

From Hierarchical control to Emergent Management: Distributed Leadership as the Driving Force of University Self-Organization in the Venezuelan Context

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ABSTRACT

Venezuelan universities are undergoing a period of forced structural transformation, exacerbated by the institutional, economic, and political crisis that the country has experienced since the second decade of the 21st century. In this context, management models based on hierarchical control have shown a growing inability to respond to the complexity of the contemporary university environment. This article aims to examine, from a theoretical and documentary perspective, how distributed leadership can drive university self-eco-organization processes that transcend the limitations of the bureaucratic-vertical paradigm. To this end, a qualitative, hermeneutic-critical approach was adopted, based on the analysis of specialized bibliographic sources from the fields of complexity theory, educational management, and organizational studies. The results reveal that distributed leadership, far from being a managerial fad, constitutes an epistemological response to the demands of complex adaptive systems, and that its implementation in Venezuelan university contexts requires a profound reconfiguration of institutional cultures, power structures, and regulatory frameworks. It is concluded that the articulation between distributed leadership and self-eco-organization represents a viable and urgent alternative for the revitalization of Venezuelan universities, although its development faces structural resistance that cannot be underestimated.

Keywords: distributed leadership, self-eco-organization, organizational complexity, university management, Venezuelan university, complex adaptive systems.

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