

REVIEW

Ethics in Public Practice

La Ética dentro del Ejercicio Público

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: ethics in public administration has been considered a fundamental pillar for transparency and accountability in governmental decision-making. In this sense, the study addressed ethics in the city council of Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, during the period 2021-2024, with the purpose of analyzing its influence on political decision-making. It was hypothesized that the degradation of ethics in the public servants of Pátzcuaro was the result of various factors, such as social pressure, personal ambition and the influence of power. For this purpose, a bibliographic review on ethics in public administration was carried out and the regulations in force in Mexico were analyzed.

Development: the research explored the origin and evolution of ethics in public service, highlighting its importance in the configuration of administrative principles. The values established by international organizations such as the OECD and the national codes of ethics governing the behavior of public servants in Mexico were identified. Likewise, an analysis of the municipality of Pátzcuaro, its institutional values and its focus on improving the quality of life of citizens was presented. Through the study of these elements, the impact of ethics in municipal management and its application in practice was evaluated.

Conclusions: the analysis evidenced that ethics is essential for the proper functioning of institutions and citizen trust in government. Although there are regulations and principles established to regulate the conduct of public servants, their effective application has been a constant challenge. Transparency, accountability and honesty were identified as fundamental values to avoid corruption and ensure that public administration works in the collective interest.

Keywords: Public Ethics; Public Administration; Transparency; Government Values; Corruption.

RESUMEN

Introducción: la ética en la administración pública ha sido considerada un pilar fundamental para la transparencia y la responsabilidad en la toma de decisiones gubernamentales. En este sentido, el estudio abordó la ética en el ayuntamiento de Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, durante el periodo 2021-2024, con el propósito de analizar su influencia en la toma de decisiones políticas. Se planteó la hipótesis de que la degradación de la ética en los servidores públicos de Pátzcuaro fue el resultado de diversos factores, como la presión social, la ambición personal y la influencia del poder. Para ello, se realizó una revisión bibliográfica sobre la ética en la administración pública y se analizó la normativa vigente en México.

Desarrollo: la investigación exploró el origen y la evolución de la ética en la función pública, destacando su importancia en la configuración de los principios administrativos. Se identificaron los valores establecidos por organismos internacionales como la OCDE y los códigos de ética nacionales que rigen el comportamiento de los servidores públicos en México. Asimismo, se presentó un análisis del municipio de Pátzcuaro, sus valores institucionales y su enfoque en la mejora de la calidad de vida de los ciudadanos. A través del estudio

de estos elementos, se evaluó el impacto de la ética en la gestión municipal y su aplicación en la práctica. **Conclusiones:** el análisis evidenció que la ética es esencial para el correcto funcionamiento de las instituciones y la confianza ciudadana en el gobierno. Si bien existen normativas y principios establecidos para regular la conducta de los servidores públicos, su aplicación efectiva ha sido un desafío constante. La transparencia, la responsabilidad y la honestidad se identificaron como valores fundamentales para evitar la corrupción y garantizar que la administración pública funcione en beneficio del interés colectivo.

Palabras clave: Ética Pública; Administración Pública; Transparencia; Valores Gubernamentales; Corrupción.

INTRODUCTION

Ethics in public service is a fundamental pillar for properly functioning government institutions and fulfilling their duty to serve society. In a scenario marked by complex political decisions and interaction with various actors, ethics is a crucial frame of reference to guide the conduct of public servants and ensure transparency, accountability, and integrity in their actions. In this context, this study explores ethics in Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, to analyze its influence on political decision-making during the 2021-2024 period. The hypothesis proposed suggests that the degradation of ethics among public servants in Pátzcuaro stems from a series of complex factors, such as social pressure, personal ambition, the influence of power, and other elements that can weaken ethics in political decision-making.

In this context, an exhaustive literature review will address ethics in public administration, political corruption, and government decision-making. A detailed case study will also be conducted on the ethics and decision-making of public servants in Pátzcuaro, explicitly focusing on political ethics. By analyzing the data collected, we will seek to identify patterns and trends that shed light on the relationship between ethics and decision-making at the municipal level. Based on the findings, we will propose an action plan to raise awareness of the importance of ethics in politics and promote its practical application in public administration.

General Objective

To conduct an in-depth analysis of the behavior of high-ranking public servants in decision-making, the role of values in citizenship, and their participation in the loss of values and professional ethics.

Specific Objectives

- Explore different aspects of ethics in public administration.
- Discover whether it is possible to restore the application of ethical values.
- Propose action to raise awareness of the importance of applying ethics within public administration.

DEVELOPMENT

The word “ethics” comes from the Greek *ethos* and means character. Ethics, in its origin, is concerned with asking questions and reflecting on the meaning of institutions, on the principles that should serve as their foundation for achieving the common good, and especially on the desirable behaviors of citizens so that life together is positive. (Alvarez, 2005)

The ethics of public service began to emerge when political communities arose with leaders and figures responsible for administrative functions. Public officials must adhere to certain values and principles that are not always written down. (Corina, 2018)

Public administration began in the modern state when the rule of law was established in the 1970s, together with applied ethics. (Corina, 2018)

Applied ethics has three pioneers:

1. Bioethics
2. Economic ethics
3. The ethics of the development of people (Corina, 2018)

Public administration ethics subsequently emerged following the Watergate scandal. (Corina, 2018)

The Watergate scandal was a political scandal that resulted from the revelation of illegal activities by the Republican administration of Richard Nixon, President of the United States between 1969 and 1974. (Gayubas, 2023)

“Ethics is more about prevention than punishment.” Dr. Adela Corina

In 1995, the British Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven guiding principles:

1. Integrity
2. Responsibility

3. Assumption of the public interest
4. Objectivity
5. Transparency
6. Honesty
7. Leadership

These have served as a reference for subsequent documents. (Apalategui, 2020)

In 2000, the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) analyzed the values on which its members' regulations and practices in the field of public ethics were based and identified eight core values:

1. Impartiality
2. Legality
3. Integrity
4. Transparency
5. Efficiency
6. Equity
7. Accountability
8. Justice

These values are highly consistent with those in the Nolan Report. (Apalategui, 2020)

In our country, codes of ethics are established by the authorities of the three levels of government. I mention the federal government, and I also mention the principles and values that governed the municipality of Pátzcuaro from 2021 to 2024.

CODE OF ETHICS OF THE FEDERAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TITLE I

ETHICS OF PUBLIC SERVICE CHAPTER II

PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Article 4. Principles of public service. For the proper exercise of public service, one must act by the constitutional and legal principles of:

Article 5.

Respect for human rights Article 6. Legality.

Article 7. Honesty.

Article 8. Loyalty.

Article 9. Impartiality.

Article 10. Efficiency.

Article 11. Effectiveness.

Article 12. Transparency.

CHAPTER III

VALUES OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Article 13. Values of public service. For the proper exercise of public service, it is important to have an appropriate work environment that directly and indirectly affects society through the values of:

Article 13. Respect.

Article 15. Leadership.

Article 16. Cooperation.

Article 17. Care for the cultural and ecological environment. CODE OF ETHICS OF THE FEDERAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, Chapter II and Chapter III. January 28, 2022 (Mexico)

Government of Pátzcuaro, Michoacán

Represented by the municipal president and his cabinet, the government of Pátzcuaro aims to improve the quality of life of its inhabitants.

Mission

To improve the quality of life of citizens.

Vision

To be a municipality that is an example of good governance and progress.

Values

Transparency, honesty, efficiency, and commitment to the community. (City Council 2021-2024).

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, ethics in public service is crucial for the proper functioning of institutions and the well-being of society. Over time, principles have been established to guide the behavior of public officials due to malpractice within the public administration, promoting values such as transparency, accountability, and honesty in theory. These principles should help prevent corruption and ensure that the work of the government is in the service of the common good, thus building a more just and equitable society.

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None.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Conceptualization: Estivaliz Wendoling Barriga Ríos.
Data curation: Estivaliz Wendoling Barriga Ríos.
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Research: Estivaliz Wendoling Barriga Ríos.
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Software: Estivaliz Wendoling Barriga Ríos.
Supervision: Estivaliz Wendoling Barriga Ríos; Estivaliz Wendoling Barriga Ríos.
Validation: Estivaliz Wendoling Barriga Ríos.
Visualization: Estivaliz Wendoling Barriga Ríos.
Drafting - original draft: Estivaliz Wendoling Barriga Ríos.
Writing - proofreading and editing: Estivaliz Wendoling Barriga Ríos.