SCHOOL MEDIATION AND A CULTURE OF PEACE: STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING VIOLENCE AND IMPROVING EDUCATION

MEDIAÇÃO ESCOLAR E CULTURA DE PAZ: ESTRATÉGIAS PARA REDUÇÃO DA VIOLÊNCIA E MELHORIA DA EDUCAÇÃO

MEDIACIÓN ESCOLAR Y CULTURA DE PAZ: ESTRATEGIAS PARA LA REDUCCIÓN DE LA VIOLENCIA Y LA MEJORA DE LA EDUCACIÓN

Marcos Antonio Negreiros Dias[1], Hildeglan Carneiro de Brito[2], Paulo Sérgio Rocha Lima[3], Sergio Vieira da Silva[4], José Roberto Carneiro Alves[5], Anísio Vaz de Melo Júnior[6], Edglês Gomes Kruk[7], José Luís Cantanhede Coêlho[8], Frank Cynatra Sousa Melo[9]

ABSTRACT

The increase in conflicts and manifestations of violence in the school environment has become one of the main challenges faced by educational institutions, affecting coexistence, the educational process, and the well-being of students and education professionals. In this context, school mediation emerges as a pedagogical and preventive alternative for the constructive management of conflicts, contributing to the promotion of a culture of peace. This article aimed to analyze school mediation as an instrument for the prevention and reduction of violence in the educational setting, as well as its contribution to strengthening interpersonal relationships based on dialogue, respect, and solidarity. The research problem consisted of understanding how school mediation can effectively address violence and promote the transformation of school culture. Methodologically, a qualitative approach was adopted, with an exploratory and bibliographic design, based on the analysis of books, scientific articles, and institutional documents addressing school violence, culture of peace,

[1] Doctoral student in Forest and Environmental Sciences. Universidade Federal do Tocantins (UFT). Tocantins, Brazil. E-mail: marcosnegreiros1985@gmail.com Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1964-620X

[2] Specialist in Civil Law and Civil Procedure. Universidade Estadual do Tocantins (UNITINS). Tocantins, Brazil. E-mail: hildeglan_brito@hotmail.com Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0000-9436-1357

[3] Master's student in Forest and Environmental Sciences. Universidade Federal do Tocantins (UFT). Tocantins, Brazil. E-mail: paulosergio@ift.edu.br Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7399-4347

[4] MBA in Leadership, Management and Advisory in Public Security. Academia Policial Militar Tiradentes (APMT). Tocantins, Brazil. E-mail: sergiovieirasi@gmail.com

[5] Master's degree of Science in Police Science. . Academia Policial Militar Tiradentes (APMT). Tocantins, Brazil. E-mail: robertopmto@gmail.com Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-9436-1357

[6] Master's degree of Science in Police Science. Academia Policial Militar Tiradentes (APMT). Tocantins, Brazil. E-mail: anisiovazz@gmail.com Orcid: https://Orcid.org/0009-0009-4081-4598

[7] Specialist in Music Education and Arts Teaching. Faculdade Ibra de Minas Gerais (FIBMG). Tocantins, Brazil. E-mail: eddegkruk8@gmail.com Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-8267-2669

[8] Master's degree of Science in Police Science. Academia Policial Militar Tiradentes (APMT). Tocantins, Brazil. E-mail: jcantanhededecoelho@gmail.com

[9] Master's degree of Science in Police Science. Academia Policial Militar Tiradentes (APMT). Tocantins, Brazil. E-mail: frankcynatra@gmail.com Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8824-6811

and conflict mediation. Data analysis was conducted using thematic content analysis. The results indicate that school mediation promotes improvements in school climate, strengthens interpersonal bonds, fosters the development of socio-emotional competencies, and reduces violent practices by encouraging dialogue, shared responsibility, and the participation of educational actors in conflict resolution. It is concluded that school mediation constitutes an effective and necessary strategy for building safer, more democratic, and more humane educational environments, contributing significantly to the dissemination of a culture of peace and to the civic education of children and adolescents.

Keywords: School Conflicts. Conflict Management. School Coexistence. Restorative Practices. Education for Peace.

RESUMO
O aumento dos conflitos e das manifestações de violência no ambiente escolar tem se consolidado como um dos principais desafios enfrentados pelas instituições de ensino, afetando a convivência, o processo educativo e o bem-estar de estudantes e profissionais da educação. Nesse contexto, a mediação escolar surge como uma alternativa pedagógica e preventiva para a gestão construtiva dos conflitos, contribuindo para a promoção da cultura de paz. O presente artigo teve como objetivo analisar a mediação escolar enquanto instrumento de prevenção e redução da violência no espaço educacional, bem como sua contribuição para o fortalecimento das relações interpessoais baseadas no diálogo, no respeito e na solidariedade. O problema que orientou a pesquisa consistiu em compreender de que maneira a mediação escolar pode atuar de forma eficaz no enfrentamento da violência e na transformação da cultura escolar. Metodologicamente, utilizou-se uma abordagem qualitativa, de natureza exploratória e bibliográfica, fundamentada na análise de livros, artigos científicos e documentos institucionais que abordam a temática da violência escolar, da cultura de paz e da mediação de conflitos. A análise dos dados foi realizada por meio da técnica de análise de conteúdo temática. Os resultados apontam que a mediação escolar favorece a melhoria do clima escolar, o fortalecimento dos vínculos interpessoais, o desenvolvimento de competências socioemocionais e a redução de práticas violentas, ao estimular o diálogo, a corresponsabilização e a participação dos atores educacionais na resolução dos conflitos. Conclui-se que a mediação escolar se configura como uma estratégia eficaz e necessária para a construção de ambientes educacionais mais seguros, democráticos e humanizados, contribuindo significativamente para a disseminação da cultura de paz e para a formação cidadã de crianças e adolescentes.

Palavras-chave: Conflitos Escolares. Gestão de Conflitos. Convivência Escolar. Práticas Restaurativas. Educação para a Paz.

RESUMEN
El aumento de los conflictos y de las manifestaciones de violencia en el entorno escolar se ha consolidado como uno de los principales desafíos que enfrentan las instituciones educativas, afectando la convivencia, el proceso educativo y el bienestar de estudiantes y profesionales de la educación. En este contexto, la mediación escolar surge como una alternativa pedagógica y preventiva para la gestión constructiva de los conflictos, contribuyendo a la promoción de la cultura de paz. El presente artículo tuvo como objetivo analizar la mediación escolar como instrumento de prevención y reducción de la violencia en el ámbito educativo, así como su contribución al fortalecimiento de las relaciones interpersonales basadas en el diálogo, el respeto y la solidaridad. El problema que orientó la investigación consistió en comprender de qué manera la mediación escolar puede actuar de forma eficaz en el enfrentamiento de la violencia y en la transformación de la cultura escolar. Metodológicamente, se adoptó un enfoque cualitativo, de carácter exploratorio y bibliográfico, fundamentado en el análisis de libros, artículos científicos y documentos

institucionales que abordan la temática de la violencia escolar, la cultura de paz y la mediación de conflictos. El análisis de los datos se realizó mediante la técnica de análisis de contenido temático. Los resultados indican que la mediación escolar favorece la mejora del clima escolar, el fortalecimiento de los vínculos interpersonales, el desarrollo de competencias socioemocionales y la reducción de prácticas violentas, al estimular el diálogo, la corresponsabilidad y la participación de los actores educativos en la resolución de los conflictos. Se concluye que la mediación escolar se configura como una estrategia eficaz y necesaria para la construcción de entornos educativos más seguros, democráticos y humanizados, contribuyendo de manera significativa a la difusión de la cultura de paz y a la formación ciudadana de niños, niñas y adolescentes.

Palabras clave: Conflictos Escolares. Gestión de Conflictos. Convivencia Escolar. Prácticas Restaurativas. Educación para la Paz.

1 INTRODUCTION

The growing number of acts of indiscipline and infractions committed by children and adolescents in the school context has aroused significant social concern, evidencing the complexity of the phenomenon of violence in the educational environment (Silva; Assis, 2018). The school, historically conceived as a space for training, socialization, and integral development, began to live with recurrent situations of aggressiveness, interpersonal conflicts, and violent behaviors, compromising the teaching-learning process and collective coexistence (UNESCO, 2019; Silva; Negreiros, 2020).

In this regard, such a scenario has caused relevant impacts, not only on the school performance of students, but also on the safety and well-being of education professionals. It is observed that many teachers are afraid to attend the work environment safely, while students and their families, in view of the insecurity established, opt for school transfer. These facts reinforce the perception that school violence is no longer an isolated episode, but a structural problem that demands effective and articulated responses (Silva et al., 2019).

The intensification of this phenomenon is associated, among other factors, with the advance of serious social problems, such as drug use and trafficking, family breakdown, social exclusion, and the weakening of community bonds (UNESCO, 2019). In this way, school violence goes beyond the limits of the educational institution, becoming a concern shared by society, families, public security systems, and educational policies (Jural et al, 2024).

From this perspective, there is a need to reflect on strategies capable of facing violence in the school environment in a preventive, educational and restorative way. Thus, the following research problem is formulated: in the contemporary socio-educational context, what is the importance of school mediation as a factor in reducing violence in the school environment?

The relevance of this study is justified by the urgency of discussing and implementing mechanisms that promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the school space, breaking with traditional punitive practices that often prove to be ineffective. School mediation presents itself as a promising alternative, as it prioritizes dialogue, active listening, co-responsibility, and the strengthening of interpersonal relationships, contributing to the construction of a safer, more democratic, and inclusive educational environment (Mello, 2023).

In addition, by fostering a culture of peace, school mediation collaborates with the citizenship formation of children and adolescents, developing socio-emotional skills that are fundamental for social coexistence and the exercise of citizenship. In this way, the study

contributes both to the academic field and to educational practice, offering theoretical subsidies for managers, educators, and public policy makers (Mello, 2023; Jural et al., 2024).

In this sense, this article aimed to analyze the importance of school mediation as a factor in reducing violence in the educational environment, as well as its contribution to the dissemination of the culture of peace in educational institutions, providing a healthy and conducive space for the educational development of children and adolescents.

2 METHODOLOGY

The present research was developed under a qualitative approach, of exploratory and bibliographic nature, with the objective of understanding school mediation as a strategy for the prevention and reduction of violence in the educational environment, as well as its contribution to the dissemination of the culture of peace in educational institutions. It is a theoretical-reflective study that seeks to systematize and critically analyze the knowledge produced on the subject, without collecting empirical data from subjects.

The exploratory nature of the research is justified by the need to deepen the conceptual and methodological understanding of school mediation, especially with regard to its theoretical bases, principles, forms of implementation and impacts on the educational context. The bibliographic approach is based on the analysis of previously published materials, enabling the mapping of the state of the art and the identification of relevant contributions to the field of study.

The theoretical basis of the work is based on the critical analysis of books, scientific articles and institutional documents, which address themes related to school violence, culture of peace, conflict mediation, restorative justice and educational practices of conflict management. This methodological strategy allowed to bring together different theoretical and empirical perspectives, favoring a broad and integrated understanding of the investigated phenomenon.

The selection of sources was carried out based on criteria of relevance, timeliness and scientific rigor, prioritizing publications indexed in recognized databases, such as Google Scholar, SciELO, Redalyc, ScienceDirect, Scopus, CAPES Journal Portal, as well as documents made available by international organizations and institutions linked to education and the promotion of the culture of peace, such as UNESCO. Works that had a direct relationship with the object of the research were included, while outdated materials, without consistent theoretical foundation or unrelated to the theme were excluded.

The analysis of the bibliographic data was conducted through the thematic content analysis technique, as proposed by Bardin (2011), which enables the identification,

categorization and systematic interpretation of the contents present in the selected sources. Based on this technique, analytical categories were defined that guided the discussion of the results, such as: violence and conflicts in the school environment; fundamentals of the culture of peace; school mediation as a pedagogical practice; advantages and limits of mediation in school; and school mediation as an instrument for preventing and reducing violence.

Although it is a bibliographic research, the study adopts the school environment as a contextual cut, considering the dynamics of educational institutions and the complexity of the interpersonal relationships established in them. There was no specific geographical delimitation, since the central objective consisted of the conceptual and theoretical analysis of school mediation, based on relevant national and international productions.

Finally, the information extracted from the sources was organized in a systematic way and articulated in a critical way, seeking to establish connections between the theoretical frameworks, the educational practices described in the literature and the contemporary challenges faced by school institutions in confronting violence and promoting peaceful coexistence.

3 VIOLENCE AND ITS ASPECTS

3.1 CONCEPT OF VIOLENCE

In the contemporary social context, it is observed that the media often emphasize episodes of violence, evidencing the relevance and severity of this phenomenon in the Brazilian scenario (Silva et al., 2019). Violence, in its multiple aspects, has reached significant proportions, reflecting a society that, in recent years, has shown increasing difficulties in the peaceful resolution of its conflicts (Silva; Negreiros, 2020). This reality stems from several social factors that directly influence the way individuals relate to each other.

From this perspective, it is essential to conceptually understand the phenomenon of violence, which has assumed significant visibility in the contemporary social context. According to the definition adopted by the World Health Organization, as presented by Elias (2011), violence consists of the deliberate use of physical force or power, either effectively or by means of threat, directed against oneself, against third parties or against groups and communities, which may result, or present a high probability of resulting, in physical damage, death, psychological damage, developmental impairment or situations of deprivation.

This concept highlights the breadth of the phenomenon of violence, as it encompasses both the use of physical force and the exercise of power, which are central elements for its understanding. By practicing violence, the individual or group seeks to impose its will on the other, reducing it to the condition of subordination. Such imposition can occur directly, through

physical aggression, or indirectly, through threat and psychological coercion, with the aim of minimizing the resistance of the other party and achieving the desired claim (Mello, 2023; Jural et al., 2024).

Regardless of its form of manifestation, violence causes significant damage to the subject of the action, and can result in severe consequences, such as physical injuries, death, psychological damage, damage to development or situations of deprivation. The concept of violence can be defined as the dishonest, arrogant and opportunistic use of power over the opponent, without legitimacy for it (Fernández, 2005).

Thus, it is inferred that violence is deeply incorporated into the social fabric, manifesting itself directly or indirectly and generating negative impacts on social relations and collective coexistence, compromising individual and social well-being.

However, it is essential to highlight that violence is not to be confused with conflict. Although all violence stems from a conflict, not all conflict results in violence. The main distinction lies in the fact that violence is socially constructed and, therefore, avoidable, while conflict is inherent to human coexistence and, to a large extent, inevitable (Elias, 2011; Digiácomo, 2026).

In the same sense, Crispino and Crispino (2002) define conflict as the situation in which two or more people have opposite, incompatible or perceived interests as such. Thus, conflict is a constitutive part of social relations, because where there is human interaction there are divergences of opinions, values and expectations. Violence, in turn, emerges from the inadequate conduct of these conflicts, and can be avoided when managed in a positive, dialogical and constructive way.

3.2 TYPES OF VIOLENCE

Violence manifests itself in the most diverse spheres of social life, taking on multiple forms and expressions. In this sense, it can be classified according to the context in which it occurs, highlighting the categories of self-directed, interpersonal, and collective violence (Rogers; Wilson; Dixon, 2026).

In this sense, Dahlberg and Krug (2006), in a widely recognized study on the subject, propose a classification that contributes significantly to the understanding of violence. The authors identify self-directed violence, collective violence, also called structural, and interpersonal violence.

Self-directed violence refers to actions in which the individual directs aggression against himself, manifesting itself, for example, through suicide and self-mutilation. Collective violence, on the other hand, is practiced by political, economic, or social groups, with the aim

of imposing power, ideology, or specific interests, usually resulting in oppression and social exclusion (Stelko-Pereira; Williams, 2010; Rogers; Wilson; Dixon, 2026).

Finally, interpersonal violence occurs in the daily relationships established within the family, the community, and social institutions. These are actions that involve physical, verbal, or psychological aggression, used as instruments of domination and imposition of will on the other, which can lead to injuries, traumas, and, in extreme cases, death (Jural et al., 2024).

Thus, it is perceived that violence is deeply inserted in the social dynamics, manifesting itself in different ways and directly impacting human relations in its various contexts.

3.3 VIOLENCE AND THE SCHOOL

In recent years, it has been observed that violence has reached social institutions traditionally considered safe spaces, among which the school stands out. As an environment for intellectual, moral, and social formation, the school has faced a significant increase in violent behaviors practiced by children and adolescents, who often resort to aggressiveness as a way to impose wills or achieve goals (Silva et al., 2019).

This reality has contributed to the establishment of a climate of insecurity, fear and instability in the school space, negatively affecting the teaching-learning process and the interpersonal relationships between students, teachers, managers and families. In this context, bullying stands out as one of the most recurrent and visible forms of school violence. Although historically naturalized as simple "jokes", it is now recognized that bullying produces deep and lasting consequences in the lives of victims, impacting their emotional health, academic performance, and socialization (Groff et al., 2022).

In addition, several conflicts present in daily school life can act as triggering factors for violence. In this sense, Gorbeña and Arregui (2012) identify the following as the main types of school conflicts: indiscipline, disruption, mistreatment between equals, school objection, absenteeism, vandalism and interpersonal conflicts.

School indiscipline is characterized by students' attitudes that transgress institutional norms, compromising the order and organization of the school environment. Disruption refers to intentional behaviors, usually occurring in the classroom, that aim to interrupt or impair the progress of pedagogical activities (Chrispino; Melo; Chrispino, 2024).

Mistreatment between equals corresponds to bullying, understood as the repeated practice of physical, verbal or psychological violence, with the aim of dominating and humiliating the other. School objection occurs when the student attends school against his will, motivated only by legal obligation, manifesting resistance, disinterest, and rejection of the educational process (Groff et al., 2022).

School absenteeism consists of repeated absence from classes, compromising the student's academic development. Vandalism, in turn, involves actions that cause damage to school and public property, negatively affecting the learning environment. Finally, interpersonal conflicts emerge from the relationships between students, teachers, and families, due to divergent interests, expectations, and values (Groff et al., 2022).

Thus, it is evident that the school, by bringing together individuals from different social, cultural and family origins, constitutes a space prone to the occurrence of conflicts and violence. It should be noted, however, that the list presented is merely illustrative, given the multiplicity of conflicting situations that may emerge in the school context.

4 CULTURE OF PEACE

From the perspective of a culture of peace, it can be said that it presents itself as a model of social coexistence oriented towards the promotion of harmonious, fraternal and solidary relationships, based on the recognition of the other as a subject of rights (Couto; Monteiro, 2026). It is a conception that values dialogue, interpersonal communication and altruism, seeking to overcome practices of violence and exclusion through cooperative and ethical attitudes.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) emphasizes that the culture of peace is not restricted to the absence of violence, but comprises a set of values, attitudes and behaviors that reject violence and prevent conflicts, acting on its structural causes through dialogue and negotiation (UNESCO, 1999).

In this perspective, the concept of a culture of peace can be worked on as a form of harmonious and fraternal coexistence, interconnected by the spirit of love for the other, focused on a solidary, interpersonal and altruistic communication experience (Digiácomo, 2026).

4.1 CONCEPT

The culture of peace can be understood as a form of social coexistence based on the construction of solid foundations for peace, based on respect for differences and tolerance of diversity, considering the distinct individual, cultural and social characteristics of subjects and peoples. From this perspective, the culture of peace seeks to develop essential competencies, such as communicative skills, negotiation skills and consensus-building, guided by a non-prejudiced conception of interculturality and based on peaceful coexistence (Morgado; Oliveira, 2009).

This understanding is corroborated by Monteiro (2026), when he states that the culture of peace presupposes educational practices aimed at valuing dialogue, cooperation, and the constructive resolution of conflicts, understood not as threats to social coexistence, but as opportunities for learning and human development. For the author, peace is not configured as the simple absence of violence, but as a dynamic process of transformation of social relations.

In a complementary way, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1999) highlights that the culture of peace involves a set of values, attitudes and behaviors that reject violence and promote respect for human rights, social justice and solidarity, through dialogue and cooperation between individuals and groups.

Thus, the culture of peace reveals itself as a solidary coexistence, sustained by mutual respect and interpersonal communication, favoring the construction of more balanced and lasting social relationships. Therefore, by prioritizing dialogue and understanding, it enables the transformation of conflicts into positive elements of personal and collective growth, contributing to the strengthening of the social fabric and the consolidation of fairer and more democratic environments.

4.2 FEATURES

In this same perspective, it can be said that the culture of peace is essentially characterized by three basic principles for harmonious social coexistence: solidarity, dialogue, and respect (Digiácomo, 2026).

Solidarity is a fundamental element for peaceful coexistence, since it presupposes the recognition of the other as a subject worthy of care, empathy and cooperation. It is an ethical attitude that involves the feeling of otherness, of donation and of sensitization in the face of the needs and experiences of others. In this sense, solidarity can be understood as "mutual cooperation, interdependence among beings, identity of feelings and ideas" (HOUAISS, 2004, p. 689).

Dialogue, in turn, refers to the communication process established between individuals, characterized by the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and experiences. It is an indispensable principle for the construction of a culture of peace, as it enables people to express their opinions and be effectively heard, favoring mutual understanding and the construction of consensus, as well as the prevention and constructive resolution of conflicts (Silva; Negreiros, 2020).

Respect completes this conceptual tripod, configuring itself as the attitude of consideration and recognition of the other in their dignity, identity and differences. Built on

solidarity and dialogue, respect represents the element that consolidates more balanced and ethical social relations, serving as a basis for the effectiveness of the culture of peace in the social environment (Silva et al., 2019).

Therefore, the characteristics of the culture of peace are essential for the construction of a way of living based on respect, cooperation and peaceful coexistence, enabling the construction of fairer and more humanized social relations. Based on this understanding, it becomes pertinent to move on to the analysis of mediation, as a fundamental instrument for the constructive management of conflicts.

5 MEDIATION

In the midst of the multiplicity of conflicts and manifestations of violence present in contemporary society, Brazilian society has sought, in recent years, effective alternatives for the resolution of conflicts and the reduction of violence in the most diverse social contexts. This movement reflects the need to overcome traditional models, focused exclusively on judicialization, which often prove to be slow and insufficient to meet social demands (Silva et al., 2019).

In this scenario, several studies have been developed with the objective of analyzing and implementing alternative methods of conflict resolution, resorting, in many cases, to comparative law, in order to identify successful experiences in other countries capable of contributing to the improvement of the Brazilian justice system. Such initiatives seek to foster, in the social sphere, the autonomy of individuals and communities to manage their own conflicts, reducing dependence on the Judiciary as the only way to solve them (Silva; Negreiros, 2020).

Among the alternative methods of conflict resolution, mediation stands out, due to its unique character, as it gives the parties involved the leading role in the construction of the most appropriate solution to the conflict, with the help of an impartial third party. Mediation values dialogue, co-responsibility and cooperation, promoting consensual and sustainable solutions.

5.1 CONCEPT OF MEDIATION

Mediation is configured as an alternative means of conflict resolution, understood simultaneously as art and technique, through which an impartial third party, the mediator, assists the parties involved in conducting the dialogue, with a view to the peaceful resolution of the conflict. This process is not limited to the signing of agreements, but seeks, above all, the construction and strengthening of bonds of trust, as well as the reciprocal commitment

between those involved, contributing to the improvement of interpersonal relationships (Barcellas, 2012; Yu; Wang, 2022)

It is observed, from this conceptualization, that mediation presents itself as an alternative mechanism that is not to be confused with the performance of the Judiciary, constituting a voluntary option of the parties to obtain faster, more participatory and appropriate solutions to their realities. This method operates through the consensual choice of an impartial third party, who acts confidentially and equidistantly, coordinating and guiding the communicative process between those involved (Barcellas, 2012; Yu; Wang, 2022).

The consensual nature of mediation is also highlighted, as the parties freely decide to participate in the procedure and assume an active role in the construction of the solution to the conflict, which promotes the empowerment of the subjects and favors the elaboration of viable, sustainable and satisfactory solutions for all.

In the same sense, Moreira (2012) understands mediation not only as an instrument, but as a process of transformation of antagonisms, oriented to the convergence of interests, which is effected through the intervention of a third party voluntarily chosen by the parties. Such a process aims to resignify the conflict, shifting it from an adversarial logic to a collaborative perspective.

Both authors emphasize that mediation develops as a structured process, in which the presence of an impartial third party is essential to guide dialogue and communication between the parties. This mediator, oblivious to the conflict situation, employs specific techniques and strategies to facilitate listening, mutual understanding, and the construction of peaceful and consensual solutions (Digiácomo, 2026).

From the conceptual understanding of mediation, it becomes pertinent to analyze it in its application in the school context, a space marked by intense interpersonal relationships and the recurrence of conflicts that demand educational and restorative management practices.

5.2 SCHOOL MEDIATION

The school environment is a privileged space for learning, socialization and construction of interpersonal relationships, in which children and adolescents, belonging to different age groups and sociocultural contexts, live together on a daily basis. This intense and continuous coexistence, although fundamental for the integral development of students, is also a favorable terrain for the emergence of interpersonal conflicts that, when poorly conducted, can evolve into situations of violence (Barcellas, 2012; Yu; Wang, 2022).

It should be noted, however, that conflict should not be understood as a negative phenomenon in itself. On the contrary, it is an element inherent to human relations and life in society, being inevitable and necessary (Silva et al., 2019). What is imposed as a challenge is not the elimination of conflict, but its conduct in a positive, constructive and educational way. As Morgado and Oliveira (2009, p. 5) point out, "living together does not mean the absence of conflicts or having the objective of eliminating them. Conflict is inevitable to the human condition, conflict is the natural state of man."

In this sense, mediation in the school context presents itself as a relevant strategy for both the prevention and alternative resolution of conflicts, directing them in a pedagogical way to the construction of a healthy, safe and harmonious educational environment. School mediation breaks with merely punitive practices, prioritizing dialogue, co-responsibility, and the restoration of interpersonal relationships (Digiácomo, 2026).

But how to define school mediation? According to Morgado and Oliveira (2009), school mediation can be understood as a process of conflict resolution developed within the school institution, which, due to its specificities, involves all actors in the educational community, such as students, teachers, managers, parents and other members of the community. It is a procedure marked by characteristics such as flexibility, confidentiality and voluntariness, conducted by an impartial third party, who can be a properly trained education professional, with the objective of assisting the parties in the construction of viable and consensual solutions, stimulating values such as solidarity, tolerance, dialogue and equality.

Thus, the mediation of school conflicts can be understood as an adaptation of mediation methods to the educational context, incorporating the subjects that make up school life into the conflict management process. Its central purpose is to prevent and resolve latent or manifest conflicts, leading educational actors to understand the problem, to identify its causes and, above all, to the joint construction of constructive solutions, capable of strengthening peaceful coexistence and favoring the teaching-learning process.

5.2.1 Advantages of School Mediation

School mediation, as an alternative means of conflict resolution in the educational sphere, offers not only effective ways of coping with conflict situations, but also multiple advantages for the promotion of a peaceful, democratic and inclusive school environment.

In this sense, Morgado and Oliveira (2009, p. 45) highlights several advantages associated with the implementation of school mediation, among which the following stand out:

a) Creation of safe learning environments, since mediation programs contribute to the reduction of violence and to the reduction of conflicts between students, especially those based on ethnic, racial or social differences. In addition, they favor the reduction of suspensions, absenteeism and school dropout, often related to educational contexts marked by insecurity.

b) Promotion of constructive learning environments, characterized by a positive classroom climate, in which the proper management of behaviors favors discipline associated with respect and affection, essential elements for children and adolescents to feel safe to express ideas, feelings and opinions.

c) Personal and social development of students, through the learning of skills related to problem solving, recognition and management of emotions, reduction of aggressive behaviors and the use of constructive strategies in the face of conflicts, both in the school environment and in family and community contexts.

d) Construction of a constructive perspective of conflict, which seeks to stimulate social justice and the co-responsibility of the subjects for the problems and solutions produced in the school community. This approach favours the participation of families and the community in school life, as well as the extension of the skills acquired beyond the walls of the school, contributing to the reduction of tension and violence in the wider social context.

Thus, it is evident that school mediation plays a fundamental role in improving the educational environment, promoting constructive conflict management and the individual and collective development of students, contributing significantly to the consolidation of a culture of peace and harmonious coexistence in the school context.

6 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MEDIATION AS A FACTOR FOR PREVENTING AND REDUCING VIOLENCE

School mediation plays a fundamental role in the educational context by contributing to the transformation of the culture of students and other school actors, recognizing them as active agents in the construction of social peace. Through this alternative method of conflict resolution, it seeks not only to solve specific situations of divergence, but, above all, to rebuild interpersonal relationships that have been weakened or broken as a result of conflicts and practices of violence, promoting dialogue, co-responsibility and the strengthening of social bonds (Barcellas, 2012; Yu; Wang, 2022).

The implementation of mediation in the school environment is a complex process that requires ideological, attitudinal and behavioral changes on the part of the entire educational community. As Morgado and Oliveira (2009) point out, the transformation of conflicts through

alternative methods, especially mediation, presupposes the development of skills related to the constructive management of conflicts, the improvement of interpersonal communication and the overcoming of models traditionally centered on repression and punishment. Thus, school mediation implies a break with authoritarian paradigms, opening space for a flexible, dialogical, and self-compositional approach to the conflicts experienced in everyday school life (Silva et al., 2019).

Before the effective implementation of school mediation, it is essential to carry out an institutional diagnosis that allows the identification of the main types of conflicts and manifestations of violence present in the educational context. Such a survey makes it possible to measure the situations to be worked on by the mediation program, as well as the understanding of the social, economic and cultural context in which the school and its actors are inserted, favoring the adoption of strategies compatible with the local reality. Next, it is necessary to sensitize the school community, students, teachers, managers, families, and other employees about the objectives, principles, and benefits of mediation, in order to promote collective engagement and commitment to the project (Digiácomo, 2026).

Subsequently, a team responsible for the implementation of the mediation program is constituted, with a clear definition of the attributions of each member, followed by the training of school actors on the fundamentals, techniques and principles of mediation. This stage aims to disseminate the mediating philosophy in the school environment, strengthening the understanding of mediation as a legitimate and effective strategy for conflict management. Subsequently, the selection and specific training of school mediators is carried out, which may include teachers, employees and students with an appropriate profile, in order to improve technical and communicational skills essential to the conduct of the mediating process (Barcellas, 2012).

With the mediators properly trained, the execution of the school mediation program begins, accompanied by continuous monitoring, with the purpose of identifying difficulties, evaluating partial results and promoting the necessary adjustments. At the end of this process, a systematic evaluation of the project is carried out, analyzing the achievement of the proposed objectives, the obstacles faced and the strategies adopted to overcome them, in order to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the initiative (Barcellas, 2012; Silva et al., 2019).

Regarding the functioning of the school mediation process, Crispino and Crispino (2002) describe that the mediating session is developed in structured stages, starting with the presentation and opening, when the mediator clarifies the objectives of the mediation, its rules and principles. Then, the exposition of the parties occurs, a phase in which each

involved presents their perception of the conflict, with the mediator being responsible for listening carefully, organizing the information and synthesizing the central points through techniques such as paraphrasing. Subsequently, the exchange between the parties takes place, a stage aimed at facilitating dialogue, identifying the underlying interests and stimulating empathy. In the next phase, possible solutions are searched for and evaluated together, analyzing their impacts and feasibility, until a consensus is reached. Finally, the agreement is formalized, reviewed by the parties and the mediator, ensuring its enforceability, and is then signed and monitored by the mediation team as to its fulfillment (Barcellas, 2012; Silva et al., 2019).

It should be emphasized that school mediation should not be conceived as an absolute or immediate solution to all the problems of the educational environment, but as a continuous process of cultural transformation. By encouraging practices of dialogue, respect and cooperation, mediation contributes significantly to the prevention and reduction of school violence, by promoting the capacity to resolve conflicts without the use of force or violence. In this sense, it acts directly in the reconstruction of interpersonal relationships and in the formation of more conscious, empathetic and responsible subjects (Barcellas, 2012; Silva et al., 2019).

Consequently, school mediation has an impact not only on the daily life of the school, but also on the lives of the educational actors and the social reality in which they are inserted, favoring the transition from a culture marked by violence and repression to a culture based on respect, solidarity and peace. Thus, it is consolidated as an essential pedagogical instrument for the construction of fairer, more democratic and humanized educational environments.

7 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is concluded that school mediation is configured as a relevant pedagogical strategy, capable of re-signifying the conflicts inherent to school coexistence, transforming them into opportunities for learning, dialogue and socio-emotional development.

The findings show that school mediation favors the improvement of the institutional climate, the strengthening of bonds between educational actors and the reduction of violent practices, by stimulating communication, co-responsibility and the active participation of those involved in the resolution of conflicts. In addition, mediation contributes to the construction of a constructive perspective of the conflict, breaking with exclusively punitive practices and promoting a more democratic and humanized management of school relations.

It was verified, however, that the effectiveness of school mediation is conditioned to its systematic implementation, the engagement of the school community and the adequate training of mediators. The absence of training, institutional support and integration with the school's pedagogical project can compromise the expected results, limiting the scope of mediation as a continuous educational practice.

Finally, it is recommended that educational institutions invest in the continuing education of teachers and student mediators, in raising awareness in the school community and in incorporating mediation into pedagogical policies and practices. It is also suggested that future empirical studies be carried out to evaluate the application of school mediation in different educational contexts, contributing to the improvement and consolidation of this strategy as a permanent policy for promoting a culture of peace.

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