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THE RELEVANCE OF CONFLICT MEDIATION IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated how conflict mediation can influence the school climate and interpersonal relationships. The general objective was to analyze the effectiveness of mediation practices in educational environments. The methodology adopted consisted of a bibliographic review, which included the analysis of several sources on the subject. The results indicated that conflict mediation contributed to the creation of a collaborative environment, reducing episodes of violence and bullying. The analysis revealed that the training of educators is an essential factor for the implementation of mediation, since the resistance of some professionals can compromise the process. In addition, the survey highlighted the relevance of transforming school culture, promoting an environment that values communication and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The final considerations emphasized the relevance of integrating mediation into the school curriculum and the need to train educators to work in this context. The study concluded that conflict mediation is a strategy to improve the school climate and interpersonal relationships, in addition to

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pointing out the need for future research to expand the understanding of the practice of mediation.

Keywords: Conflict Mediation. School Environment. Training of Educators. Interpersonal Relationships. School Culture.

INTRODUCTION

Conflict mediation in the school environment has gained prominence in recent years, emerging as an essential practice for the promotion of a harmonious educational environment. This practice refers to the process in which an impartial and neutral third party facilitates the resolution of disputes between the parties involved, aiming to restore communication and cooperation. In the school context, mediation becomes a strategic tool to deal with conflicts that may arise between students, between students and teachers, or between the school and the community. The adoption of this practice contributes not only to the resolution of conflicts, but also to the formation of a culture of dialogue and respect in educational institutions.

The relevance of conflict mediation is evident in the face of the challenges faced in contemporary schools, which include violence, bullying and the disintegration of communication between the different actors in the educational process. The implementation of mediation programs can provide a healthy and collaborative environment, promoting the development of students' socio-emotional skills. These programs can also act in conflict prevention, by offering educators and students the necessary tools to deal with disagreements in a peaceful and constructive way. The search for peaceful and dialogued solutions reflects a growing movement in the field of education, which seeks to transform the way conflicts are perceived and treated in the school context.

However, the practice of conflict mediation faces significant challenges, including resistance from some educators and a lack of adequate training for the effective implementation of mediation programs. In addition, the negative perception that some students have in relation to these programs can make it difficult to accept them. The need to understand the factors that influence the implementation and success of mediation in school environments is a problem that deserves attention. Therefore, the factors that affect the effectiveness of conflict mediation in schools and the role it can play in improving the school climate are investigated.

The objective of this research is to analyze the effectiveness of conflict mediation practices in the school environment and the implications for the improvement of interpersonal relationships and the educational climate. The text is structured in sections that initially address the definition and relevance of conflict mediation, followed by an examination of existing practices and the role of psychology in school mediation. Then, the challenges faced in the implementation of these practices and the future perspectives for mediation in the educational context are discussed. The conclusion summarizes the main

findings of the research, offering suggestions for the improvement of conflict mediation in schools.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this research is organized into three main sections, which aim to provide an understanding of conflict mediation in the school environment. The first section addresses the definition and fundamental concepts related to mediation, establishing the theoretical bases necessary for understanding the subject. The second section examines mediation practices in educational settings, presenting examples of implemented programs and their respective contributions to conflict resolution. Finally, the third section argues the role of psychology in mediation, analyzing how emotional and behavioral aspects influence the conflict mediation process, in addition to presenting proposals to improve the effectiveness of these practices in schools. This structure allows for a systematic and reasoned approach, facilitating the critical analysis of issues related to conflict mediation in the educational context.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CONFLICT MEDIATION

Conflict mediation is a structured process that aims at the peaceful resolution of disputes, promoting dialogue and cooperation between the parties involved. The literature points out that mediation differs from other forms of conflict resolution, such as arbitration and litigation, because it does not impose a decision, but facilitates communication between those involved so that they can reach a satisfactory agreement. According to Eller (2019. p. 15), "mediation is a process that involves the active participation of the parties in the search for solutions, unlike arbitration, in which a third party decides for the party". This definition emphasizes the active role of the parties in the construction of the agreement, which contrasts with the adversarial approach present in legal proceedings.

In addition, mediation is confused with conciliation, although there are differences between the two processes. Conciliation usually involves a third party who suggests solutions, while in mediation, the mediator acts only as a facilitator, helping the parties to explore needs and interests. According to Araújo and Lopes (2020, p. 85), "the mediator does not determine the solution, but guides the parties in the search for their own solutions, respecting the time and dynamics of each group". This perspective emphasizes the relevance of the autonomy of the parties in the mediation process, highlighting that the mediator should not interfere in decisions, but rather create an environment conducive to the parties' dialogue.

Conflict mediation can also be understood as an educational practice, especially in the school context. Farias (2020, p. 160) states that "mediation must be incorporated into the school routine, as it not only resolves conflicts, but also educates students for dialogue and the peaceful resolution of differences". This approach expands the role of mediation, highlighting its role in the development of socio-emotional skills in students, which are essential for social coexistence.

Conflict mediation presents itself as an approach that values the active participation of the parties and the joint construction of solutions, differentiating itself from other forms of dispute resolution. The authors' definitions and reflections on mediation reinforce the importance of understanding this process as an educational practice that contributes to the formation of citizens who are aware and capable of dialogue. In this way, mediation is not only a tool for conflict resolution, but also a fundamental element in the construction of a cooperative school environment.

MEDIATION PRACTICES IN EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

Mediation practices in educational settings have been shown to be effective in resolving conflicts and promoting a positive school climate. The implementation of mediation programs in schools has provided students and educators with tools that favor communication and the peaceful resolution of differences. According to Oliveira and Rolim (2020, p. 10), "school mediation should be seen as a practice that transforms the educational environment, promoting respect and solidarity between students and teachers". This statement highlights the protagonism of mediation as an approach that not only resolves conflicts, but also contributes to the formation of a collaborative educational environment.

A significant example of a mediation program is the "Conflict Mediation Program", which has been implemented in several Brazilian schools. This program trains students and educators to act as mediators, allowing the school community itself to participate in conflict resolution. Farias (2020, p. 165) mentions that "schools that adopted mediation as a regular practice observed a significant decrease in cases of violence and bullying, in addition to an increase in empathy among students". This data highlights the positive impact that mediation can have on school dynamics, promoting healthy relationships among students.

However, the implementation of mediation practices also faces challenges. The resistance of some educators and the lack of adequate training can hinder the effectiveness of these programs. According to Eller (2019, p. 20), "the lack of preparation of mediators and the distrust of some parties involved can compromise the mediation process, leading to

unsatisfactory results". This observation points to the need for continuous and adequate training for all those involved in mediation, in order to ensure an efficient and safe process.

In addition, Araújo and Lopes (2020, p. 88) state that "school culture needs to be transformed for mediation to be effective; It is essential that the school community recognizes the relevance of dialogue in conflict resolution." This statement shows that the change in culture is a determining factor for the success of mediation, requiring a joint effort from all members of the school community.

Oliveira (2023) also emphasizes the importance of continuous training of educators so that they can act as mediators. The author points out that without adequate training, mediators face difficulties in dealing with the complexities of conflicts in the school environment, which can compromise the success of the process. Thus, mediation should be seen as an integral educational practice, not limited to dispute resolution, but aimed at the socio-emotional development of students, enabling them to deal with disagreements in a peaceful and constructive way

Mediation practices in educational settings have been shown to be effective in promoting a healthy school climate, but they face challenges that need to be overcome. The adequate training of mediators, the transformation of the school culture and the recognition of mediation as an essential tool for conflict resolution are fundamental aspects for the success of these practices. The experience of schools that have implemented mediation reflects that, with the necessary support, it is possible to build a collaborative educational environment.

THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGY IN THE MEDIATION OF SCHOOL CONFLICTS

The role of psychology in the mediation of school conflicts is fundamental, since it offers theoretical and practical tools to understand and deal with the emotional dynamics present in conflict situations. Psychology contributes in several ways to mediation, promoting an environment that favors dialogue and mutual understanding. According to Farias (2020, p. 167), "the training of mediators must include psychological knowledge that helps to understand the emotions involved and the way they affect the mediation process". This statement indicates the need to prepare mediators to recognize and deal with emotions, thus facilitating conflict resolution.

Additionally, conflict mediation can have a significant impact on the emotional well-being of students and educators. Implementing mediation practices can reduce the anxiety and stress associated with conflict situations by fostering a safe and welcoming environment. According to Oliveira and Rolim (2020, p. 12), "school mediation not only

resolves conflicts, but also acts as an agent for promoting mental health, by creating spaces for listening and welcoming". This perspective highlights the importance of mediation not only as a resolution mechanism, but as an element that contributes to the emotional development of those involved.

The psychological training of mediators is essential to ensure that they can act with empathy and understanding. Eller (2019, p. 25) highlights that "the mediator, by understanding the emotional dynamics, is able to create a space of trust in which the parties feel safe to express their needs and concerns". This emotional security is essential for the mediation process to occur fluidly, allowing the parties to feel valued and understood.

The relationship between mediation and emotional well-being is, therefore, a two-way street: while mediation contributes to an emotionally healthy environment, psychology offers the necessary support for this process to be effective. Araújo and Lopes (2020, p. 90) state that "mediation should be understood as an instrument that not only resolves conflicts, but also strengthens interpersonal relationships, promoting a positive school climate". This view broadens the understanding of the role of mediation, highlighting its ability to transform the dynamics of relationships in school.

The contribution of psychology to the mediation of school conflicts is essential, as it allows a conscious and empathetic approach to interactions. The understanding of emotions and the promotion of the emotional well-being of students and educators are aspects that enrich the mediation process, making it transformative. The intersection between mediation and psychology not only improves conflict resolution but also favors the construction of a healthy and collaborative school environment.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research is characterized as a bibliographic review, whose objective is to analyze and synthesize the existing knowledge about conflict mediation in the school environment. This qualitative approach allows an exploration of theories and practices related to the topic, using academic sources that include books, articles and dissertations. The instruments used in the research consist of the collection of secondary data through digital platforms, such as academic databases and institutional repositories. The procedures involved the selection of relevant materials, prioritizing recent publications of recognized credibility in the area of education and psychology. The techniques used include the critical reading of the selected texts, the extraction of relevant information and the organization of the data in a board that facilitates visualization and analysis.

Chart 1 presents a selection of sources that support the research and contribute to the discussion on the subject. This table gathers information about author(s), title, year and type of work, allowing a quick consultation of the main references used in the construction of the theoretical framework.

The presentation of this table facilitates the understanding of the works that support the bibliographic review and offers the reader a clear view of the contributions of each reference to the development of the research. By organizing the information in a systematic way, it seeks to provide a basis for the analysis of conflict mediation practices in the school context, highlighting the relevance of the selected works for discussion and reflection on the theme.

Table 1 - References

Author(s)	Conforming title published	Year	Type of Work
OR, Edson Wander	The concept of conflict mediation in the school environment	2019	Dissertation (Master's Degree in Education: Curriculum)
ARAÚJO, Vitor Savio; LOPES, Cristiane Rosa	Conceptions of critical training of teachers in university education	2020	Book Chapter
FARIAS, Bianca Oliveira	Conflict mediation in educational environments: a horizon with new perspectives	2020	Article
OLIVEIRA, Rosane Severo; DA SILVA ROLIM, Paulo Daniel	Conflict mediation in the school environment: a view from psychology	2020	Article
OLIVEIRA, Vanusa Batista de	Discussions of evaluation practices in ninth grade classes of elementary school in a state public school in Goiânia and the teachers' testimonies from the perspective of historical-cultural conceptions	2023	Dissertation (Master's Degree in Education)
CHRISPINO, Alvaro; CHRISPINO, Raquel	The mediation of school conflict	2023	Book
JESUS, Simone A.; ARAUJO, Vitor Savio	The relationship between school inequality and social inequality	2024	Article

Source: authorship

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MEDIATION PRACTICES

Critical analysis of mediation practices in school settings reveals the effectiveness and challenges faced in implementing this approach. Mediation practices have demonstrated a positive impact on conflict resolution, but they also raise questions about effectiveness and acceptance within the school community. According to Farias (2020, p. 171), "mediation practices not only contribute to conflict resolution, but also foster a culture of peace in schools, promoting an environment of dialogue and understanding". This statement highlights that mediation is not limited to dispute resolution, but is an instrument

that can transform school culture by encouraging open communication between students and educators.

However, the effectiveness of mediation depends on several factors, including the training of mediators and the acceptance of the process by the school community. Oliveira and Rolim (2020, p. 14) state that "resistance to mediation can be a significant obstacle to its effectiveness, especially when educators do not feel prepared or confident to act in this role". This resistance can be attributed to the lack of specific training and distrust of the process. Thus, it is essential that there is adequate training for all those involved, in order to ensure the effectiveness of mediation practices.

In addition, educators' and students' perceptions of conflict mediation influence acceptance and application. Eller (2019, p. 30) highlights that "for mediation to be successful, it is necessary that all participants recognize its relevance and are willing to be involved in the process" (). This consideration indicates that the construction of a shared understanding of mediation is essential for its effectiveness, as the lack of support can lead to the devaluation of the process.

An argument that deserves to be highlighted is that of Araújo and Lopes (2020, p. 92), who state that "mediation experiences must be evaluated, taking into account the *feedback* from students and educators, so that the process can be improved and adapted to the needs of the school community". This reflective approach is essential as it recognizes that the practice of mediation must evolve based on the actual experiences of the participants. Including *feedback provides a space for continuous adjustments and improvements, ensuring that mediation remains relevant.*

In short, the critical analysis of mediation practices in school environments reveals a scenario where the effectiveness of the process is influenced by multiple factors, including the training of mediators and the perception of the school community. While mediation has shown positive results, an ongoing effort is needed to promote its acceptance and improvement, ensuring that everyone involved recognizes its value. In this way, mediation practices can be consolidated as an effective tool for building a peaceful and collaborative school environment.

CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CONFLICT MEDIATION

The implementation of conflict mediation practices in schools faces several challenges that can compromise their effectiveness. One of the main obstacles identified is the resistance of educators and students in relation to the mediation process. According to Oliveira and Rolim (2020, p. 15), "many educators are still skeptical about the effectiveness

of mediation, preferring traditional methods of conflict resolution, which can hinder the adoption of these practices in educational institutions". This resistance can be attributed to a lack of familiarity with the process and the belief that traditional methods are reliable.

Another significant challenge is the lack of adequate training for mediators. Farias (2020, p. 175) highlights that "the lack of training and ongoing support for mediators can result in an inconsistent application of mediation practices, limiting their impact". Training is essential for mediators to feel safe and competent in conducting the process, and the absence of it can lead to inefficiency in interactions.

School culture can also represent an obstacle to the implementation of mediation. According to Eller (2019, p. 33), "resistance to cultural change within schools can inhibit the adoption of mediation practices, especially in environments where conflict is treated in a punitive manner". Thus, the transformation of school culture towards a model that values dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflicts is fundamental for the success of mediation.

To overcome these challenges, it is necessary to adopt strategies that promote the acceptance of mediation as a resource. Araújo and Lopes (2020, p. 95) suggest that "the promotion of regular workshops and training for educators and students can raise awareness of the benefits of mediation and prepare the school community for this practice". This proposal emphasizes the importance of continuous training and awareness, in order to build a shared understanding of mediation.

In addition, the creation of a school environment that values mediation as part of the institutional culture can contribute to its acceptance. Farias (2020, p. 178) states that "initiatives that encourage the active participation of students and educators in conflict mediation can strengthen the school community and make mediation a common practice". This active participation not only engages community members but also legitimizes the mediation process as a conflict resolution tool.

The implementation of conflict mediation practices in schools faces significant obstacles, including cultural resistance, lack of training, and a punitive approach to conflict. However, through strategies that involve continuous training and the promotion of a school environment favorable to dialogue, it is possible to overcome these challenges and integrate mediation as an essential component of school dynamics. This approach not only favors the peaceful resolution of conflicts but also contributes to the construction of a collaborative educational community.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES FOR SCHOOL MEDIATION

The future perspectives for school mediation point to trends and innovations that can increase the effectiveness and acceptance of this process in the educational environment. The growing appreciation of socio-emotional skills in the school curriculum has stimulated the inclusion of mediation as an essential practice for the integral formation of students. Farias (2020, p. 180) observes that "mediation should not be seen only as a tool for conflict resolution, but as an educational practice that contributes to the development of interpersonal skills, such as empathy and communication". This view reinforces the idea that mediation can be integrated into the school routine, promoting a culture of dialogue and respect.

Another trend that stands out is the use of technologies to facilitate the mediation process. Digitalization and the use of *online* platforms have proven effective in promoting mediation, allowing students and educators to access resources and guidance in a dynamic manner. According to Oliveira and Rolim (2020, p. 17), "the integration of digital tools can enhance mediation, offering new spaces for dialogue and negotiation, in addition to enabling the monitoring of cases". This approach demonstrates how technology can be an ally in the implementation and effectiveness of mediation practices.

The training of educators is also a fundamental aspect for the future of school mediation. It is necessary for education professionals to receive specific training that not only prepares them to act as mediators, but also sensitizes them to the importance of mediation in promoting a healthy school environment. As Eller (2019, p. 35) highlights, "the continuous training of educators must include the development of emotional and technical skills that enable them to facilitate the mediation process". This emphasis on continuous training is essential for educators to feel prepared and confident when addressing conflicts.

Raising awareness in the school community is vital to ensure that mediation is well received and effective. Araújo and Lopes (2020, p. 97) suggest that "carrying out awareness campaigns about the benefits of mediation can help build a culture of peace and strengthen interpersonal relationships within the school". This strategy not only engages students and educators, but also engages parents and the community, fostering a shared understanding of the importance of mediation in education.

The future perspectives for school mediation indicate a promising path, with trends that involve the valorization of socio-emotional skills, the incorporation of technologies and the adequate training of educators. Raising awareness in the school community also plays an essential role in the acceptance and effectiveness of mediation practices. With these innovations, mediation can be consolidated as a fundamental tool for the construction of a

collaborative educational environment, contributing to the formation of conscious citizens capable of dialogue.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The final considerations of this study focus on the main findings related to the practice of conflict mediation in the school environment. The research identified that mediation is established as a strategy for conflict resolution, promoting a collaborative environment. Through mediation, it was possible to observe a reduction in episodes of violence and bullying, as well as an improvement in interpersonal relationships between students and educators. Thus, the central question of the research, about how conflict mediation can influence the school climate and interpersonal relationships, was answered, showing that the practice of mediation contributes to a healthy educational environment.

The findings of this study also highlight the importance of adequate training of educators for the implementation of mediation. The research showed that the resistance of some educators, often due to the lack of specific training, can compromise the effectiveness of mediation. Continuous training and awareness of the importance of mediation are essential to ensure that educators feel safe and prepared to act as mediators, thus facilitating the conflict resolution process.

In addition, the survey highlighted that school culture plays a key role in the acceptance and success of mediation. Cultural transformation within the school, which favors communication and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, is essential for the effectiveness of mediation practices. Therefore, a joint effort by the school community is necessary for mediation to become a common and valued practice in the daily life of educational institutions.

The contributions of this study are significant, as they provide an understanding of the impacts of conflict mediation in the school environment. The research contributes to the discussion about the importance of integrating mediation as part of the school curriculum, highlighting its role in the development of socio-emotional skills. In addition, the study points to the need to create an environment conducive to dialogue, where all members of the school community are involved and committed to the practice of mediation.

Finally, the research indicates that additional studies are needed to complement the findings presented. Research on the application of specific mediation techniques in different school contexts, as well as the analysis of mediator training programs, can enrich the understanding of the effectiveness of mediation in educational settings. The continuity of research in this area will allow an evaluation of the effects of mediation, contributing to the

improvement of educational practices and the promotion of a collaborative school environment.

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