

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18930670

EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION AND ETHICS APPLIED TO CONFLICT MEDIATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A PREVENTIVE STRATEGY FOR WELL-BEING AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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Received: 27/12/2025

Accepted: 19/02/2026

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to design and validate an educational innovation strategy grounded in applied ethics and conflict mediation as a preventive approach to strengthen well-being and academic success in higher education. A mixed-methods design was employed, with a non-experimental, cross-sectional, correlational-explanatory scope. The sample consisted of 354 participants (312 students and 42 faculty members). The Ethical Mediation and Academic Climate Questionnaire (EMACQ), validated through expert judgment and demonstrating high reliability ($\alpha = .91$), was administered alongside semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed positive and statistically significant correlations among ethical sensitivity, perception of mediation, institutional climate, and academic well-being. The regression model explained 58% of the variance in well-being and academic engagement, with institutional climate emerging as the strongest predictor. Pretest-posttest comparisons indicated statistically significant improvements across all measured dimensions, with large effect sizes. Qualitative analysis confirmed processes of conflict transformation, strengthened institutional trust, and expanded ethical awareness. The study concluded that the systematic integration of applied ethics, structured mediation, and pedagogical innovation constitutes an effective preventive strategy for fostering fair, participatory, and achievement-oriented academic communities. The research provides a replicable integrative model that addresses the fragmentation between mediation, academic integrity, and student well-being, contributing to the advancement of educational innovation in higher education.

KEYWORDS: Educational Innovation, Applied Ethics, Conflict Mediation, Restorative Justice, Academic Integrity, Student Well-Being, Institutional Climate, Academic Success.

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education currently faces complex challenges related to academic coexistence, institutional integrity, student mental health, and the ethical management of interpersonal conflicts. In a context characterized by expanded access, digitalization of educational processes, and increasing sociocultural diversity among students, universities experience tensions that directly affect well-being and academic success. Empirical evidence indicates that inadequately managed conflicts deteriorate institutional climate, negatively influence student retention, and compromise the quality of educational processes (Gmurzyńska, 2021; Lau, 2022).

Within this framework, educational innovation emerges as a strategic axis for transforming traditional disciplinary models into preventive, restorative, and ethically grounded approaches. Recent literature highlights the consolidation of the “restorative university” paradigm, which advocates replacing punitive responses with dialogical practices aimed at repairing harm and rebuilding community relationships (Karp, 2023; Elbers, 2025). Empirical studies demonstrate that restorative justice strengthens academic integrity culture and promotes fairer and more participatory environments (Abramson & Rucker, 2023; Riley, 2024; Mokomane, 2024). Moreover, its implementation within university conduct processes contributes to disrupting exclusionary dynamics and fostering sustainable educational trajectories (Sullivan & Witenstein, 2022).

Simultaneously, academic dishonesty acquires new dimensions with the incorporation of digital technologies and generative artificial intelligence tools. Evidence suggests that the emergence of these resources redefines ethical dilemmas in higher education and requires innovative regulatory and pedagogical frameworks (Sharma & Panja, 2025; Bennett et al., 2025). In this regard, institutional responses centered exclusively on control mechanisms prove insufficient if not integrated with pedagogical processes that cultivate ethical sensitivity, shared responsibility, and socioemotional competencies. Educational experiences that incorporate restorative approaches into university courses report improvements in students’ understanding of the ethical meaning of academic integrity (Jamieson & Mertiny, 2023).

Mediation emerges as a key strategy within this transformative landscape. Studies on alternative dispute resolution in universities indicate that mediation fosters constructive communication and

reduces the escalation of disputes (Gmurzyńska, 2021; Lau, 2022). Innovative institutional initiatives demonstrate that the systematic implementation of mediation mechanisms strengthens academic governance and organizational trust (Mancuso & Felicetti, 2024). Even in digital contexts, online dispute resolution systems show potential to expand access and enhance the effectiveness of conflict management, although they also raise ethical and legal challenges that warrant careful consideration (Horielova, 2025; Sulistianingsih et al., 2023). More recently, the integration of digital tools and artificial intelligence-based systems has opened new possibilities for optimizing mediation processes and leadership practices within higher education institutions (Gkanatsiou et al., 2025).

From the perspective of student well-being, scientific evidence confirms that safe and collaborative educational environments function as protective factors against dropout and low academic performance. Systematic reviews underscore the importance of structured interventions aimed at promoting holistic well-being in higher education (Fang et al., 2025; Zhao et al., 2025). However, many of these interventions focus primarily on individual dimensions (such as stress, anxiety, and resilience) without systematically addressing the relational and ethical dimensions of academic conflict. The disconnect between well-being programs and mediation strategies limits the preventive scope of university policies.

Furthermore, research on “zero tolerance” policies in educational institutions reveals that excessively punitive approaches may produce counterproductive effects, particularly in cases involving discrimination or violence (Chai, 2025). In contrast, restorative models offer alternatives that promote accountability, dialogue, and reparation, thereby consolidating more inclusive academic communities (Bussu & Karp, 2025). Training workshops in conflict management using simulated methodologies demonstrate significant improvements in students’ communicative and ethical competencies (Zhou et al., 2025), confirming the relevance of incorporating innovative pedagogical strategies in this field.

Despite conceptual and empirical advances in restorative justice, university mediation, and academic integrity, a significant gap persists in the systematic articulation of these elements within an integrative framework that combines educational innovation and applied ethics as a preventive strategy explicitly oriented toward well-being and academic success. The literature tends to address

these components in a fragmented manner: some studies focus on conflict resolution, others on academic integrity or psychological well-being, without developing a holistic model that integrates them as interdependent dimensions of a comprehensive institutional strategy.

This knowledge gap is particularly significant in the contemporary context, where universities require structural responses that transcend reactive conflict management and instead emphasize prevention, ethical formation, and the construction of resilient academic communities. The absence of integrative models limits institutions' capacity to implement coherent policies that articulate mediation, ethics, and pedagogical innovation as strategic pillars of university governance.

Within this framework, the present study aims to design and theoretically substantiate an educational innovation strategy grounded in applied ethics and conflict mediation in higher education, oriented toward the prevention of relational problems and the promotion of well-being and academic success. Specifically, the study seeks to: (a) analyze the theoretical foundations linking restorative justice, mediation, and academic integrity culture; (b) identify recent empirical contributions concerning student well-being and ethical conflict management; and (c) structure an integrative preventive model applicable to the university context.

The relevance of this research lies in its contribution to consolidating a systemic approach that articulates ethics, innovation, and mediation as strategic pillars for strengthening university coexistence. Its scope extends to both the theoretical domain (by integrating fields traditionally examined separately) and the practical domain, by providing guidelines for the design of institutional policies oriented toward holistic well-being and sustainable academic achievement.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. *Method*

This study was conducted under a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative components in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under analysis. The mixed design was selected because the research objectives required both the examination of theoretical relationships among restorative justice, mediation, and academic integrity culture, and the empirical validation of a preventive intervention model oriented toward well-being and academic success. According to Hernández et al. (2014), mixed methods enable the integration of

numerical measurement and interpretative analysis, thereby strengthening explanatory capacity and methodological rigor.

From a typological perspective, the research was applied, as it sought to design and substantiate a practical innovation strategy for implementation in higher education institutions. In terms of design, the quantitative component followed a non-experimental, cross-sectional design, since variables were observed as they naturally occurred without manipulation (Hernández et al., 2014). The qualitative component adopted a descriptive-interpretative design, aimed at deepening the understanding of participants' perceptions regarding ethical mediation processes and institutional coexistence.

Regarding its scope, the study reached a correlational and explanatory level. It was correlational because it analyzed the relationships among ethical climate, mediation culture, student well-being, and academic success indicators. It was explanatory insofar as it sought to determine whether the proposed innovation strategy contributed to improvements in these variables. As Bisquerra (2009) states, explanatory research attempts to identify causal or predictive relationships between variables in order to clarify underlying mechanisms.

The methodological integration occurred through a sequential explanatory design, in which quantitative data were collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data to interpret and deepen the findings. This structure ensured coherence with the research objectives: (a) analyzing theoretical foundations, (b) identifying empirical contributions regarding well-being and ethical conflict management, and (c) structuring and validating an integrative preventive model.

To enhance methodological transparency, the study explicitly defined operational procedures for sampling, measurement, and analysis. Variables were operationalized through standardized Likert-type indicators, data collection followed a pretest-posttest structure for the quantitative component, and qualitative inquiry was guided by theoretically derived interview categories aligned with the research constructs.

2.2. *Participants*

The population consisted of undergraduate students and faculty members from a higher education institution that had expressed institutional interest in strengthening ethical conflict mediation mechanisms. The target population included 1,240

undergraduate students and 95 full-time faculty members enrolled during the academic period in which the study was conducted.

A non-probabilistic intentional sampling strategy was employed, selecting participants who met predefined criteria and voluntarily agreed to participate. This strategy was selected because the study required participants with prior exposure to institutional coexistence dynamics and academic

integrity processes. Recruitment was conducted through institutional email invitations and informational sessions, ensuring that participation was voluntary and independent of academic evaluation. The final sample was composed of 312 students and 42 faculty members, considered adequate to perform correlational statistical analyses and qualitative triangulation.

Table 1: Distribution Of Participants.

Group	Population (N)	Sample (n)	Percentage (%)
Students	1,240	312	25.1%
Faculty members	95	42	44.2%
Total	1,335	354	—

a. Inclusion criteria

- Active enrollment (students) or active contractual status (faculty).
- Minimum of one academic semester completed.
- Voluntary participation with signed informed consent.

b. Exclusion criteria

- Administrative staff not directly involved in academic processes.
- Students in their first semester (due to limited institutional experience).
- Incomplete survey responses exceeding 20% missing data.

The selection criteria were justified by the need to include participants with sufficient experience in institutional coexistence dynamics and exposure to conflict mediation processes. The final sample size also met minimum recommendations for correlational and regression analyses, ensuring sufficient statistical power for medium effect sizes.

2.3. Procedure

The research was carried out in four sequential phases:

Phase 1: Theoretical and diagnostic foundation. A systematic review of recent literature on restorative justice, mediation, academic integrity, and student well-being was conducted to substantiate the conceptual framework. Based on this review, an initial diagnostic instrument was designed, aligning each construct with observable indicators and measurement dimensions.

Phase 2: Instrument design and validation. Two primary instruments were developed:

- Ethical Mediation and Academic Climate Questionnaire (EMACQ), structured on a Likert-type scale (1-5), composed of four dimensions: Ethical sensitivity and academic

integrity culture, perception of mediation mechanisms, institutional climate and coexistence, self-reported well-being and academic engagement. Items were formulated based on theoretical constructs identified in the literature review, and scale scores were computed as the mean of item responses within each dimension. Higher scores indicated stronger presence of the measured construct.

- Semi-structured interview guide, aimed at exploring perceptions of conflict management experiences and institutional ethical practices. Interview questions were organized around predefined thematic domains corresponding to the quantitative variables to facilitate data integration.

Content validity was established through expert judgment by five specialists in higher education, educational ethics, and research methodology. The Content Validity Index (CVI) reached 0.89, indicating high agreement.

A pilot study was conducted with 40 students to assess clarity and internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha for the overall instrument was 0.91, with subscale values ranging from 0.82 to 0.88, indicating high reliability. These procedures were consistent with methodological quality standards described by Hernández et al. (2014).

Phase 3: Implementation of the innovation strategy.

A structured intervention program was implemented over eight weeks, including:

- Workshops on restorative dialogue and ethical decision-making
- Simulated mediation sessions
- Reflective activities on academic integrity
- Faculty training sessions on restorative practices
- Participation was voluntary and integrated

into extracurricular academic activities.

Each session followed a standardized structure including conceptual input, guided practice, and reflective evaluation, ensuring procedural consistency across participants.

Phase 4: Data collection. Quantitative data were collected before and after the intervention using the EMACQ instrument under standardized administration conditions. Subsequently, 18 in-depth interviews (12 students, 6 faculty members) were conducted to interpret quantitative findings and explore perceived changes in coexistence and well-being. Interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

2.4. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were processed using statistical software. Prior to analysis, data screening procedures were conducted, including verification of missing values, detection of outliers, and assessment of normality assumptions. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions) were calculated to characterize the sample and baseline conditions.

To address the correlational objective, Pearson's correlation coefficients were computed to determine the relationships among ethical climate, mediation perception, well-being, and academic engagement.

To examine explanatory relationships, multiple linear regression analyses were conducted, with student well-being and academic engagement as dependent variables and ethical mediation indicators as predictors. Assumptions of linearity, independence, homoscedasticity, and absence of multicollinearity were evaluated prior to model interpretation. Pretest-posttest comparisons were analyzed using paired-sample t-tests to evaluate intervention effects. Statistical significance was established at $p < .05$. Effect sizes (Cohen's d) were

calculated to determine practical relevance.

Qualitative data from interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis. An open coding process was followed by axial coding to identify emerging categories related to ethical awareness, conflict transformation, institutional trust, and perceived academic motivation. Coding reliability was strengthened through iterative comparison of categories and analytical memo writing. Triangulation was performed by comparing qualitative findings with quantitative results to enhance interpretative validity (Bisquerra, 2009).

The integration of both data strands enabled a comprehensive interpretation aligned with the research objectives: (a) examining theoretical foundations, (b) identifying empirical associations between ethical mediation and well-being, and (c) validating an integrative preventive model applicable to higher education institutions.

3. RESULTS

The analysis of the results is organized in accordance with the objectives established in the introduction: (a) to analyze the theoretical foundations linking restorative justice, mediation, and academic integrity; (b) to identify empirical relationships among ethical mediation, well-being, and academic engagement; and (c) to validate an integrative preventive model applicable to the university context. The findings are presented according to the descriptive, correlational, explanatory, and qualitative analyses specified in the methodology section.

3.1. Initial Descriptive Results

Descriptive statistics from the pre-intervention administration of the Ethical Mediation and Academic Climate Questionnaire (EMACQ) are first examined.

Table 2: Pre-Intervention Descriptive Statistics (N = 354).

Dimension	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Ethical sensitivity and academic integrity	3.41	0.62
Perception of mediation mechanisms	3.08	0.71
Institutional climate and coexistence	3.26	0.65
Well-being and academic engagement	3.33	0.68

The results indicate moderate levels across all evaluated dimensions. Perception of mediation mechanisms shows the lowest mean ($M = 3.08$), reflecting limited institutional recognition or trust in formal conflict resolution channels prior to the intervention. Ethical sensitivity and academic integrity reach an intermediate level ($M = 3.41$), suggesting normative awareness without full

consolidation into restorative practices.

These baseline findings substantiate the need for implementing the preventive strategy, as they reveal clear margins for improvement in ethical culture and institutional mediation structures.

3.2. Correlational Analysis

In alignment with the correlational objective,

Pearson correlation coefficients are calculated among the instrument's dimensions.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix (Pretest).

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Ethical sensitivity	—			
2. Perception of mediation	.48**	—		
3. Institutional climate	.52**	.61**	—	
4. Well-being and academic engagement	.46**	.58**	.67**	—

Note: p < .01

All variables display positive and statistically significant associations. The strongest correlation is observed between institutional climate and well-being (r = .67, p < .01), indicating that environments perceived as fair and collaborative are directly associated with higher levels of academic engagement.

Perception of mediation mechanisms also demonstrates a significant correlation with well-being (r = .58, p < .01), confirming that trust in

restorative processes is associated with greater emotional stability and academic motivation. These findings empirically support the theoretical integration of applied ethics, mediation, and academic success.

3.3. Pretest-Posttest Comparison

A paired-samples t-test is conducted to assess the impact of the intervention.

Table 4: Pretest-Posttest Comparison (N = 354).

Dimension	M Pre	M Post	t	p	Cohen's d
Ethical sensitivity	3.41	4.02	12.84	< .001	0.78
Perception of mediation	3.08	4.15	15.96	< .001	0.92
Institutional climate	3.26	3.98	13.11	< .001	0.81
Well-being and academic engagement	3.33	4.07	14.02	< .001	0.85

Statistically significant increases are observed across all dimensions (p < .001). Effect sizes range from 0.78 to 0.92, indicating large effects according to Cohen's criteria.

The greatest improvement occurs in perception of mediation mechanisms (d = 0.92), demonstrating that workshops, simulations, and restorative training substantially strengthen institutional confidence in dialogical processes.

Well-being and academic engagement also increase significantly (d = 0.85), confirming the preventive impact of the strategy on academic

outcomes. These findings directly address the explanatory objective of validating the integrative model.

3.4. Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression analysis is conducted with posttest well-being and academic engagement as the dependent variable and ethical sensitivity, perception of mediation, and institutional climate as predictors.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Model.

Predictor Variable	β	t	p
Ethical sensitivity	.24	4.31	< .001
Perception of mediation	.29	5.02	< .001
Institutional climate	.38	6.47	< .001

$$R^2 = .58 \mid F(3, 350) = 161.42 \mid p < .001$$

The model explains 58% of the variance in well-being and academic engagement, representing substantial explanatory power. Institutional climate emerges as the strongest predictor (β = .38), followed by perception of mediation (β = .29) and ethical sensitivity (β = .24).

These findings confirm that improvements in restorative processes and ethical institutional culture significantly contribute to explaining increases in well-being and academic engagement.

3.5. Qualitative Findings

The thematic analysis of 18 interviews identifies four central categories:

- Conflict transformation: Participants report changes in how disagreements are addressed, emphasizing structured dialogue and active listening.
- Expanded ethical awareness: Greater reflection on academic responsibility and relational consequences is evident.

- Institutional trust: Both students and faculty express stronger perceptions of fairness and transparency in conflict management.
- Strengthened academic motivation: Students describe an enhanced sense of belonging and commitment to their academic trajectories.

Triangulation confirms consistency between quantitative and qualitative findings. Statistical improvements in perception of mediation correspond with narratives emphasizing legitimacy and participatory conflict resolution. Increased well-being aligns with reported experiences of restorative dialogue and collaborative problem-solving.

3.6. *Validation Of the Integrative Preventive Model*

The integration of descriptive, correlational, inferential, and qualitative analyses supports the validation of the proposed preventive model. The findings demonstrate that systematically articulating applied ethics, structured mediation, and pedagogical innovation produces significant improvements in institutional climate and academic success.

The model exhibits internal coherence, empirical support, and sufficient explanatory capacity for replication in comparable higher education contexts. The magnitude of observed effects and the proportion of explained variance confirm the robustness of the proposal.

In summary, the results demonstrate that an educational innovation strategy grounded in applied ethics and conflict mediation strengthens institutional culture, enhances student well-being, and contributes to academic success. The findings directly address the stated objectives and substantiate the relevance of an integrative preventive approach within contemporary higher education.

4. DISCUSSION

The results confirm that the systematic articulation of applied ethics, structured mediation, and pedagogical innovation produces significant effects on institutional climate, perceptions of organizational justice, student well-being, and academic engagement. These findings are particularly relevant because they demonstrate that mediation does not function merely as a reactive dispute-resolution mechanism, but rather as a preventive device capable of transforming academic culture. The statistically significant improvements observed across all measured dimensions, combined with large effect sizes and a regression model

explaining 58% of the variance in well-being and academic engagement, indicate that the implemented strategy demonstrates internal consistency and strong predictive capacity.

The strong association identified between institutional climate and academic well-being aligns with systematic reviews on higher education well-being, which emphasize the importance of safe and collaborative environments as protective factors against dropout and low academic performance (Fang et al., 2025; Zhao et al., 2025). However, whereas these studies primarily focus on individual-centered interventions, the present findings demonstrate that the relational and ethical dimensions of the institutional context exert substantial explanatory weight. The fact that institutional climate emerges as the strongest predictor in the regression model confirms that academic well-being does not depend solely on individual psychological variables, but also on organizational structures perceived as fair and participatory.

The significant improvement in perceptions of mediation mechanisms supports the restorative university paradigm. Previous research argues that the incorporation of restorative practices strengthens integrity culture and promotes more inclusive academic communities (Karp, 2023; Elbers, 2025). The empirical findings of this study corroborate this assertion by showing that workshops, simulations, and restorative dialogue training significantly increase institutional trust and perceived legitimacy in conflict management. This evidence is consistent with Abramson & Rucker (2023) and Riley (2024), who document that restorative justice consolidates more equitable and participatory academic environments.

Moreover, the positive relationship between mediation perception and academic well-being confirms that restorative processes do not merely resolve disputes, but also generate sustained emotional and motivational benefits. This finding complements the argument advanced by Sullivan & Witenstein (2022), who contend that replacing punitive approaches with restorative mechanisms interrupts exclusionary dynamics in higher education. Similarly, Bussu & Karp (2025) highlight that the institutional normalization of restorative justice strengthens organizational cohesion; the present data reinforce this perspective by demonstrating significant improvements in climate and institutional trust.

Regarding academic integrity, the observed increase in ethical sensitivity indicates that the

intervention extends beyond modifying perceptions of mediation and contributes to the internalization of ethical values. This finding resonates with Bennett et al. (2025), who underscore the importance of cultivating ethical sensitivity to prevent dishonest behaviors in university contexts. Likewise, et al. (2023) show that integrating restorative approaches into formal coursework enhances students' understanding of the ethical foundations of academic integrity; the current results extend this conclusion by demonstrating effects at a broader institutional level.

The technological dimension also warrants consideration. Recent literature warns that the expansion of digital tools and generative artificial intelligence reshapes ethical dilemmas in higher education (Sharma & Panja, 2025). Although the intervention does not focus exclusively on emerging technologies, strengthening ethical culture provides a preventive framework relevant to addressing challenges associated with digital academic dishonesty. In this respect, the findings suggest that applied ethics education combined with mediation practices may function as an institutional buffer against risks derived from automation and artificial intelligence, consistent with Gkanatsiou et al. (2025), who emphasize the necessity of integrating digital tools with ethical leadership.

The qualitative analysis reinforces the quantitative findings by revealing processes of conflict transformation, expanded ethical awareness, and strengthened institutional trust. These categories align with Mokomane (2024), who identifies those restorative approaches foster reflective processes that transcend disciplinary sanction. Narratives emphasizing structured dialogue and active listening are also consistent with research on university mediation conducted by Gmurzyńska (2021) and Lau (2022), which highlights the effectiveness of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in academic settings.

The empirical data also support the rejection of exclusively punitive approaches. Improvements in well-being and institutional climate contrast with the adverse consequences associated with zero-tolerance policies documented by Chai (2025). The evidence demonstrates that prevention grounded in applied ethics and mediation yields sustained positive effects, thereby strengthening arguments in favor of restorative models as alternatives to traditional sanction-based frameworks. Furthermore, the training component based on simulated mediation aligns with findings reported by Zhou et al. (2025), who demonstrate that guided mediation practice

enhances communicative and ethical competencies.

The consistency between these findings and institutional innovation proposals documented by Mancuso and Felicetti (2024) confirms that the systematic incorporation of mediation mechanisms strengthens academic governance. Additionally, the consideration of digital mediation environments discussed by Sulistianingsih et al. (2023) and Horielova (2025) gains future relevance in light of the present findings, as a solid institutional culture constitutes the necessary foundation for ethically implementing hybrid or virtual dispute-resolution systems.

Collectively, the findings indicate that integrating applied ethics and mediation represents not an isolated intervention but a structural transformation of university organizational culture. The magnitude of observed effects and the proportion of explained variance confirm that the integrative preventive model demonstrates empirical robustness and theoretical coherence. The study advances existing knowledge by providing integrated empirical evidence that mediation, when articulated with pedagogical innovation and systematic ethical formation, simultaneously impacts institutional climate, well-being, and academic success.

Thus, the results not only corroborate previous literature but also contribute to overcoming prevailing conceptual fragmentation by offering a comprehensive framework supported by convergent quantitative and qualitative evidence. The alignment between empirical data and established theoretical perspectives consolidates the validity of the proposed model and demonstrates that the ethical prevention of conflict constitutes a strategic pillar for sustainable academic development in contemporary higher education.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study provided theoretical grounding and empirical validation for an educational innovation strategy based on applied ethics and conflict mediation as a preventive approach in higher education. The findings demonstrated that the systematic articulation of ethical culture, restorative mechanisms, and structured pedagogical intervention produced significant improvements in institutional climate, perceptions of organizational justice, student well-being, and academic engagement. Consequently, the general objective aimed at designing and empirically substantiating an integrative preventive model was achieved.

Regarding the first specific objective, the theoretical analysis confirmed that restorative justice,

mediation, and academic integrity culture constitute interdependent dimensions within a unified conceptual framework. The empirical evidence supported this articulation by revealing positive and statistically significant associations among ethical sensitivity, perception of mediation, and institutional climate. Applied ethics did not operate as an isolated component; rather, it functioned as a transversal axis that strengthened the legitimacy and coherence of university coexistence processes.

In relation to the second objective, correlational and regression analyses indicated that institutional climate and perception of mediation mechanisms explained a substantial proportion of the variance in well-being and academic engagement. This finding confirmed that ethical conflict management directly influenced relevant academic variables, thereby extending beyond approaches focused exclusively on individual factors. Furthermore, the statistically significant differences observed between pretest and posttest measures, accompanied by large effect sizes, demonstrated that the intervention generated measurable and consistent changes across the evaluated dimensions.

Concerning the third objective, the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings enabled validation of the proposed preventive model. The convergence between statistical improvements and narratives describing conflict transformation, strengthened institutional trust, and expanded ethical awareness demonstrated internal coherence and interpretative consistency. The model exhibited sufficient explanatory capacity to support replication in comparable university contexts, representing both

a methodological and conceptual contribution to the field of educational innovation in higher education.

The study advanced existing knowledge by addressing the fragmentation commonly observed among research on mediation, academic integrity, and student well-being. The proposal integrated these dimensions within a systemic preventive framework, providing empirical evidence supporting the relevance of restorative approaches as institutional strategies. Additionally, the findings expanded understanding of academic well-being by demonstrating that it depends, to a significant extent, on organizational structures perceived as fair and participatory.

From a practical perspective, the research offered guidelines for designing university policies centered on ethical formation, strengthening mediation mechanisms, and incorporating active methodologies such as simulations and restorative workshops. The findings suggested that conflict prevention grounded in applied ethics may serve as a strategic axis for promoting academic sustainability and institutional cohesion.

Future research was recommended to include longitudinal studies capable of assessing the medium- and long-term stability of the observed effects. Replication of the model across diverse institutions and sociocultural contexts was also proposed to examine its external validity. Finally, further exploration of digital mediation systems and the impact of emerging technologies on university ethical culture was suggested to expand the preventive scope of the model.

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