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*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Ethics as a transverse axis of higher education for the professional efficiency of Ecuador**

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**This article is based on research in Higher Education Institutions, in order to determine the importance of ethics as a transverse axis of education. Given the above, it requires changes in the Ecuadorian universities toward the implementation of ethics and values that meet a crucial role in society, these are directed to the continuous improvement of higher education institutions. The results of this research indicate that the heis are partakers in the guidance of ethical values in the academy and its importance determines the implementation of a code of ethics in all universities of Ecuador, in order to improve the educational processes and achieve standards of quality and professional efficiency in the country. The methodology used in the present research is based on the current problems in the Higher Education Institutions in Ecuador, for which a qualitative and quantitative approach was used. Field research and bibliographical research were carried out taking as a population the Universities of Ecuador Which are about 530.000 students, for which we take as a base the Universities of Zone 3, such as: Higher Polytechnic School of Chimborazo, National University of Chimborazo, Amazon State University, Technical University of Ambato, Universidad Autónoma de los Andes, Technical University of Cotopaxi, University of the Armed Forces, Indoamerica Technological University, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador Sede Ambato. For this, we have taken a total of 104 respondents, through sample calculation, with a confidence level of 95%.**

**Keywords:** Ethics, higher education, code of ethics, Ecuador

## INTRODUCTION

At present, higher education in Ecuador is characterized as a productive force for national development, where learning is a factor of diversification and improvement for the institutional educational offer. When talking about ethics in higher education, we refer to objective mechanisms such as codes, regulations, training programs, advisory services, documentary, formal procedures and management systems.

However, it is important to highlight elements such as values, principles and norms that are prioritized as a basic element of education and academic development. In the Institutions of Higher Education in Ecuador, it is considered that heist should be shaped by responsible purposes aimed at achieving ethical values, where 84% of the respondents are aware of ethics as the basis of human behavior.

Ethics for its part, allows the university community to provide a document that collects experiences supported by knowledge. For this, based on the 104 people surveyed it is indicated that in the Higher Education Institutions in Ecuador, 52% of them do not have a code of ethics. This denotes the importance of including this code to appeal to the conscience or reason of the members of each institution, because ethics is constituted as a factor of appeal to the organizational equivalent.

In antiquity, ethics is established based on universal knowledge oriented to morals, then in the middle ages, the advent of Christianity marks a religious conception within thought. However, the categorical imperative in the modern age is the moral basis and ethical ideas are the result of beliefs in the freedom of the individual's foundation. On the other hand, in arriving at the contemporary age, the values ethic is driven to the freedom of human beliefs and ideologies.

Based on the philosophy of education, ethics must have as its fundamental objective the formation of ethical human beings who operate with moral codes and practice their values. These codes are inseparable instruments necessary to meet the challenges of coming, highlighting responsibility in an educational and social context.

With respect to the research and data analyzed, a survey is applied to the Higher Education Institutions of zone 3 of Ecuador comprised by Tungurahua, Chimborazo, Pastaza and Cotopaxi, where the results indicate that 79% of the total respondents stated are in agreement with the implementation of a Code of Ethics to improve the academic and professional quality of Ecuador.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ethics are subjects capable of making decisions in a free

and responsible manner, according to Savater (2002), "ethics is an attitude, an individual reflection on one's own freedom in relation to the freedom of others and with social freedom in that we move". The values and principles that commit the university and the community in general are entities of study of morality and constitute an ethical study that allows organizing the learning processes necessary for the achievement of educational objectives.

Ethics as a principle of knowledge and philosophical reflection is one of the areas of human knowledge that allows discernment on the scope of human actions in terms of morality that is necessarily immersed in both individual and collective behavior (Franco, 2006). This encompasses key factors such as morality, the analysis of the degree of goodness or malice of the human act, evaluation that is rational, objective, real and intersubjective assessment that allows to establish criteria to determine the achievement that a person has achieved after investing their resources.

As an effect of the lack of a Code of Ethics in Higher Education Institutions in Ecuador, we refer to Bauman's (2005) criterion, "human reality is disordered and ambiguous, as are moral decisions as opposed to abstract ethical principles". To make a paradigm shift, it is important to delegitimize or delimit moral impulses and emotions, and then try to reconstruct the building of ethics with careful, clean arguments, emotional matrices and free of any bondage.

The use of moral sensibility is a means to build stable and prosperous societies, since unethical behavior can have repercussions on internal and external conflicts and problems. The action of man can be positive or negative, if it is positive constructs, if negative destroys, the importance is in the simultaneous and educational didactic that arises based on learning processes necessary for the development of collaborative learning.

Through a personalized dimension of education according to Tirado (2003), "through an ethical perspective, the professional's assessment of his environment and his reality with an end of service is punctuated." through the personalized dimension of education, family, school, vocational, professional and work orientations are promoted.

The objectives are embodied in know-how in the application of research methods and techniques, the development of strategies needed to conduct research and in the skills to manage and manage human and educational resources in companies and educational institutions. For this, the role that education can play in all its fields and particularly in universities is fundamental. New generations of professionals must be thoroughly prepared in their ethical responsibilities. This is crucial in areas that are crucial to development, such as managers, accountants, economists, and other professions

(Kliksberg, 2006). The author continues to point out that specialists and professionals should be trained to advance social responsibility practices, ensuring total trustworthiness and transparency in information in both public and private areas. In short, the freedom of professorship in higher education institutions demands the existence of an ethical responsibility, this ethical regulation does not limit the freedom of professorship, and to a certain extent is a consequence of this, since it contributes to establishing the limits of it, which is both a guarantee and a form of accountability for academic freedom (Casanova, 2002).

In moral and ethical analysis since the promulgation of human rights and human dignity, Franco (2006) points out that "it is necessary to create a clear conscience about the principles of justice, autonomy, respect for difference and sociability as imperatives that establish the Human and social interactions that create the immense network of social support as a niche where the person develops in each and every one of the dimensions, spheres and expressions that constitute it."

However, Deusto (1995) explains that "an ethics of values is not bound by the norm but leaves human behavior open in a responsible way to a series of situations where one has to act in terms of certain values, beyond what the norms oblige to do or prohibit doing ". In this respect, the application of ethics obliges us to be continuously making an analysis of reality to determine the values and conflict between them. Nowadays, through ethics one can end up with corrupt practices that destroy value and damage the economy and society in general, the importance of a code of ethics, is considered as a guide of value that will be a source of competitive advantages for the professional. As objectives of the present investigation we have:

### General objective

Develop ethics as a transversal axis of Higher Education to improve the professional efficiency of Ecuador.

- Specific objectives
- Analyze the current ethics of Higher Education Institutions in Ecuador.
- To determine professional efficiency in Ecuador through a Code of Ethics.
- Implement a Code of Ethics in Higher Education Institutions to improve the professional efficiency of Ecuador.

### METHODOLOGY

According to Gómez (2006), "the methodology is the process of linking abstract concepts with empirical indicators, through an explicit and organized plan to be

able to classify the available data, depending on the concept that the researcher has in mind".

In this sense, the methodology is a conceptual support that governs the way in which the procedures will be applied in an investigation. This knowledge discipline seeks to elaborate, define and systematize procedures to follow for the development of the research process.

### Investigative approach.

The research is based on the current problems in the Institutions of Higher Education in Ecuador, for which it has a qualitative-quantitative approach to the current ethics that is handled in higher education.

Qualitative: "Systematic activity oriented to an in-depth understanding of educational and social phenomena, to the transformation of socio-educational practices and scenarios, to decision-making and also to the discovery and development of an organized body of knowledge."

Quantitative: "It is based on the explanatory paradigm, this paradigm uses quantifiable information to describe or treat phenomena of study, in the forms that it is possible to do in the level of logical structure in which the current social sciences are found."

### Scientific method

"The scientific method is the best method we have to understand the functional relations between things with the greatest possible attachment to reality, which is the goal of the sciences" (Bravo, 1997).

For the present investigation we used methods such as:

Field research "Process of analysis and understanding of a reality and the problems existing in it, research has a diversity of approaches, theoretical, practical and applied. In this investigation the situation in the real place of the facts investigated is analyzed".

*Bibliographic research:* "A process involving a series of techniques and procedures to achieve its goals, in this case consists of the systematic study of reports or written as data sources, which is essential reading."

*Population:* We will call population any finite or infinite collection of individuals and distinct elements, perfectly identifiable without ambiguity (Quesada, 1988). Due to the impossibility in most studies to be able to study all the subjects of a population, it becomes necessary to use subsets of elements extracted from the population, this set is called sample.

*Sample:* The sample is a subset of individuals belonging to a population, and representative of it, there are several ways of obtaining the sample depending on the analysis that is intended (Quesada, 1988).

According to the aforementioned, the population of the Universities of Ecuador is about 530000 students, for which we take as base the Universities of zone 3, such as: Higher Polytechnic School of Chimborazo, National University of Chimborazo, State University of Amazonia, Technical University of Ambato, Universidad Autónoma de los Andes, Technical University of Cotopaxi, University of the Armed Forces, Indoamerica Technological University, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador Sede Ambato. For this, we have taken a total of 104 respondents, through sample calculation, with a confidence level of 95%.

Equation

$$K = 2\sqrt{(p(1 - p))/n}$$

N: Population

n: Sample size

K: Sampling error

P: Percentage of the population that has characteristics of interest.

P (1-p): Dispersion

The information gathering process was carried out in the Higher Education Institutions of zone 3 of Ecuador, in a sample of 104 people among teachers, students and administrative staff. The questionnaire as a method of data collection was established with data that allow the rigorous and standardized study as an object of research.

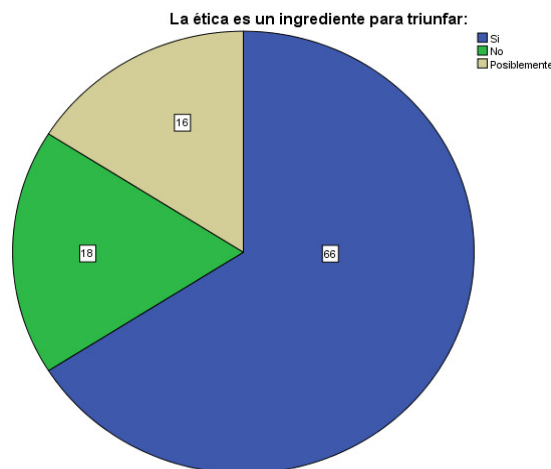
## RESULTS

Ethics in higher education is a process that involves the student with society, where in order to evaluate human actions it is necessary to understand them in a reflection of autonomous, free and responsible character. According to research carried out in the Universities of Zone 3 of Ecuador, 66% of the population surveyed agree that ethics is an ingredient to succeed, 18% say no, while 16 % Thinks it is possible. It must be taken into account that the population is aware that ethics is important within the organization while at the same time contributing to the well-being of the organization.

Regarding the question whether ethics is a limit to business opportunities, it was determined that, out of the total population surveyed it can be said that 49% correspond to 49 respondents who consider that ethics is a limit to business opportunities. Therefore, ethics is a limit for the opportunities, which is due to the behavior of the human being to know the difference between what is good and what is bad, and this is where HEIs must work with the aim of strengthening the institutional ethics.

Regarding the question of whether business ethics helps to act in an environment that not only seeks the highest respect and dignity of its employees, but also

Illustration 1. Ethics is an ingredient to succeed



Source: Self Made  
Prepared by: Research Group

Illustration 2. Ethics is a limit to business opportunities

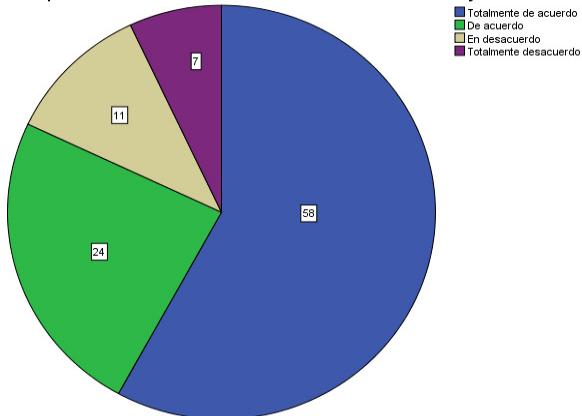


Source: Self Made  
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ensures that the company presents itself honestly to society honestly and honestly, % Representing the majority of the population with 58 respondents who state that ethics in HEIs is vitally important and they totally agree with this question, while 24% who represent 24 respondents also agree, the 11 respondents who Represent 11% say they disagree and 7% represent 7 respondents, said they totally disagree.

**Illustration 3. Business ethics.**- Helps to act in an environment that not only seeks the highest respect and dignity of its employees, but also ensures that the company presents itself honestly to society honestly and truthfully.

La ética empresarial.- Ayuda a actuar en un ambiente que no solo procura el más alto respeto y dignidad de sus empleados sino que procura que la empresa se presente frente a la sociedad de manera honrada veraz y honesta.

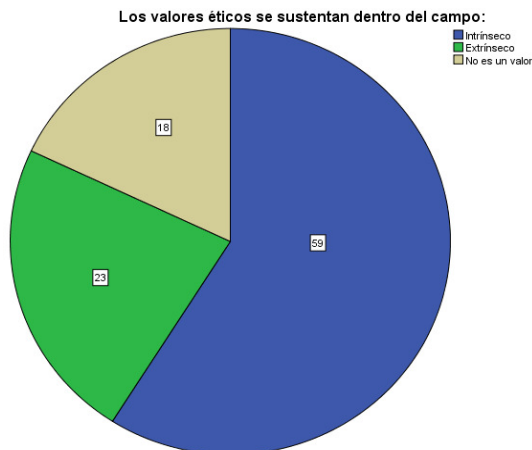


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In order to know if the ethical values are sustained within the field, 59% of 59% of the total respondents indicate that ethical values are sustained within the intrinsic field, 23% said that 23 respondents stated that ethics Manifest from the extrinsic field, and 18% that 18 respondents say that ethics is not a value.

From what the respondents said that ethics is derived from the intrinsic field, we can say that it is characteristic or characteristic of the person who expresses itself and does not depend on the circumstances. And it is there, where HEIs must contribute with the elements important for the academic formation of the individuals and so that they can differentiate the good from the bad, if we go beyond knowing how to apply what is right and what is not right.

**Illustration 4.** Ethical values are sustained within the field



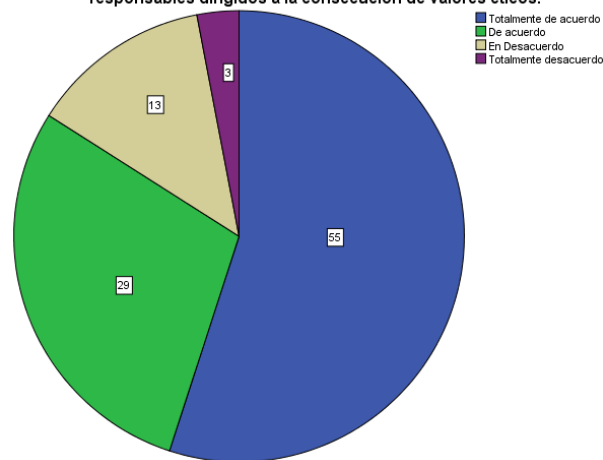
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In the same way, it was surveyed that if HEIs are considered to be shaped by responsible purposes aimed at achieving ethical values. Of the total number of respondents, it can be stated that 55% of the 55 respondents agree and strongly agree that HEIs should have responsible purposes to help achieve ethical values. Twenty-nine percent said they agree, 13% said 13 disagreed and 3% said they strongly disagree.

While it is true that ethics is a science that helps to improve the behavior of the individual in society, and if it is ESI that in its own vision and mission is to offer professionals with entrepreneurial spirit, whose responsibilities are in The process of decision-making in any field of its professionalism. In addition, with this survey we see that 84% of the respondents know about ethics and 16% do not know about this discipline.

**Illustration 5.** You consider that HEIs should be shaped by responsible purposes aimed at the attainment of ethical values

Considera usted que las IES deben ser conformadas con propósitos responsables dirigidos a la consecución de valores éticos.

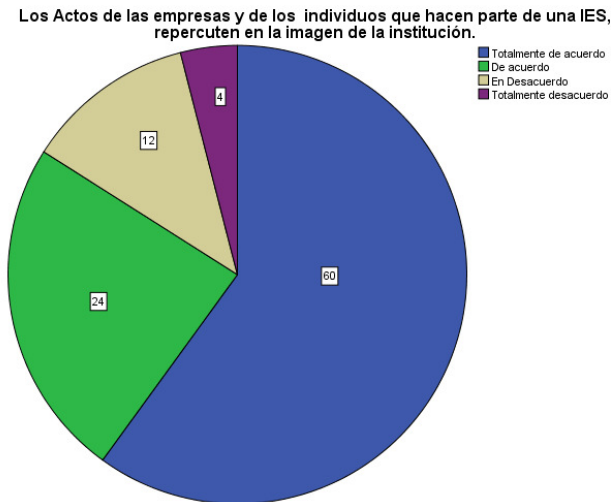


Fuente: Elaboración propia  
Elaborado por: Grupo de investigación

Based on the question whether: the acts of companies and individuals that are part of an HEI have an impact on the image of the institution, 60% representing 60 respondents stated that they fully agree with the actions of HEIs and The individuals have repercussions on the institutional image, while 24% said that 24 respondents also agreed, 12% said they disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed.

In relation to the question asked, we can say that the acts, events, strategies carried out by HEIs are perceived by a social environment and institutional images will be evaluated by what they do or do not do the same, not forgetting the main actors who They influence institutions such as the Human Talent, because in every activity that is carried out must be present what is good and what is bad, many of the people surveyed have answered that they know about ethics and have not applied it.

**Illustration 6.** The Acts of companies and individuals that are part of an HEI, have an impact on the image of the institution

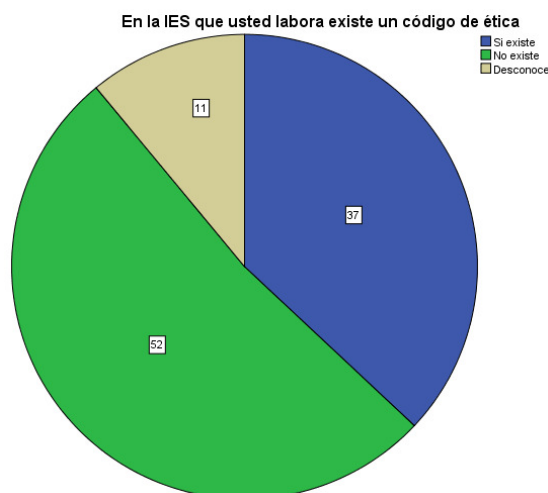


Fuente: Elaboración propia  
Elaborado por: Grupo de investigación

Likewise, with regard to the question whether in the HEI that you work there is a code of ethics, of the total of the people surveyed 37 representing 37%, said that its HEI if it has a code of ethics, 52% Said that no and 11% said they did not know.

Although it is true, the constitution of the Republic of Ecuador speaks of the implementation of a code of ethics in institutions, but few apply it to reality or simply live according to the traditional and traditional resistance. For this, it is necessary to demand more HEIs to be the example to the business sector in the creation of the Institutional Code of Ethics but this goes beyond that it must be applied and sanctioned, this implies to comply with the Code.

**Illustration 7.** In the HEI that you work there is a code of ethics

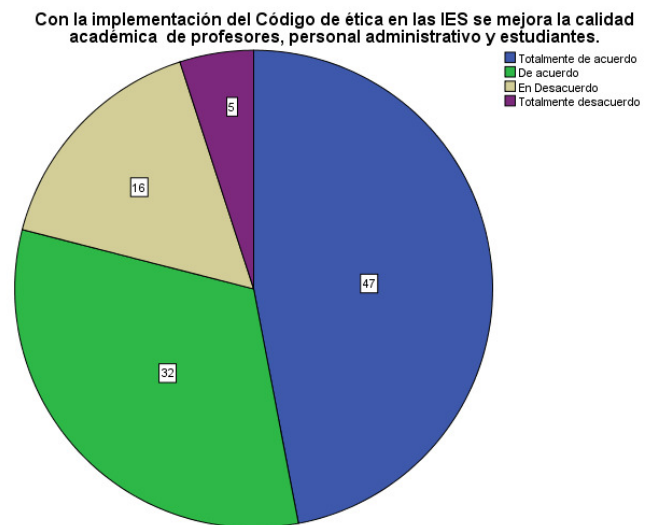


Source: Self Made  
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With respect to the question of: With the implementation of the Code of Ethics in HEIs, the academic quality of teachers, administrative staff and students is improved, 47% agree that implementing a code of ethics in HEIs will improve the Academic quality of both teachers, administrators and students, 32% also agree, 16% say they disagree and 5% strongly disagree.

With the demands of the National Government, every institution must implement a Code of Ethics, if we talk about SUMAK CAUSAY that is to live in harmony and this is protected by our constitution, we can say that the implementation and execution of an Ethical Code will transform the academy and human talent.

**Illustration 8.** With the implementation of the Code of Ethics in HEIs, the academic quality of teachers, administrative staff and students is improved



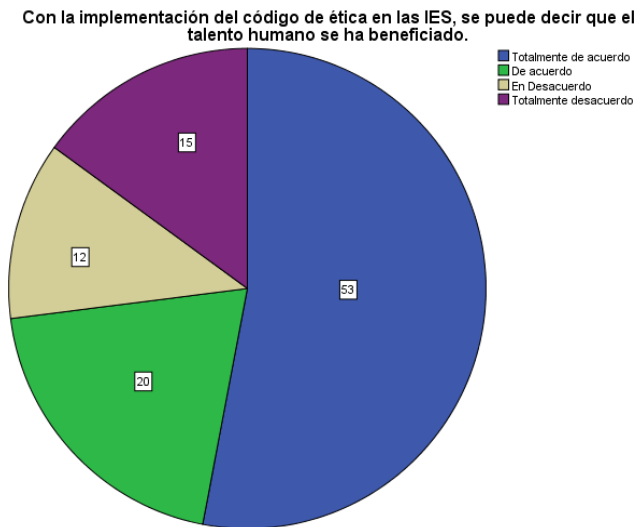
Source: Self Made  
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From the question: With the implementation of the code of ethics in HEIs, it can be said that human talent has benefited, of the total of the people surveyed we can say that 53% representing 53 respondents stated that they fully agree that Benefiting from the code of ethics is human talent, 20% also agree, 12% disagree and 15% disagree.

Although it is true, ethics is based on the values of individuals, values that can be modified by different factors, but we must take into account ethics is the letter of presentation in front of society, that is to say that everything we do become impregnated in society.

Based on the question: Ethics in HEIs, today is a requirement that becomes more significant the greater the complexity, the 58% that represents 58 respondents stated in fully agreeing that ethics in HEIs At present it is a requirement that becomes more meaningful while it is

**Illustration 9.** With the implementation of the code of ethics in HEI, it can be said that human talent has benefited

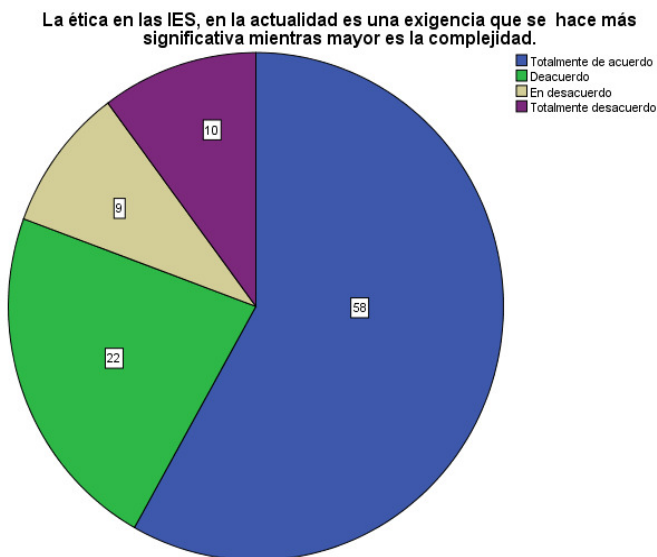


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more complex, 22% also agree to agree 9% say they disagree and 10% totally disagree.

Nowadays, ethics are inserted in the academic and business field, it is there where it is important to study this topic, to propose policies that help HEIs to improve every day and to become competitive in front of other international HEIs.

**Illustration 10.** Ethics in HEIs, at present, is a requirement that becomes more meaningful the greater the complexity



Source: Self Made  
Prepared by: Research Group

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Ethics in education seeks to fulfill the mission and vision of the country's universities, because at present there are no ethical codes in all universities. The ethical behavior of students, teachers and administrators, should not be unrelated to professional practice, because this is part of a component of action, which from a perspective of training by competencies, involves the integration of knowledge with theoretical knowledge, practical and Values that are developed in the Institutions of Higher Education.

The meaning of values, rules and norms that implies ethics, is projected to the change of paradigms in the society, such is that nowadays do not propose completely ethical measures for the benefit of the human talent. On the other hand, the educational quality undergoes current changes that arise in two fundamental requirements: the relation of production and creation of knowledge maintained and the basis of the transmission of all the educational activities that translate into ethics.

These components indicate that HEIs should be shaped for responsible purposes aimed at the attainment of ethical values, corresponding in such a way to a cross-sectional and professional education from the ethical point of view.

However, this ethical transversality addresses issues of special relevance to education, life and society in general; consequently, it is fully justified in the educational framework as current topics are developed, of a controversial nature and of great social interest in HEIs, in this way students are formed as a person and as citizens of a society.

The implementation of a Code of Ethics in Higher Education Institutions is a very important factor, one of the cases of analysis is the Technical University of Ambato, this institution has implemented its Code of Ethics according to Resolution 2022 CU-P-2015, This document gathers principles, values, responsibilities and guided commitments of the behaviors, attitudes and practices of the authorities, teachers, students, servants and workers who are part of the university community.

It is important that all those who make up the university assume their commitment to comply with this Code, which will change the old perception of corrupt, disloyal and impolite public officials. In addition, the Technical University of Ambato will have an Ethics Committee to ensure the application of these regulations, which must be complemented by a series of organizational, diffusion and participative experiences.

The main objective of this Code of Ethics is to determine and promote principles, values, responsibilities and ethical commitments in relation to behaviors and practices of the authorities, teachers, students, administrative and service personnel of the Technical

University of Ambato to reach the institutional objectives to the good use of public resources (Ambato, 2015).

In this way, we have a clear example of the application of an Ethical Code in higher education, these codes must be put into practice in the face of changes in the environment and in society. Ethical considerations should be an element of rationality in the analysis of HEIs and a transversal axis of education.

## CONCLUSIONS

Ethical issues have become very important for the individual in society, ethics on the other hand is a source of competitive advantage, which generates patterns of behavior and value in society. However, the ethical implications are a challenge for university education from the point of view of knowledge, demands and ethical responsibilities.

Due to the demands of the National Government, Higher Education Institutions must implement a Code of Ethics for academic transformation and human talent. To do this, based on research conducted 8 out of 10 people indicate that ethics is a significant requirement that will improve the academic quality of teachers, administrative staff and students.

In addition, it is important to indicate that 9 out of 10 people indicate that HEIs should be shaped for responsible purposes aimed at achieving ethical values. This indicates that the ethics helps to improve the behavior of the individual in the society, guaranteeing a successful projection of professionals.

Personal growth is linked to the social structure, so it is necessary for higher education institutions to implement a Code of Ethics, since 66% of those surveyed indicate that ethics is important within the organization. While this contributes to professional and social welfare.

It requires the application of an Ethical Code in higher education as a transversal axis, which allows improving the quality of life and promote an efficient and competent professional service.

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