years, this is the case (Muff et al., 2022). In addition to "conventional" leadership qualities, leadership involves a unique set of talents, knowledge, and abilities. These include, among others, the capacity to manage change, adaptability, empathy, motivating individuals, and developing direction and vision (Anthony & Antony, 2017). In addition, academic leadership entails strengthening the research group's reputation, networking, maintaining the autonomy of staff members, establishing academic legitimacy, and managing complexity (Anthony & Antony, 2017; Haage et al., 2021).

There is a lack of clarity surrounding the conceptualizations of leadership ability most commonly espoused in university education and the outcome models utilized by leadership educators to evaluate the efficacy of their efforts (Jiang et al., 2021; Seemiller & Whitney, 2020).

As mentioned by the study's goal, the leadership development of college students can be enhanced if leadership instructors are trained to display a dedication to leadership. These leadership educators must plan and develop leadership best practices that are learner-centered, knowledge-centered, assessment-centered, and community-centered. Consequently, it appears crucial to have well-trained and self-aware leadership educators create, implement, and direct these high-impact events. A deeper comprehension of how a leader thinks and acts (Bouichou et al., 2022).

It is anticipated that, over time, educators of leadership will shift from the function of merely retaining information to that of competent professionals who can critically apply leadership development principles in their work and, eventually, encourage the growth of leadership in themselves and others.

Contextual constraints are among this research's limitations. The context is academics in higher education. Consequently, the findings cannot be generalized to leadership instructors who work outside the setting of higher education or to non-student populations. Second, even though leadership models have shifted from industrial to post-industrial, the findings of this study are merely a snapshot in time, and the existing literature constrains them on leadership education.

Inadequate staffing and recruitment, mismanagement of resources, management of virtual learning, and dependable online assessment of learning outcomes are some management challenges an institution faces. Staff shortages severely impair the learning process. Due to the strain that increased class sizes place on the remaining teaching staff, institutions frequently hire adjunct teachers to fill the void. However, this does not resolve the issue entirely. Most of the time, students cannot communicate with their part-time teachers, depriving them of the necessary instructor interaction associated with learning. Compared to the number of teachers and professors, the number of students seeking quality education in Peru is vastly greater. Therefore, the nation's kids must be instructed by qualified and trustworthy educators.

Part-time teachers often deny their students the crucial teacher-student contact that is important for the educational system. In Peru, there are significantly more students pursuing higher education than there are professors and teachers. Therefore, the nation's youths should be instructed by qualified and reliable teachers. University education in Peru could be more useful and moral if students were guided toward their desired careers and sustainable growth by courses emphasizing genuine conduct and enduring skills. The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the level of leadership in private and public institutions in Peru.

6. Conclusions

To fulfill its mission effectively, a university must first prioritize the pursuit of teaching and learning outcomes. This entails defining criteria for the school's learning methods and ensuring that the organization's values and behaviors are conducive to the kids' success. Leadership should always seek innovation in education, keeping abreast of recent developments and asking for input from university faculty and students. Competent leaders must encourage teaching professionals' continuing education and development for instructional practices to reflect the most current industry standards. Leaders should cultivate collaboration and collaboration with other education providers to expand the education system's influence.

Universities should also adjust their courses in response to societal demands, emphasizing innovation in the sectors of information, communication, and technology and promoting links with business and government. Due to the rapid evolution of the educational space, school leaders must promote environmental innovation and problem-solving activities. Similarly, teachers must foster a culture of responsibility and originality to overcome a challenging challenge.

Education system administrators can make informed ethical judgments regarding existing norms and standards, such as the employment of new teachers if they get ongoing training on themes such as ethics, responsibility, and accountability. They will feel at ease engaging in long-term thinking and aim for positive change, such as encouraging innovation via research and teaching. In developing a student-centered education system, they will engage in effective communication and collaborative problem-solving.

7. Implications

This study has substantial theoretical ramifications based on its findings. This study begins by discussing the significance of leadership in the sustainable development of universities to promote education. Indeed, previous research has examined the function of leadership in assessing the conduct of students. Still, this study is the first to demonstrate that strong leadership can affect university administration and improve student affairs work. In addition, this study has shown that the role of responsible leadership significantly impacts social responsibility. Undoubtedly, previous research disregarded this field of study. Because the consequences of this research expand the literature on the social responsibility of universities, these ramifications are outstanding for raising awareness about responsible leadership.

Furthermore, this research has enhanced the university model of social responsibility by demonstrating the major influence of responsible leadership. In this regard, the future study can utilize responsive leadership as a crucial variable, as this variable is currently the most important aspect of universities' social duties. Therefore, from a theoretical standpoint, this study has substantial implications that must be considered when designing future research on the discrepancies between institutions' social responsibilities.

Furthermore, this study has significant practical implications for university administration in both the public and commercial sectors. The job of leadership is to guarantee that all work is performed appropriately and in a sustainable manner for the benefit of the pupils. According to the students' principles, the university administration should help the students with all their problems responsibly. In addition, this study indicated that public colleges should build a system similar to that of private universities to assist students. Moreover, this research reveals that the social responsibility of management is essential for students and that it is the student's entitlement to receive all facilities from universities about university-projected prisons. On the other hand, students should be self-motivated to ensure they work diligently to get their desired outcomes from university. Indeed, the implications of this research are extraordinary and should be explored by the responsible leadership of public and private colleges in Peru to benefit their students.

8. Future Directions

This study is predicated on the significant hypothesis that the level of social responsibility differs significantly between public and private institutions in Peru. This emerging topic of the study examined the role of responsible leadership in the university's social responsibilities to its students. However, this study has methodological and substantive flaws. This study's first limitation is that data were acquired from teachers at

various universities. On the other hand, students are the most important stakeholders in institutions. In this context, future research should collect student information to confirm the outcomes of this study. In addition, this study includes responsive leadership as a variable. Alternatively, it was determined during the literature review that numerous additional significant variables are crucial. Universities in Peru must focus future research on the role of motivated teachers, teacher training, and student psychology in comprehending responsible leadership and social responsibilities. In this regard, further research in the theory would significantly contribute to and improve leadership functioning in public and private universities in Peru.

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