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Liderazgo para el bien común en estudiantes de una universidad privada en México

Leadership for common good in students of a private university in Mexico

Liderança para o bem comum entre estudantes de uma universidade privada no México

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Resumen

El liderazgo en las Instituciones de Educación Superior ha cobrado relevancia como factor clave para el rendimiento académico, la efectividad institucional y la responsabilidad social. El objetivo de esta investigación fue analizar si los estudiantes de la Universidad Anáhuac Querétaro desarrollan capacidades orientadas al bien común, considerando la relación entre el modelo institucional del Liderazgo de Acción Positiva y el modelo del Liderazgo para el Bien Común. Se realizó una investigación cuantitativa, descriptiva, no experimental y transversal. Se aplicó la Escala de Liderazgo para el Bien Común (la cual incluye 10 dimensiones) a 655 estudiantes de licenciatura. Para el análisis de datos se consideraron la fiabilidad (coeficiente omega de McDonald (ω)), el análisis de brechas perceptuales entre las puntuaciones reales e ideales, y la prueba de la mediana de Mood con corrección de Bonferroni. Los hallazgos revelan una tendencia predominantemente idealista. Mientras que la dimensión de gestión mostró una concordancia cercana entre los valores reales e ideales, dimensiones como resiliencia, dueño de sí mismo y congruencia presentaron brechas estadísticamente relevantes. No se encontraron diferencias estadísticamente significativas

por sexo, edad o área de estudio, lo que sugiere que el *ethos* universitario prevalece sobre los factores sociodemográficos. Los resultados sugieren que el modelo de Liderazgo de Acción Positiva ha sido efectivo principalmente para el desarrollo de competencias organizacionales, pero requiere una revisión integral para fortalecer otras virtudes clave vinculadas al bien común. En consecuencia, este estudio aporta evidencia empírica a los debates internacionales sobre liderazgo estudiantil y subraya la importancia de reforzar las estrategias institucionales que reduzcan la brecha entre los ideales y las prácticas.

Palabras clave: acción positiva, bien común, cooperación, liderazgo, liderazgo estudiantil.

Abstract

Leadership in Higher Education Institutions has emerged as key factor for academic performance, institutional effectiveness, and social responsibility. The objective of this study was to analyze whether students at Anáhuac University, Querétaro campus, develop the skills oriented toward the common good, taking in account the relationship between the institutional model of Positive Action Leadership and the model of Leadership for the Common Good. A quantitative, descriptive, non-experimental, cross-sectional study was conducted. The Leadership for the Common Good Scale (which includes 10 dimensions) was administered to 655 undergraduate students. Data analysis included reliability (McDonald's omega (ω)), perceptual gap analysis between real and ideal scores, and Mood's median test with Bonferroni correction. Findings reveal a predominantly idealistic tendency. While the dimension of *management* showed near alignment between real and ideal values, dimensions such as *resilience, self-mastery, and congruence* showed statistically significant differences. No statistically significant differences were found by sex, age, or field of study, suggesting that the universitary *ethos* outweighs sociodemographic factors. Results suggest that the positive action leadership model has been effective mainly in developing organizational skills, but requires a comprehensive review to strengthen other key virtues linked to the common good. Consequently, this study contributes empirical evidence to international debates on student leadership and highlights the importance of reinforcing institutional strategies that reduce the gap between ideals and practices.

Keywords: positive action, common good, cooperation, leadership, student leadership.

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Resumo

A liderança em instituições de ensino superior tem ganhado relevância como fator-chave para o desempenho acadêmico, a eficácia institucional e a responsabilidade social. O objetivo desta pesquisa foi analisar se os estudantes da Universidade Anáhuac de Querétaro desenvolvem capacidades orientadas para o bem comum, considerando a relação entre o modelo institucional de Liderança para a Ação Positiva e o modelo de Liderança para o Bem Comum. Foi realizado um estudo quantitativo, descritivo, não experimental e transversal. A Escala de Liderança para o Bem Comum (que inclui 10 dimensões) foi aplicada a 655 estudantes de graduação. A análise dos dados considerou a confiabilidade (coeficiente ômega de McDonald (ω)), a análise das lacunas perceptivas entre as pontuações reais e ideais e o teste da mediana de Mood com correção de Bonferroni. Os resultados revelam uma tendência predominantemente idealista. Enquanto a dimensão de gestão apresentou concordância próxima entre os valores reais e ideais, dimensões como resiliência, autopropriedade e congruência apresentaram lacunas estatisticamente significativas. Não foram encontradas diferenças estatisticamente significativas por sexo, idade ou área de estudo, sugerindo que o ethos universitário prevalece sobre os fatores sociodemográficos. Os resultados sugerem que o modelo de Liderança em Ação Positiva tem sido eficaz principalmente no desenvolvimento de competências organizacionais, mas requer uma revisão abrangente para fortalecer outras virtudes essenciais ligadas ao bem comum. Consequentemente, este estudo contribui com evidências empíricas para os debates internacionais sobre liderança estudantil e destaca a importância de reforçar estratégias institucionais que reduzam a lacuna entre ideais e práticas.

Palavras-chave: ação positiva, bem comum, cooperação, liderança, liderança estudantil.

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Introduction

Leadership in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) has gained global relevance in both practice and research. Firstly, leadership is considered a crucial element in education because it impacts the environment and academic quality; indeed, professors are regarded as academic and learning leaders, enabling them to focus on student academic performance. However, studies such as that by Frisk et al. (2021) suggest that leadership in academia faces challenges such as a lack of clear job descriptions, insufficient recognition, and limited access to professional development.

Secondly, leadership is considered essential for HEIs to achieve greater institutional performance and manage the changes they must adapt to in a competitive environment. Therefore, they must develop organizational resilience and institutional effectiveness through decision-making. However, a key question to consider is: which type of leadership has the greatest impact on academic life? In this vein, Salendab 's (2025) research analyzes different types of leadership, such as transformational, transactional, servant, distributive, and adaptive management, to propose components of academic leadership such as effective communication, innovation and adaptability, inclusion, and financial management.

Leadership studies primarily focus on decision-makers, such as university presidents, vice-presidents, administrators, and professors. Research on student leadership is supported by the proliferation of leadership programs and extracurricular activities designed to develop skills and foster active participation in university and social life. However, these programs and activities vary in their visions, types, approaches, and methodologies, leading to a lack of clarity on how to develop leadership in university students (Skalicky et al., 2018). Furthermore, the specific leadership skills targeted for development vary; however, some common skills include solidarity and a focus on shared goals (Kim & Holyoke, 2022).

In Mexico, leadership training within higher education institutions (HEIs) has been approached from various perspectives, albeit in a fragmented manner. On the one hand, organizations such as ANUIES have promoted action plans for sustainable development in HEIs that include social leadership as one of the core functions of university activity (García-Arce et al., 2021). Similarly, the Inter-American University Organization (OUI) has identified leadership, ethical values, empathy, resilience, and emotional intelligence as among the most relevant competencies for HEI administrators in Latin America (Mina-Hernández, 2025). However, specific leadership training opportunities for the university community in Mexico are scarce; of the 598 higher education institutions surveyed in the country, only five offer specific training geared toward university leadership and management roles (Artiles et al., 2014). Regarding student leadership, although several Mexican private universities, such as those belonging to the Regnum Christi University Institutions Network, have implemented curricular and extracurricular leadership training programs (López-González et al., 2023, 2025), empirical studies remain limited.

This study was conducted at a private university in Mexico, Anáhuac University Querétaro, which belongs to the Anáhuac University Network (RIU). The RIU comprises nine universities in Mexico, one in the United States, one in Chile, one in Spain, and two in Rome.

The RIU has coined the term Positive Action Leadership (PAL) to train its students, faculty, and staff. PAL is grounded in the mission, vision, and bylaws of Anáhuac University, but especially in the Pauline phrase "overcoming evil with good" (Anáhuac University Querétaro, n.d.). To achieve this objective, Anáhuac University Querétaro has a curriculum structured around a path of study in leadership: leadership and personal development; entrepreneurial skills; leadership and high-performance teams; and entrepreneurship and innovation. and eight extracurricular leadership and excellence programs: sports, health sciences, art and culture, business, social commitment, technological innovation, public administration and Anáhuac excellence (Anáhuac University Querétaro, n.d.).

The PAL has the common good as its ultimate goal; however, recent studies on the PAL do not address how the common good can be achieved (López-González et al., 2023, 2025). In this context, the following central question arises: Do students at Anáhuac University Querétaro develop the capacity to achieve the common good? Based on this question, this research aims to analyze the degree to which students at Anáhuac University Querétaro develop leadership skills oriented toward the common good, identifying the gaps between their ideals and their practices. The hypothesis is that students will exhibit a predominantly idealistic tendency, with significant gaps between the dimensions of leadership; furthermore, that there will be no significant differences based on sociodemographic variables.

The structure of the article is as follows: 1) it defines what is meant by the common good and a proposal for leadership aimed at the common good; 2) it presents the methodology used to analyze this phenomenon; 3) it presents the results; and, finally, 4) the discussions.

The common good and a leadership proposal

The common good is a concept that has resurfaced in the academic, economic, social, and political spheres. It is understood as a normative ethical, social, and political principle (Nebel, 2018). Some characteristics of the common good are its perfection, its perfecting nature, and its perfecting force. It is perfect because the common good is a concrete good that the community develops, strives for, and acts to achieve (Nebel, 2018; Gutiérrez-González, 2021). It is perfecting in that this concrete common good can be renewed over time and is an obligation for all members of every era; that is, this concrete common good is perfected through time and space (Nebel, 2018; Gutiérrez-González, 2021). Finally, it is perfecting because the common good perfects the person, leading them to their full potential (Nebel, 2018; Gutiérrez-González, 2021).

The previous proposal regarding the common good can be interpreted as static or metaphysical; therefore, Nebel et al. (2022) propose analyzing the dynamics of institutional development through the common good approach. To understand and measure these dynamics, Nebel et al. (2022) describe five normative drivers of the common good approach: agency, or the collective freedom to come together to generate or act on common goods; governance, so that everyone governs the common goods together; justice, so that by distributing common goods equitably everyone can enjoy their benefits; the stability of common goods, so that they endure over time; and humanity, so that all members of the community are perfected through collective practices.

Leadership for the common good (LCG) is based on this approach, which modifies the view of different types of leadership that address the common good. Initially, the studies by Montaudon-Tomas et al. (2021), Malcón-Cervera et al. (2021), and Gutiérrez-González et al. (2023) show that there are different approaches that claim to seek and achieve the common good; however, the authors of the different models never define the common good, nor do they mention how they achieve it, as is the case with Crosby and Bryson (2005) and Chrislip and O'Malley (2013). Studies on PAL suffer from the same issue, since they only state and affirm that this construct is the center of university studies and that leadership consists of acts that guide towards a common good, but they do not say what common good or goods will be worked for and how they understand the concept of common good (López-González et al., 2023, 2025).

Secondly, research on different leadership styles also fails to propose specific characteristics, habits, attitudes, or virtues for achieving the common good. This is also the case in the PAL, which considers that this model should promote virtues, put them at the service of others, and demonstrate a genuine interest in other people. However, there is no consensus on which virtues should be used to train university members. Sometimes digital skills are mentioned as complementing leadership skills; other times the cardinal virtues are proposed; and still others emphasize ethics, Christian humanism, social commitment, teamwork, or communication (López-González et al., 2023, 2025).

For their part, in the LCG based on the approach of Nebel (2018), Malcón -Cervera et al. (2021) propose eleven dimensions that are based on the common good approach; namely, self-mastery, solidarity, logic of the gift, sustainability, congruence, flourishing, responsibility, management, resilience, collaboration and justice; the modifications and improvements of this leadership by Ávila-Valdez and Gutiérrez-González (2025) propose

the virtues of solidarity[1], self-mastery, sustainability, congruence, collaboration, management, resilience, responsibility, equity and flourishing.

Solidarity is a social virtue that leads to the unity and cohesion of a community, manifested through cooperation and mutual support among individuals and communities; these actions lead to personal and communal flourishing. For these reasons, solidarity is intimately linked to the common good, especially because it seeks to ensure that all individuals have access to the goods and services necessary for a dignified life (Clark, 2014; Frémeaux et al., 2023).

Neuroscience and positive psychology have shown that self-mastery (*enkrateia*), proposed by Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, is an important virtue because it helps control thoughts, emotions, and actions to achieve personal goals without distractions and while effectively managing stress (Gahl, 2022; Dobel, 2015). Its connection to the common good stems from the fact that virtuous individual behavior benefits and contributes to the common good, especially by fostering cooperative relationships (Torka, 2018; Bernacchio, 2023).

Sustainability has been established as a social virtue since Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'* (2015). It helps individuals and communities to live and promote environmental, social, and economic well-being; some of its components are frugality, moderation, and harmony with nature (Tavanti & Wilp, 2021; Jordan & Kristjánsson, 2017). The common good and sustainability are closely related, as the latter seeks to promote a university *ethos* where all members of the community can thrive (Clayton, 2021; Hein, 2011).

Congruence is a virtue that refers to the alignment of a person's thoughts and actions with their principles, making it essential for integrity and consistency in ethical behavior. Through these attitudes, congruence is linked to the common good because it promotes trust and cooperation within a community (Tomlinson et al., 2014).

The virtue of collaboration is related to joint attention to a common goal and the harmonious execution of complex actions. Working together with others makes it easier to achieve shared objectives. Collaboration involves certain characteristics, such as shared goals, norms, and values, as well as clear and open communication for problem-solving and decision-making (Sweet, 2023; Oliver et al., 2020). Collaboration is crucial for the common good because it allows individuals to work toward the goods and services that help meet the basic needs of community members. Furthermore, it promotes participation in communities and fosters

[1] In this virtue, the logic of the gift is assumed, which contrasts with some selfish attitudes that have been generated in recent times; indeed, the logic of the gift has as its fundamental axis gratitude, thus transcending the meritocratic logic (Gutiérrez-González et al., 2023).

other virtues, such as justice, solidarity, and responsibility (Sison & Fontrodona , 2013; Gómez-Álvarez & Morales-Sánchez, 2021).

Virtuous management can be understood from a virtue-based perspective, as it refers to the application of ethical principles, virtue ethics, and leadership in community life (Scalzo & Akrivou , 2020; Harris, 2007; Argandona, 2015). Virtuous management fosters positive relationships between institutions/communities and their members, contributing to their overall well-being and the common good (Scalzo & Akrivou , 2020; Potts , 2020; Hengda & McCann, 2022).

In the field of positive psychology, resilience can be studied from a virtue perspective because it is an action that can be sustained over time and is goal-oriented. Therefore, resilience, viewed from this perspective, is characterized by enduring adversity and transforming it into opportunities (Kim et al., 2017). Furthermore, resilience helps individuals achieve the common good. Firstly, from a moral perspective, resilience helps maintain moral integrity and foster moral progress in stressful situations and moral dilemmas (Rushton, 2017; Sala Defilippis et al., 2019). Secondly, resilience helps strengthen the capacity of community members to thrive in times of adversity and systemic and structural challenges (Brooks, 2025).

Responsibility is a virtue that helps individuals assume and fulfill their moral duties and obligations, both individually and within the community. Golob (2020) considers that it implies a reflective awareness and constant self-evaluation of one's own actions and decisions. This virtue is manifested in practice through meaningful interaction with others; therefore, responsibility contributes to the common good by promoting and protecting it, creating the social conditions that guide people toward it (Drakard , 2010; Scandroglio , 2013).

Equity is a virtue related to justice, which dictates the constant and perpetual will to give to each according to their rights; thus, equity is characterized by its relationality and orientation toward others. Equity is one of the virtues most oriented toward the common good, as it restores equality and allocates goods proportionally, ensuring that institutions and individuals contribute to collective flourishing (Gutiérrez-González, 2024).

Finally, flourishing is the capacity to live an authentic life. It implies living in accordance with moral virtues, which manifests itself in the full development of human beings and societies, not only in the physical realm but also in the emotional, social, and spiritual spheres (Martínez de Soria & Naval, 2023). The relationship between flourishing and the common

good is bidirectional, meaning they are intimately connected. On the one hand, virtues provide individuals and communities with the moral foundation to promote the common good, and on the other hand, the common good offers the university *ethos* in which virtues can flourish (Arjoon et al., 2018).

Materials and methods

This research presents a quantitative approach and a non-experimental, cross-sectional cohort design with a descriptive scope.

Participants

The study involved a sample of 655 undergraduate students from Anáhuac University Querétaro. Participants included both men and women between the ages of 18 and 26, from the first to the tenth semester, and from the five areas of study offered by the university: health sciences, creative studies, legal and social sciences, engineering, and economics and business.

Tools

For data collection, the Leadership for the Common Good Scale (LCGS) proposed by Malcón-Cervera et al. (2021) and adapted by Ávila-Valdez and Gutiérrez-González (2025) was used (see Appendix A). The LCGS is based on the SERVQUAL model, which was originally developed to measure service quality in terms of customer expectations and perceptions (Parasuraman et al., 1991; Shi & Shang, 2020). However, under the LCGS approach, it is geared toward measuring the ideal of the common good in relation to actions aimed at achieving it. The LCGS is a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 corresponds to “strongly disagree” and 7 to “strongly agree.” The 134 items that make up the scale are divided into 10 dimensions: solidarity (26 items), self-mastery (10 items), sustainability (14 items), congruence (16 items), collaboration (6 items), management (10 items), resilience (10 items), responsibility (12 items), flourishing (16 items), and equity (14 items). In each dimension, half of the items measure the ideals of the LCG and the other half measure the current actions of the leaders. The instrument also included an initial section to collect the following information from the student: sex, age, courses taken in the humanities program, semester, and major.

Ávila-Valdez and Gutiérrez-González (2025) demonstrated good psychometric properties for the LCGS. Reliability was assessed using internal consistency, highlighting the use of McDonald's Omega coefficient (ω), whose values exceeded the threshold of 0.70 in all dimensions, particularly the solidarity dimension (ω = 0.93); additionally, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient corroborated these results. Regarding validity, content evidence was obtained through expert judgment, which confirmed the relevance of the items in the ten dimensions. Convergent validity was verified using significant factor loadings ($p < 0.001$) greater than 0.5 and mean variance extracted values greater than 0.5.

For its part, discriminant validity showed that the dimensions or constructs are distinguishable from each other, as the value of 1 was not included in the 95% confidence intervals of their correlations. The internal structure of the instrument was verified through confirmatory factor analysis, using the robust diagonal weighted least squares method for parameter estimation, which is suitable for ordinal data; the fit indices demonstrated a robust model (RMSEA=0.024, RMSR=0.056, TLI=0.983, CFI=0.984).

Procedure

A survey was used as the data collection method. First, the authorities at Anáhuac University Querétaro were contacted to explain the purpose of the study and request their authorization to conduct it. Subsequently, the directors of the academic divisions sent an email to the selected students to inform them and invite them to participate. Participants received informed consent, which included the purpose of the study, the confidential handling of the data, and the invitation to participate voluntarily. The response rate was monitored until the required sample size was reached. The survey was administered via the Google Forms platform between October and November 2022.

Data analysis

First, the reliability of the LCGS was assessed using McDonald's Omega coefficient (ω). A $\omega > 0.7$ indicates good reliability in each of the dimensions (Kalkbrenner, 2024) and in accordance with the results reported in Ávila-Valdez and Gutiérrez-González (2025).

Since the LCGS is based on the SERVQUAL model, the differences or gaps between the actual (R) and ideal (I) values of the LCG (RI) were calculated for each item. According to

Gutiérrez-González et al. (2023), negative gap values reveal a greater tendency to be idealistic, while positive or zero values indicate a greater tendency to be realistic.

Once the gap for each pair of items was calculated, the mean gap for each dimension was determined, followed by the average gap across all dimensions. This yielded 11 new variables (one for each dimension and one for the total LCG), which are the focus of the study. To assess the normality of the data for the variables under study, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used. Since none of them followed a normal distribution, Mood's non-parametric median test was employed to test the corresponding hypotheses. This same test (with Bonferroni correction) was implemented to perform multiple comparisons of the LCG gap.

To graphically represent the distribution of the LCG gap, a box and whisker plot was created, which divides the gap into four equal parts. The horizontal line and the diamond within the box represent the median and the mean, respectively.

Data analysis was performed using the statistical software R (version 4.5.1). A significance level of 5% was used in all hypothesis tests.

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics and LCG gap of the sample.

Variable		Sample			Gap		
		Total	Percentage		Average	Median	OF
Sex	Man	243	37.10		-0.25	-0.24	0.50
	Women	412	62.90		-0.27	-0.27	0.36
Age	18	123	18.78		-0.26	-0.25	0.36
	19	152	23.21		-0.25	-0.26	0.42
	20	157	23.97		-0.27	-0.26	0.42
	21	119	18.17		-0.27	-0.31	0.44
	22	55	8.40		-0.24	-0.31	0.39
	23	29	4.43		-0.33	-0.24	0.39
	24 or more	20	3.05		-0.30	-0.12	0.63
Semester	1	178	27.18		-0.28	-0.28	0.38
	2	36	5.50		-0.32	-0.25	0.52

	3	174	26.56		-0.21	-0.24	0.41
	4	46	7.02		-0.26	-0.28	0.37
	5	122	18.63		-0.27	-0.27	0.44
	6	24	3.66		-0.45	-0.45	0.62
	7	42	6.41		-0.35	-0.34	0.33
	8	7	1.07		0.08	0.04	0.20
	9	19	2.90		-0.10	-0.15	0.25
	10	7	1.07		-0.45	-0.59	0.28
Area of study	Health Sciences	106	16.18		-0.30	-0.32	0.32
	Creative studies	139	21.22		-0.25	-0.23	0.38
	Legal and social sciences	106	16.18		-0.29	-0.27	0.38
	Engineering	103	15.73		-0.32	-0.35	0.37
	Economy and business	201	30.69		-0.22	-0.23	0.51
He has completed the Ser Universitario course	Yes	576	87.94		-0.26	0.39	-0.26
	No	79	12.06		-0.26	0.41	-0.26
She has studied Anthropology	Yes	321	49.01		-0.24	-0.24	0.41
	No	334	50.99		-0.29	-0.28	0.42
She has studied Ethics	Yes	271	41.37		-0.27	-0.28	0.41
	No	384	58.63		-0.26	-0.25	0.42
She has completed the course Person and Transcendence	Yes	219	33.40		-0.26	-0.26	0.40
	No	436	66.60		-0.27	-0.26	0.42
She has studied Humanities	Yes	128	19.54		-0.24	-0.27	0.42
	No	527	80.46		-0.27	-0.26	0.41

Source: Own elaboration

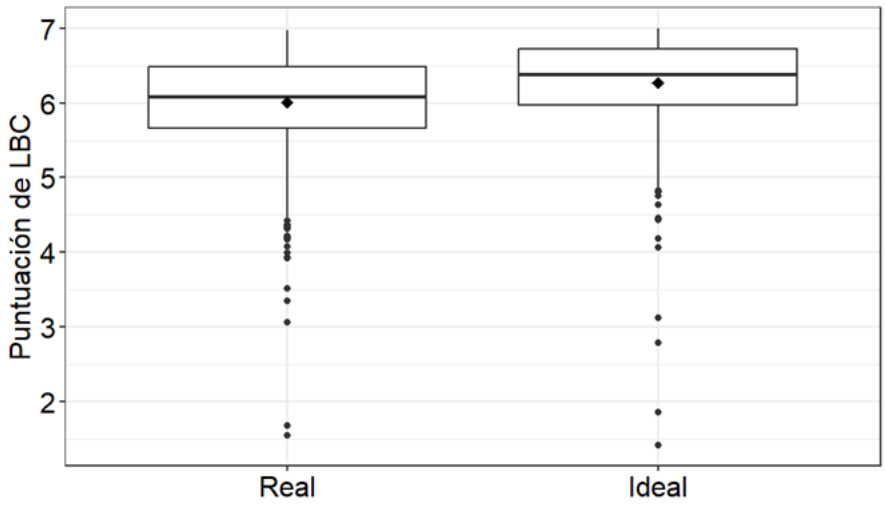
Results

ω coefficient for each of the dimensions of the ideal part of the LCGS was 0.93 for solidarity, 0.84 for self-mastery, 0.88 for sustainability, 0.90 for congruence, 0.79 for collaboration, 0.87 for management, 0.84 for resilience, 0.86 for accountability, 0.89 for flourishing, and 0.88 for equity. These results indicate that all dimensions show adequate levels of reliability, since a $\omega \geq 0.70$ indicates adequate reliability (Kalkbrenner, 2024).

Table 1 presents the sociodemographic characteristics of the sample, showing that slightly less than two-thirds (62.90%) were women; the average age was 20 years, and approximately 66% were between 18 and 20 years old; two-thirds were in their first through fourth semesters, and students of creative sciences and economics and business represented 51.91% of the sample. Regarding humanities courses, slightly more than three-quarters (87.94%) had taken the course "Being a University Student," and less than 50% had taken at least one of the other courses (anthropology, ethics, person and transcendence, and humanism).

Figure 1 shows the distribution of LCG scores. The mean score for the real portion was 6.01 and for the ideal portion was 6.27, with an overall (real-ideal) gap of -0.26. The median score for the real portion was 6.08 and for the ideal portion was 6.38. Mood's median test revealed a significant difference between the medians of the two groups ($\mu 2 = {}^{46.95}$, $p = 0.001$). These results indicate that, overall, there is a slight tendency toward idealism.

Figure 1. Distribution of LCG scores (actual and ideal).

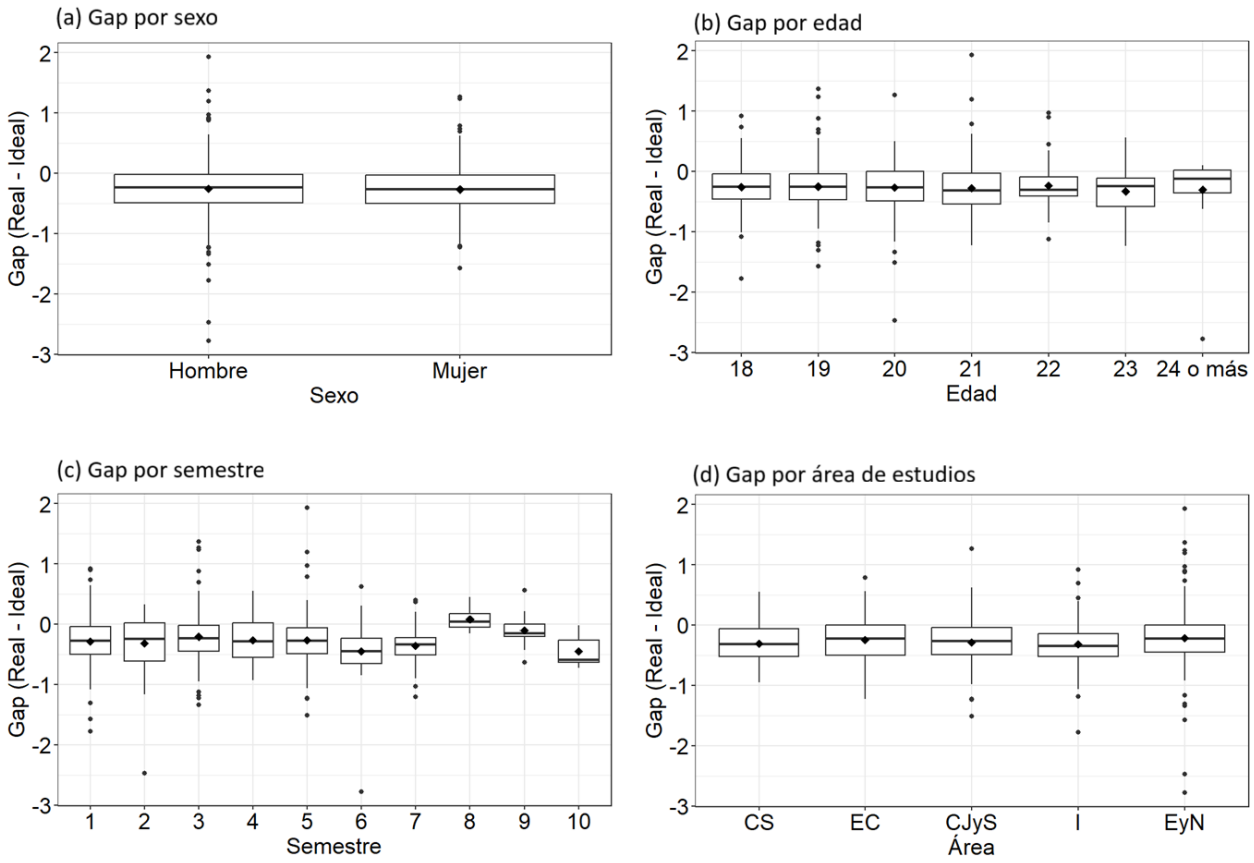


Source: Own elaboration

The LCG tends to be idealistic in each of the sex variable categories, as both categories show a negative average gap (see Table 1). The gap distribution for men and women is shown in

Figure 2(a). Although there are some outliers in both sexes, and the gap variability is slightly higher in men than in women, there is no statistically significant difference between the sexes (Mood's median test, $\mu 2 = {}^{1.75}$, $p = 0.19$). This indicates that the LCG is not associated with the students' sex.

Figure 2. Distribution of the LCG gap, by sex, age, semester and area of study.



Note: CS = Health Sciences; EC = Creative Studies; CJyS = Legal and Social Sciences; I = Engineering; EyN = Economics and Business.

Source: Own elaboration

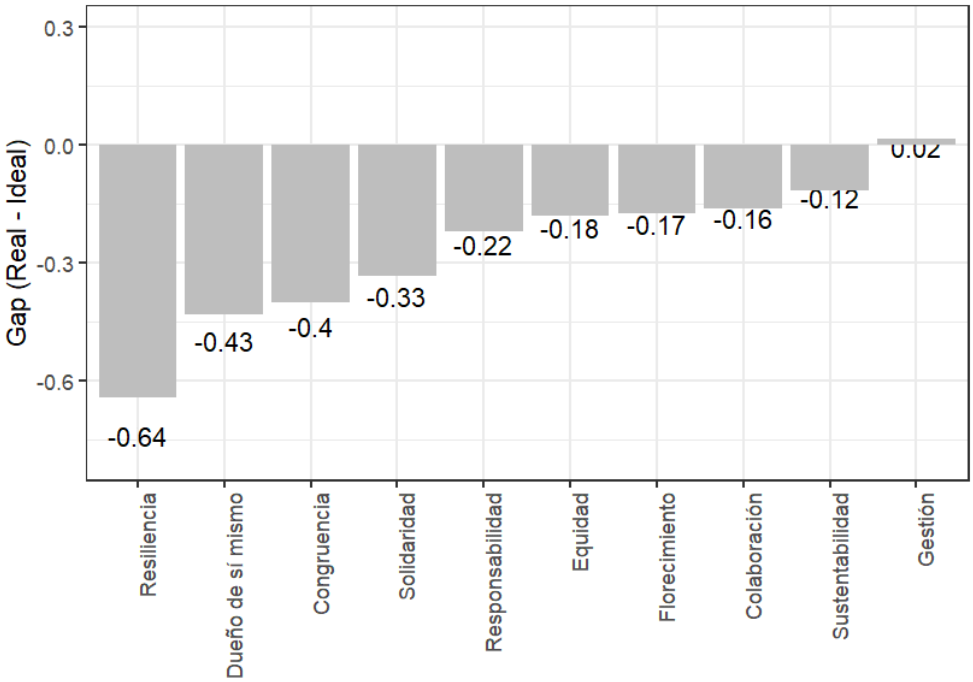
Regarding the LCG by age, Table 1 shows that it tends to be idealistic for all age groups, as the gap is negative in all cases. The distribution of the gap by age is shown in Figure 2(b), where it can be seen that the gap is slightly larger for participants aged 23 and older. However, there is no statistically significant difference in the gap for each of the participants' ages (Mood's median test, $\mu 2 = {}^{3.25}$, $p = 0.78$). This result indicates that the LCG is not age-dependent.

Regarding the gap per semester of study, Table 1 shows that it is negative in all semesters, indicating an idealistic tendency, except in semester 8, where it is slightly positive, indicating

a LCG with a slight tendency toward realism. Figure 2(c) shows the distribution of the gap per semester. According to Mood's median test, at least one median is statistically different from the others ($\mu 2 = {}^{27.54}$, $p = 0.001$), and according to the results of the same test for multiple comparisons, there are statistically significant differences in the gap between semesters 6 and 9 ($\mu 2 = 12.35$, $p = 0.02$) and in the gap between semesters 7 and 9 ($\mu 2 = 13.55$, $p = 0.01$).

Table 1 shows that the gap is negative across all areas of study, indicating that, in all cases, the LCG tends to be idealistic. Figure 2(d) shows the distribution of the gap by area. The variability of the gap in the "health sciences" area is the lowest, followed by the "creative studies" and "legal and social sciences" areas. Conversely, the two areas with the greatest variability in the gap are "engineering" and "economics and business." Although the economics and business area has a smaller gap than the other areas, no differences were found in the LCG gap between the areas of study (Mood's median test, $\mu 2 = {}^{6.12}$, $p = 0.08$), suggesting that the LCG is not related to the area of study.

Figure 3. Leadership gap for the common good, by dimension.

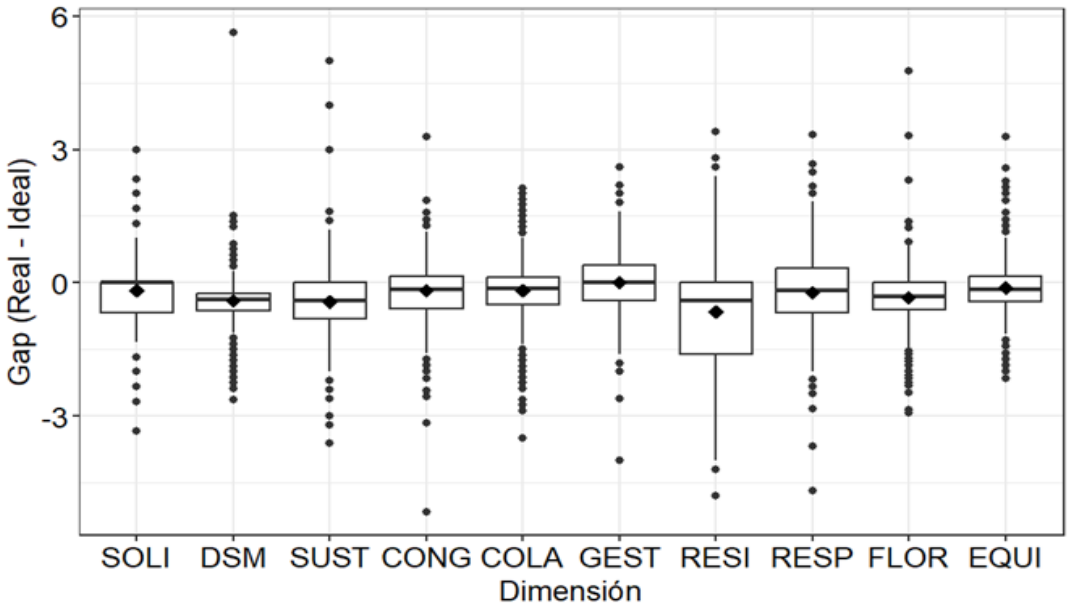


Source: Own elaboration

From the results by dimension (Figure 3), nine dimensions showed a negative LCG gap, indicating that participants in all of them tend to be idealistic. Of these, the resilience and sustainability dimensions stand out with the largest and smallest negative gaps, respectively.

In contrast, the gap in the management dimension is very close to zero, suggesting a tendency for participants to be realistic. Figure 4 shows the distribution of the LCG gap by dimension, revealing that the gap in the management dimension is slightly larger than in the other dimensions, while the gap in the resilience dimension is slightly smaller. The LCG gap is statistically different for at least one dimension according to Mood's median test ($\mu 2 = {}^{432.23}$, $p = 0.001$). Figure 5 graphically displays the results of the multiple comparisons of this test for the LCG median. The results indicate no statistically significant differences ($p \geq 0.05$) in the LCG gap between dimensions joined by a solid line; conversely, dimensions joined by a dotted line show statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) in the LCG gap. It is noteworthy that the median LCG gap for the management dimension differs from that of the other dimensions, while, for example, the median LCG gap for the equity dimension is equal to that of the sustainability, accountability, flourishing, and collaboration dimensions.

Figure 4. Distribution of the leadership gap for the common good, by dimension.



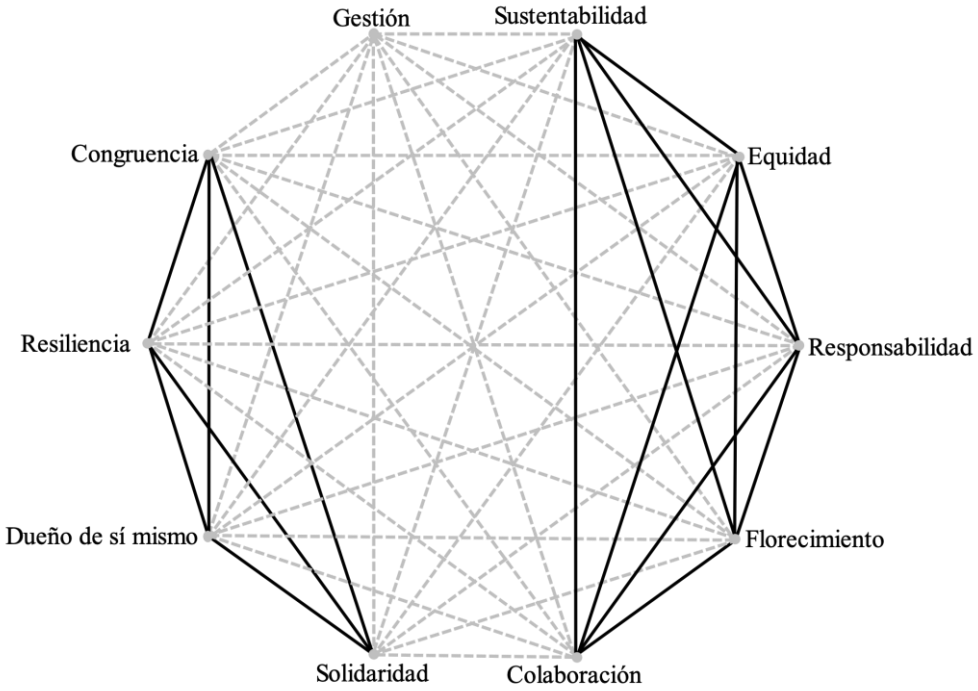
Note: SOLI = Solidarity; DSM = Self-mastery; SUST = Sustainability; CONG = Congruence; COLA = Collaboration; GEST = Management; RESI = Resilience; RESP = Responsibility; FLOR = Flourishing; EQUI = Equity.

Source: Own elaboration.

A comparison was also made between the LCG gap between participants who belonged to a leadership group and those who did not, for each of the dimensions that make up the LCGS. According to Mood's median test, statistically significant differences in the LCG gap were

only found in the dimensions of solidarity ($\mu 2 = 7.12$, $p = 0.001$) and flourishing ($\mu 2 = 5.80$, $p = {}^{0.02}$) . Those belonging to [a] leadership group had a smaller gap in these two dimensions.

Figure 5. Multiple comparisons of the LCG gap, by dimension.



Note: ($p \geq 0.05$), ($p < 0.05$).

Source: Own elaboration.

Discussion

The results from students at Anáhuac University Querétaro show a general trend toward an idealistic approach to leadership, meaning that students recognize the theoretical importance of virtues; however, the practical application of these virtues in their personal, academic, and professional lives is not developed with the same intensity. Regarding the variables of sex and field of study, which did not show significant differences, this reinforces the idea that leadership is not solely determined by individual or disciplinary factors, but rather by the university *ethos* and the learning environments.

Now, compared to previous studies at other universities in Mexico, these findings are similar, as there is a predominance of idealism in common good leadership (Table 2). However, there is a difference between this study and those reported by Montaudon-Tomas et al. (2021), which analyzes common good leadership in business students at the Popular Autonomous University of the State of Puebla (UPAEP), and those reported by Gutiérrez-González et al.

(2023), which reports common good leadership in students at the Technological University of Querétaro. In the latter study, the justice dimension tends to be realistic, while for the students at Anáhuac University Querétaro, the management dimension tends to be realistic. The management dimension indicates that the students take actions aligned with the ideal; This suggests that there are positive relationships between students and the university (Scalzo & Akrivou, 2020; Potts, 2020; Hengda & McCann, 2022).

Table 2. Comparison of leadership for the common good with other universities.

Dimension	Anáhuac Querétaro	UPAEP	UTEQ
Solidarity	-0.33	-0.63	-0.30
Master of himself	-0.43	-0.34	-0.28
Sustainability	-0.12	-0.22	-0.16
Congruence	-0.40	-0.20	-0.09
Collaboration	-0.16	-0.23	-0.25
Management	0.02	-0.10	-0.02
Resilience	-0.64	-0.77	-0.02
Responsibility	-0.22	-0.30	-0.20
Flowering	-0.17	-0.20	-0.07
Equity	-0.18	NA	NA
Justice	NA	0.26	0.30
Logic of the gift	NA	-0.43	-0.38
Global	-0.26	-0.35	-0.17

Note: Based on Montaudon-Tomas et al. (2021) and Gutiérrez-González et al. (2023). NA = Not applicable, as this dimension was not part of the leadership scale used.

However, unlike other students, those enrolled in extracurricular programs such as the Leadership and Excellence Programs at Anáhuac University (PLEAS) demonstrate greater development of solidarity and flourishing, although their progress remains largely idealistic. This is related to leadership research, as solidarity and flourishing are skills that are actively cultivated. Leadership is based on understanding others, fostering cooperation and mutual support among individuals. These actions guide individuals and communities toward

flourishing, because they share the common goal of ensuring everyone has access to common resources and, consequently, a dignified and fulfilling life (Kim & Holyoke, 2022; Clark, 2014; Frémeaux et al., 2023; Martínez de Soria & Naval, 2023).

The resilience dimension, on the other hand, presents the widest gap. This means that students consider resilience very important, but they find it difficult to take concrete actions to cultivate this virtue. As Brooks (2025) observes, resilience requires training processes during university life to cope with adversity. Indeed, university life presents many challenges and adversities to overcome, which shape personal and community life. For example, university students are under constant stress to achieve good or excellent academic performance, which sometimes leads to academic burnout. Without resilience, students experience greater difficulties in finding motivation, satisfaction, and overall well-being (Wang et al., 2022).

Some limitations of this study are, firstly, that it was conducted at a private university; secondly, and no less importantly, the self-perception instruments introduce biases related to moral goodness, social desirability, and overconfidence (Montaudon -Tomas et al., 2021). Therefore, future research could complement this approach with a qualitative one that allows for a better understanding of how students interpret and experience leadership in achieving the common good.

Conclusion

Developing students' leadership skills has been a key educational element in universities worldwide. This study presents the foundations and characteristics of LCG model and contrasts it with the PAL model to analyze the extent to which students at Anáhuac University Querétaro develop leadership skills oriented toward the common good, identifying the gaps between their ideals and their practices. The results confirm the hypothesis; that is, students demonstrate a predominantly idealistic tendency (overall gap of -0.26), with significant gaps between dimensions, where resilience shows the largest gap, while management is the only one with a realistic tendency. Furthermore, the study confirms that there are no statistically significant differences by sex, age, or field of study, suggesting that the university *ethos* has a greater influence than sociodemographic variables on leadership development.

The findings presented here suggest that the PAL contributes to student development in the management dimension, demonstrating greater effectiveness, particularly in organizational competencies. However, this type of leadership requires a thorough review, both in its theoretical aspects and in how to more effectively integrate training strategies that promote

the practice of other virtues to achieve the common good. In this way, this study contributes to the international academic debate on university leadership, showing that the development of virtues depends on the university *ethos* and not on sociodemographic or disciplinary variables.

Among the obstacles encountered in this research, it is noteworthy that the sample is concentrated in a single private university, which limits the generalizability of the results to the context of Mexican higher education institutions as a whole. Likewise, the uneven distribution by semester—with low representation of students in advanced semesters (eighth through tenth)—restricts the possibility of analyzing the evolution of leadership throughout the university experience in greater depth. Additionally, the self-perception instruments introduce social desirability bias and overconfidence bias, which must be considered when interpreting the results. Among the positive aspects of the participants' involvement, the high response rate and the consistency of the results across the ten dimensions evaluated stand out, reflecting the students' commitment to the self-assessment exercise. On the negative side, the widespread idealistic tendency could indicate that students respond based on what is socially desirable rather than on their daily practice, reinforcing the need to complement this type of study with qualitative approaches.

Future lines of research

Finally, future research could go in four directions: 1) complementing this study with a qualitative approach (including, for example, interviews or focus groups) that gathers information from students about how they interpret and experience LCG, to strengthen the validity of the findings through methodological triangulation. 2) expanding this study with longitudinal and inter-university designs within the RIU; also in regional public universities outside this network, in order to broaden the representativeness of the study and compare the results with different institutional contexts. 3) extending this study to the professors and administrative staff who work in these universities, since, as members of these universities, they share the mission and vision, which also implies that they play leadership roles in positive action; 4) A comparative theoretical study between positive action leadership and leadership for the common good to correct errors, deficiencies and discrepancies found in the PAL so that the fulfillment of the mission of Anáhuac University is strengthened and, in this way, the common good is effectively materialized in university education.

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Annex A. Leadership Scale for the Common Good.

	Ideal	Real
Solidarity		
1.	I acknowledge the contributions of others and value the skills of others.	I have generated constructive discussions by valuing the knowledge of others
2.	I respect the dignity of others and my own dignity.	When I have observed someone humiliating another person, I have intervened to stop the humiliation.
3.	I consider the abilities and merits of others.	People feel valued by me in any work we do together.
4.	I value others.	I know the first and last names of the people I work with on a team.
5.	I am a person of my word.	People trust me because I always keep my word and I am true to my promises and dreams.
6.	I motivate others when they are discouraged.	I have supported my colleagues when they have had difficulties, encouraging them to keep going.
7.	I have courage; I face the music and show no cowardice.	When there is a problem, I face it and accept the consequences.
8.	I like to support others.	I participate in or lead a group that focuses on responding to or resolving a problem in my community.
9.	I am a helpful person.	Whenever I can, I perform acts of service to others.
10.	I am always willing to help.	I have helped others even when they haven't asked for help.
11.	I am a kind and pleasant person.	People approach me because I have a friendly manner.
12.	I am a shared person.	When I have encountered someone who lacks resources, food, or knowledge, I have shared what I have.
13.	I care about the well-being of others.	I've noticed when someone isn't doing well and I've asked if there's anything I can do to help.

Master of himself		
14.	I am a trustworthy person.	People believe that I am capable of leading others and that together we will achieve the proposed goal.
15.	I am a transparent and clear person.	I never lie or hide information from my parents or my classmates.
16.	I am a person of integrity.	I have never committed dishonest acts against myself or any third party.
17.	I am loyal to my convictions and to the people around me.	People value my friendship because they know I am loyal.
18.	I can admit when I make mistakes.	When I have made a mistake, I have been able to accept it and take responsibility for it.
Sustainability		
19.	I am concerned about the well-being of the less privileged.	I have made donations in money, goods or time to noble causes.
20.	I am interested in the culture of my region and my country.	People approach me because they believe I have a broad general knowledge.
21.	My training will allow me to help others in the future.	I am studying to help/contribute something to my community/country.
22.	I care about the environment.	I don't throw trash in the street and when I have seen trash lying on the ground I have picked it up and thrown it in the bin.
23.	I contribute to the sustainability of my environment.	I practice recycling, recovery or reuse of some products.
24.	I promote diversity and gender equality.	It bothers me when acts of discrimination are committed.
25.	I participate in social benefit activities.	I have developed or participated in social impact projects.
Congruence		
26.	I value the relationships I have.	I invest time in maintaining and improving my relationships with family, friends, and acquaintances.
27.	I consider myself a decent person.	It bothers me when others commit immoral acts.
28.	I'm in a positive mood.	I spread my joy to others.

29.	I am an authentic person.	I have never tried to pretend to be something I'm not.
30.	I'm available for the other one.	I am always available to help others regardless of the time or situation.
31.	My actions reflect my values.	When I have had to make a decision, I use the values I learned at home and during my education as my guide.
32.	I love my neighbor.	I have performed acts of compassion and charity towards others.
33.	I have great potential.	I believe I have the ability to achieve great things.
Collaboration		
34.	I believe that together we achieve better results.	I actively participate in solving shared challenges.
35.	I can work collaboratively with others.	When I have worked in a team, I have sought to ensure that everyone contributes and that we reach consensus decisions.
36.	I welcome suggestions and comments from other people.	I have been able to accept constructive criticism.
Management		
37.	I have the ability to lead the efforts of others.	When I have worked in a team, I have been the leader who organizes others to achieve better results.
38.	I have the ability to guide collective actions.	I feel that others see me as a leader.
39.	I can easily connect with others.	I integrate well and can interact with others easily.
40.	I can delegate responsibilities to others.	When I have worked in a team, I have shared leadership with the other participants.
41.	I can plan activities to guide others towards a common goal.	When I have had to work in a team, I have been able to organize myself with others appropriately to meet the objectives on time and in the right way.
Resilience		
42.	I have a high tolerance for failure or when things don't go as expected.	When things haven't gone as I expected, I've given up.

43.	I am patient when I am with other people.	I get desperate when others make mistakes or when they take a long time to solve something.
44.	I can step out of my comfort zone to help others.	I have put the good of others above my own interests or my comfort.
45.	I have the ability to change.	I have accepted difficult changes in my life without resisting or getting angry.
46.	I seek what is best for my community.	I always obey the rules and regulations for social coexistence.
Responsibility		
47.	I am a responsible consumer.	I buy certain products for ethical or ecological reasons, even if they are more expensive.
48.	I am a consistent person.	I don't have any projects that I've left unfinished or incomplete.
49.	I have a critical and strategic mindset.	The others acknowledge that my arguments are sound and well-founded.
50.	I am not a resentful person.	When someone does something that hurts me, I forgive them easily.
51.	I am a disciplined person.	I always complete assigned tasks within the proposed timeframe and never leave anything for later.
52.	I am a discreet person.	When I have been entrusted with a secret, I have taken responsibility for not discussing it with anyone.
Flowering		
53.	I consider myself a prudent person.	Even when I'm angry, I don't explode or let my emotions control me.
54.	I recognize my own abilities and vulnerabilities and those of others.	I never boast about my achievements and I'm annoyed by people who constantly do it.
55.	I generally have a positive attitude.	When I've had problems, I've always tried to see the bright side of things.
56.	I am empathetic.	When someone has had a problem, I have put myself in their shoes to see the situation from their perspective.

57.	I consider myself self-employed/independent.	When I have worked in a team I don't need supervision of my work, I can do it independently.
58.	I can communicate my ideas effectively.	When I speak, I motivate others to action.
59.	I consider myself a proactive person.	When I am presented with difficult challenges, I actively get involved in solving them.
60.	Challenges and problems don't stop me.	Every time I have faced a challenge, I have found a way to overcome it.
Equity		
61.	I have an impeccable reputation.	I am an example because there is nothing that can be pointed out about my misconduct or lack of ethics.
62.	I am an impartial person.	Others can give their opinion without fear that I or others will ridicule their position.
63.	I believe that plagiarism should be avoided.	When I have taken ideas from others, I have given them the necessary credit.
64.	I think it's wrong to talk about other people behind their backs.	I always try to protect the good name or reputation of people (dignity).
65.	It is not acceptable to insult other people, even when I believe they deserve it.	Even when they make me angry, I never insult others.
66.	All people have the right to be treated with the same respect regardless of their beliefs.	I always treat people with respect regardless of whether I agree with them or their ideas.
67.	I am against humiliating acts towards other people.	When I see that a person is being bullied , I stop the bullying .

Source: From “Leadership for the common good: the adaptation of a scale and its validation”, by Ávila-Valdez and Gutiérrez-González (2025).