

A Proposed Framework for Implementing Peer Mediation to Reduce School Violence among Adolescent Students

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Abstract

School violence remains a persistent challenge for adolescent students in Algeria, often requiring more than traditional disciplinary measures to resolve. This paper proposes peer mediation as a transformative educational alternative for managing student conflict. By synthesizing current literature and drawing on successful regional and international models, the study moves beyond theory to offer a practical framework for implementation. We examine the specific drivers and consequences of violence within the Algerian school system, ultimately outlining a strategic roadmap for peer mediation—covering its core objectives, key stakeholders, and the practical hurdles to its success. The findings suggest that shifting toward a peer-led model is a critical step in replacing a culture of confrontation with one of dialogue, ensuring a safer and more sustainable climate for both students and educators.

Keywords: School Violence, Peer Mediation, Adolescence, Educational Climate

Introduction

The Algerian educational system serves as a foundational pillar for national development, designed not only to provide academic knowledge but to shape the social, emotional, and cognitive character of future generations. However, despite ongoing institutional reforms, the system faces a significant hurdle in the rise of school violence. This issue is particularly dangerous at the middle school level, where the physical and emotional turbulence of adolescence often leads to a heightened sense of rebellion and a defensive need for self-assertion. When these pressures manifest as verbal or physical aggression, they do more than disrupt the classroom; they undermine academic achievement, damage mental health, and erode the sense of safety and belonging essential to a productive learning environment (UNESCO, 2017).

Defined broadly as any behavior that threatens a student's psychological or physical well-being, school violence is a multifaceted problem. It spans physical, verbal, and social dimensions, driven by a complex interplay of personal, familial, and societal factors (UNESCO, 2017).

As traditional disciplinary models—often centered on punishment and top-down control—reach their limits, there is a clear and growing need for alternative strategies. Modern educational approaches are shifting toward student empowerment, prioritizing dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution over coercion. Among these alternatives is peer mediation. By positioning students as active participants in maintaining harmony, this innovative mechanism has been reported to help reduce conflict and foster a culture of mutual respect. Indeed, both regional and international precedents suggest that peer mediation is a vital tool for strengthening school solidarity and revitalizing the educational climate (Abu Ghazaleh, 2012; Ezzaytouni, 2015).

The proposed framework for implementing peer mediation to reduce school violence among adolescent students is structured around the following dimensions:

1. Objectives of the framework.
2. Significance of the framework.
3. Key premises underlying the framework.
4. Theoretical and pedagogical foundations.
5. Core components of the framework.
6. Implementation requirements.
7. Stakeholders responsible for execution.
8. Potential challenges and strategies to overcome them.

Finally, future research directions are suggested to support the development of peer mediation and improve its effectiveness in preventing school violence.

This comprehensive vision seeks to foster a positive school climate, reduce manifestations of violence, and prepares a generation capable of resolving conflicts peacefully, ensuring the long-term educational, psychological, and social impact of peer mediation within Algerian schools.

Nature and method of the paper. This paper is a conceptual contribution and does not report original empirical data. The proposed framework was developed by drawing on three sources: the Algerian regulatory and legislative texts that govern school life, regional and international research on school violence and on peer mediation, and the definitions of school mediation and peer mediation found in that literature. Because the paper does not rest on a systematic literature search or an empirical test, its statements about effectiveness are presented as possibilities supported by existing studies rather than as established findings. The framework is offered as a basis for the empirical evaluation outlined in the section on the proposed evaluation design.

Section One: Peer Mediation in Schools

1. Definition of School Mediation

The Legislative Definition (Algeria): Under the provisions of **Ministerial Decree No. 65/2018**, the following articles define the framework of the educational community and the core values underlying mediation practices:

Article 2: "The educational community comprises students and all individuals contributing to education, training, and school life, as well as those involved in the management of public and private educational institutions. This includes direct contributors (teachers, administrative staff, and school employees) and indirect contributors (parents, partners, and external stakeholders)."

Article 4: "Relationships within the educational community are grounded in fundamental educational values and principles, including the right to education, equality, tolerance, and the prevention of all forms of discrimination."

Article 5: "The organization of the educational community aims to:

- Strengthen the values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.
- Adopt mechanisms for consultation, dialogue, and active listening to maintain institutional stability.
- Foster a healthy educational climate rooted in responsibility and mutual respect." (*Ministerial Decree No. 65, 2018*)

School mediation is defined as a socio-educational mechanism established by Algerian legislation within the internal regulations of educational institutions. It is rooted in dialogue, consultation, and active listening among all members of the educational community, including students, teachers, administrators, parents, and external partners.

The primary objective is the prevention and peaceful resolution of school-based conflicts. By promoting values of tolerance, equality, and coexistence, this mechanism ensures a stable psychosocial climate and a safe learning environment (Ministry of National Education, 2018; Bouabdallah, 2020; Husseini, 2019; Zerouki, 2021).

These definitions suggest that school mediation serves as a psychosocial intervention designed to resolve daily interpersonal disputes among students in a constructive manner.

This process relies on negotiation and open communication, where educators guide and empower students to manage their own disagreements through peer support and conflict-resolution skills. Ultimately, the goal is to strengthen peer relationships and improve the school climate while reducing the need for coercive disciplinary measures, thereby supporting the emotional well-being and psychological safety of the students.

2. Definitions of Peer Mediation

Johnson & Johnson (1996) define peer mediation as:

"A program that empowers trained student mediators to assist their peers in managing school conflicts through dialogue and peaceful negotiation, with the ultimate goal of fostering positive relationships and enhancing the overall school climate."

Husseini (2019) describes it as:

"A mechanism through which trained students act as intermediaries among their peers to resolve school-based conflicts, thereby reinforcing the values of tolerance, dialogue, and active participation within the educational institution."

Zerouki (2021) characterizes peer mediation as:

"A socio-pedagogical approach aimed at empowering students to take an active role in resolving everyday school conflicts. By prioritizing dialogue and mutual listening, this method effectively reduces manifestations of school violence."

Conceptual Synthesis

Based on these definitions, peer mediation can be conceptualized as a systematic educational and psychosocial mechanism. It involves a select group of students receiving specialized training to serve as mediators who facilitate dialogue, enhance communication, and support peaceful conflict management among their colleagues.

Rather than relying on conventional disciplinary actions, this approach provides a constructive alternative that promotes healthy interpersonal relationships. By strengthening the values of tolerance and mutual respect, peer mediation serves as a vital tool for reducing school violence and improving the broader psychosocial and educational climate.

3. Foundational Principles of the Peer Mediation Program

The conceptual framework for peer mediation is underpinned by several core principles that integrate psychological, educational, and social dimensions:

A. Learner-Centeredness

- **Psychological Dimension:** Prioritizing the student's emotional state, recognizing individual psychological needs, and validating personal and social experiences both within and beyond the institutional setting.
- **Educational Dimension:** Facilitating active student engagement in program oversight and pedagogical activities, while empowering them to derive autonomous, constructive solutions to interpersonal challenges.
- **Social Dimension:** Cultivating advanced communication and dialogue skills through immersive participation in collaborative and group-based initiatives.

B. Inclusive Participation

- **Psychological Dimension:** Encouraging the transparent expression of thoughts and emotions to establish a climate of psychological safety and enhance student self-efficacy.
- **Educational Dimension:** Engaging the full spectrum of educational stakeholders—including faculty, students, parents, and administrative staff—within the mediation and learning processes.
- **Social Dimension:** Promoting collective problem-solving and institutional synergy to foster a cohesive and inclusive school environment.

C. Peer Mediation as a Lifelong Competency

- **Psychological Dimension:** Cultivating critical thinking and autonomous decision-making as essential components of adolescent psychosocial development.
- **Educational Dimension:** Embedding negotiation and conflict-resolution strategies into the pedagogical framework as fundamental life competencies.
- **Social Dimension:** Advancing the values of peaceful coexistence, mutual understanding, and interpersonal respect within the broader social fabric.

D. Pedagogical Alignment

- **Psychological Dimension:** Bolstering the student's sense of institutional belonging and psychological well-being by calibrating the program to meet specific developmental and emotional milestones.
- **Educational Dimension:** Ensuring structural consistency between the mediation framework and the school's overarching educational vision and policy mandates.
- **Social Dimension:** Strengthening the nexus between the school and the community, thereby institutionalizing mediation as a core element of school culture (Faisal Al-Husseini Foundation, 2015).

E. Systemic Sustainability (The Peer-to-Peer Model)

- **Psychological Dimension:** Instilling a sense of agency, personal accountability, and a commitment to continuous self-improvement.
- **Educational Dimension:** Transitioning the student from a passive recipient of disciplinary rules to an active practitioner and mentor in mediation methodology.
- **Social Dimension:** Securing the program's longevity across successive student cohorts and establishing a self-sustaining culture of peer-led resolution.

F. Pro-social Orientation

- **Psychological Dimension:** Developing self-confidence, empathy, and regard for others as prerequisites for holistic psychological health.
- **Educational Dimension:** Integrating foundational values—such as cooperation, empathy, and social solidarity—directly into the mediation curriculum.

- **Social Dimension:** Creating a secure, respectful institutional climate that reinforces emotional stability and facilitates positive social interaction (Faisal Al-Husseini Foundation, 2015).

Section Two: School Violence among Adolescent Students

1. Conceptualizing School Violence

Younes (2018) defines school violence as:

"Any aggressive behavior perpetrated by a student within or in connection with the school environment, resulting in physical, psychological, or symbolic harm to oneself or others" (p. 45).

UNESCO provides a broader institutional definition:

"The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, occurring repeatedly within the educational institution, which results in—or has a high likelihood of resulting in—physical or psychological injury" (2017, p. 12).

Within the **Algerian regulatory context**, **Executive Decree No. 17-240**, which governs the internal regulations of educational institutions, defines school violence as:

"Any act or behavior that disrupts the public order of the institution, compromises the safety of individuals or property, or disturbs the pedagogical climate" (Official Gazette of the Algerian Republic, 2017, p. 6).

Synthesis of Manifestations Based on these frameworks, school violence is understood as harmful or predatory behavior occurring within the school setting. It manifests through several distinct typologies:

- **Physical Violence:** Overt actions intended to cause bodily harm.
- **Verbal Violence:** The strategic use of offensive language, epithets, or threats to demean others.
- **Psychological Violence:** Behavioral patterns aimed at social exclusion, humiliation, or intimidation.
- **Social Violence:** The dissemination of rumors or engaging in character defamation to undermine interpersonal relationships.

Collectively, these behaviors aim to marginalize others and foster a hostile institutional environment. Such conditions inherently obstruct the pedagogical process and significantly compromise the psychological well-being of the student body.

2. Typologies of School Violence

2.1 Physical Violence

This category is defined as "aggressive acts that jeopardize the physical safety of the student, including hitting, kicking, or the deployment of harmful objects" (Younes, 2018, p. 52). These overt manifestations of aggression are the most visible forms of school-based conflict.

2.2 Verbal Violence

Verbal aggression refers to the "strategic use of derogatory language, threats, or pervasive mockery intended to inflict psychological distress" (UNESCO, 2017, p. 19). While non-physical, its impact on the victim's sense of security is profound.

2.3 Moral and Symbolic Violence

Symbolic violence involves "covert behaviors such as social exclusion, marginalization, or the disparagement of an individual's appearance or cognitive abilities" (Official Gazette of the Algerian Republic, 2017, p. 7). Boussouf (2020) further notes that symbolic violence "systematically excludes the 'other' and targets the core of an individual's identity or sense of institutional belonging" (p. 101).

2.4 Socio-Psychological Violence

Drawing on empirical Algerian field studies, this dimension encompasses "social isolation, harassment, and the dissemination of rumors." Research conducted among secondary school students in Tebessa identified these behaviors as primary manifestations of classroom-based violence (Mebarkia & Rahoui, 2022, p. 45).

3. Determinants of School Violence among Adolescent Students

3.1 Individual and Psychological Factors

Individual determinants are primarily rooted in the adolescent's personality traits, including deficits in emotional regulation, heightened impulsivity, and exposure to psychological disorders (Chetouh et al., 2017, p. 32). Furthermore, research emphasizes that "violence is frequently associated with a lack of social competencies and significant maladjustment" (Younes, 2018, p. 61).

3.2 Familial Influences

Domestic factors play a critical role, particularly family disintegration, inadequate parental supervision, domestic instability, or overly punitive disciplinary measures. "A home environment characterized by chronic tension and violence provides a fertile ground for the internalization and replication of aggressive behaviors" (Mebarkia & Rahoui, 2022, p. 48). Additionally, evidence suggests that "the absence of familial warmth significantly correlates with an increased propensity for violent conduct within the school setting" (UNESCO, 2017, p. 27).

3.3 Institutional and Pedagogical Factors

These causes are intrinsically linked to the institutional climate, specifically strained teacher-student relationships, classroom overcrowding, and a lack of extracurricular engagement. "An educational environment that prioritizes punitive sanctions over constructive dialogue inadvertently encourages students to adopt violent responses" (Boussouf, 2020, p. 105). Empirical findings further indicate that "acute academic pressure and constant evaluative stress can generate systemic anxiety, which often manifests as aggressive outbursts" (Younes, 2018, p. 64).

3.4 Societal and Environmental Factors

Societal determinants pertain to the broader macro-context, encompassing poverty, unemployment, community-level violence, and the pervasive influence of media. "A social fabric that normalizes aggression effectively transmits violent values into the school ecosystem" (Chetouh et al., 2017, p. 40). Moreover, digital media and social networks have been identified as significant contributors to the reinforcement of bullying behaviors among the adolescent population (UNESCO, 2017, p. 30).

4. Impact of School Violence on Students and the Institutional Climate

4.1 Consequences for the Individual Student

4.1.1 Psychosocial and Emotional Distress Empirical evidence suggests that students exposed to school-based violence exhibit significantly elevated levels of anxiety, depression, and social alienation. Such exposure is critically linked to a precipitous decline in self-esteem and general self-confidence (UNESCO, 2017).

4.1.2 Academic Underperformance Research indicates that school violence severely impairs cognitive engagement and the ability to maintain focus. Consequently, victimized students often experience a marked deterioration in academic achievement and overall scholastic performance (Carroll, 2003, p. 112).

4.1.3 Behavioral Reciprocity and Aggression Students who experience or witness violent acts are at a higher risk of developing retaliatory or aggressive behavioral patterns. This dynamic effectively perpetuates a self-sustaining cycle of violence within the school ecosystem.

4.1.4 Social Alienation and Withdrawal Victimized students frequently retreat from social interactions and avoid peer-led activities. This withdrawal negatively impacts their social adjustment and undermines the development of healthy interpersonal relationships.

4.2 Systemic Impact on the Educational Climate

4.2.1 Erosion of the Learning Environment School violence facilitates the emergence of a hostile and precarious atmosphere. This erosion of safety diminishes student engagement and compromises the collective quality of the educational experience (Center for Global Development, 2017, p. 23).

4.2.2 Breakdown of Teacher-Student Trust Persistent violence undermines the foundational trust and mutual respect between educators and learners. This fracture weakens classroom management efficacy and destabilizes emotional support systems.

4.2.3 Chronic Absenteeism Exposure to a violent school environment is a primary driver of increased absenteeism. This disruption in attendance leads to fragmented learning continuity and long-term academic setbacks (Center for Global Development, 2017, p. 24).

4.2.4 Institutional Reputation and Credibility The prevalence of violence can severely damage a school's public image and community standing. Such reputational harm often results in diminished parental confidence and declining enrollment rates.

Section Three: A Proposed Framework for Implementing Peer Mediation to Mitigate School Violence among Adolescent Students

1. Objectives of the Proposed Framework

1.1 Primary Objective The overarching goal of this framework is to operationalize the role of peer mediation as a strategic intervention to reduce the incidence of school violence among the adolescent student population.

1.2 Strategic Objectives

- **Conceptual and Procedural Clarification:** To define the theoretical underpinnings of peer mediation and establish standardized protocols for its practical application within educational institutions.
- **Contextual Adaptation:** To identify operational mechanisms and implementation phases that align with the specific cultural and systemic characteristics of the Algerian educational landscape.
- **Benchmarking and Knowledge Transfer:** To evaluate successful international and regional (Arab) peer-mediation initiatives, distilling evidence-based lessons that can be effectively adapted to local contexts.
- **Barrier Analysis and Mitigation:** To diagnose the primary systemic and cultural challenges hindering the implementation of peer mediation in Algerian schools and to propose actionable, evidence-based solutions.

2. Significance of the Proposed Framework

This framework addresses one of the most critical contemporary challenges in education: the impact of school violence on learning quality and institutional climate. Recognizing the limitations of traditional punitive measures, this proposal offers a modern pedagogical shift toward preventive and constructive conflict management. Grounded in the principles of active participation, structured dialogue, and emotional security, the framework aims to cultivate an environment conducive to both holistic personal growth and the development of essential socio-emotional competencies.

The significance of the proposed framework is reflected across several key dimensions:

- **A Modern Pedagogical Alternative:** It introduces a proactive intervention model that moves away from coercive disciplinary actions, which often exacerbate student aggression and resentment.

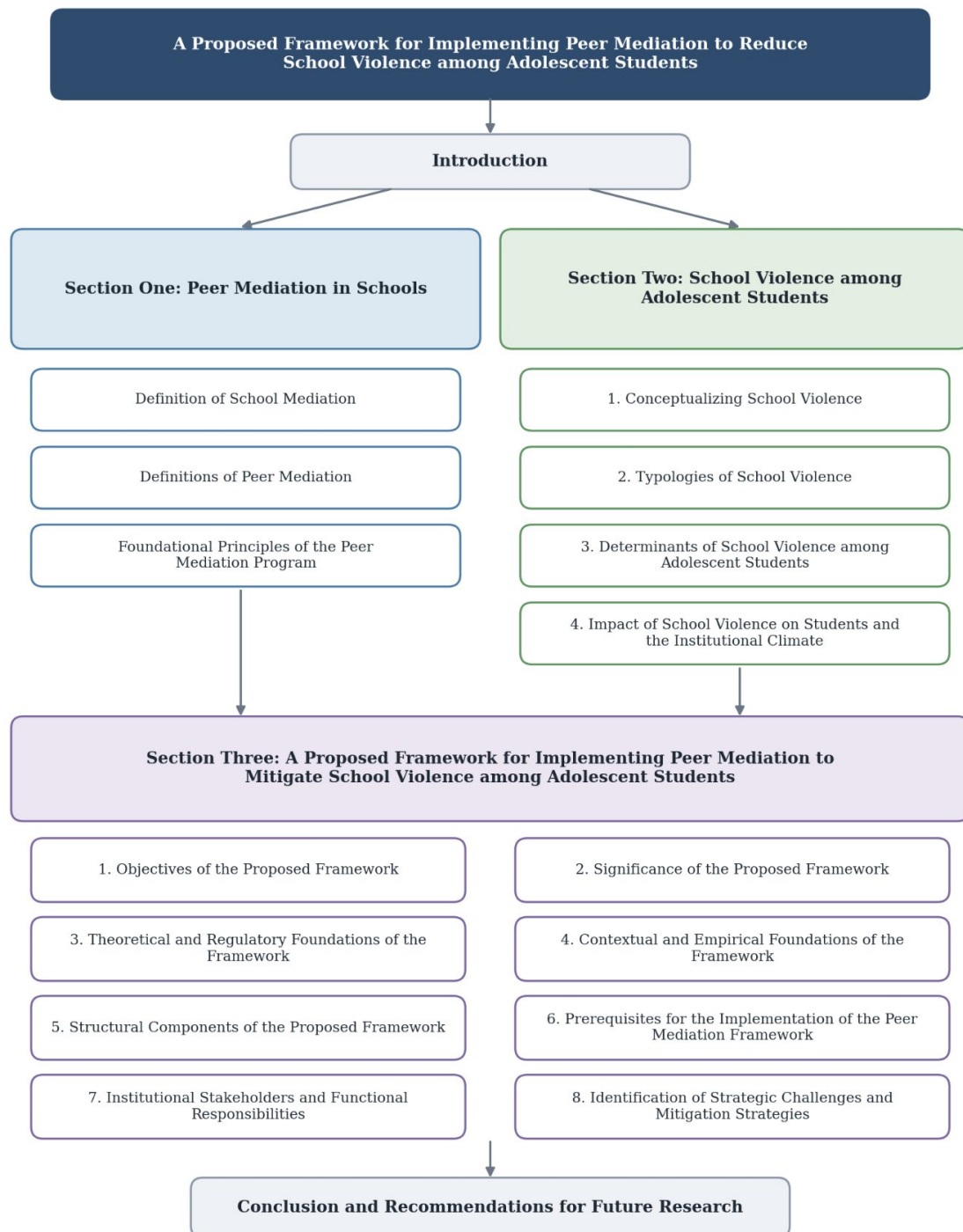


Figure 1: Conceptual Diagram of the Proposed Framework

- **Student Agency and Empowerment:** It prioritizes the active involvement of students in managing interpersonal disputes, thereby fostering internal accountability, autonomy, and self-regulatory skills.
- **Educational Impact:** By improving the overall institutional climate, the framework positively influences student discipline and scholastic achievement.
- **Psychosocial Development:** The program is designed to refine students' active listening, negotiation, and emotional regulation skills while embedding values of tolerance, empathy, and peaceful coexistence.

- **Institutional Efficiency:** It provides a scalable model that can be integrated into broader Algerian educational reforms, effectively alleviating the administrative burden on school leadership and faculty.
- **Societal Contribution:** By promoting civic engagement and prosocial behavior, the framework prepares a generation capable of non-violent conflict resolution, ultimately contributing to social cohesion and positive citizenship.

3. Theoretical and Regulatory Foundations of the Framework

3.1 National and Strategic Foundation The proposed framework is aligned with **Algeria's Vision 2030 for Education**, which prioritizes the enhancement of pedagogical quality and the promotion of coexistence, dialogue, and mediation as primary alternatives to traditional school conflict resolution. This strategic vision serves as a guiding mandate for institutional initiatives, specifically the integration of peer mediation programs designed to mitigate school violence among the adolescent population (Ministry of National Education, 2018).

3.2 Sociological Foundation The framework adopts a sociological lens that conceptualizes the school as a microcosm reflecting broader societal dynamics. Beyond its instructional role, the school functions as a critical space for socialization and interpersonal exchange. Implementing peer mediation mechanisms facilitates the reproduction of core values—such as dialogue and mutual respect—while deconstructing manifestations of violence rooted in broader socio-cultural tensions (Bourdieu, 2008, p. 112).

3.3 Pedagogical Foundation This framework is grounded in the principles of modern pedagogy, which advocate for the cultivation of essential life competencies, including effective communication, conflict resolution, and autonomous decision-making. Consequently, school mediation is positioned as a transformative educational tool for embedding a culture of non-violence and constructive dialogue within the institutional environment (Erikson, 1968, p. 245).

3.4 Psychological Foundation From a developmental perspective, adolescence is recognized as a volatile stage characterized by heightened emotional reactivity and internal tension. The implementation of peer mediation programs assists adolescents in developing emotional regulation and adaptive coping strategies, thereby reducing the propensity for aggressive or externalizing behaviors (Erikson, 1968, p. 245).

3.5 Human Rights and Legal Foundation The legitimacy of school mediation is further established by international human rights instruments, most notably the **Convention on the Rights of the Child**, ratified by Algeria. This convention mandates the child's right to a secure educational environment free from all forms of violence and explicitly encourages the adoption of peaceful measures for dispute resolution (United Nations, 1989, p. 18).

3.6 Theoretical Foundation At the theoretical level, the framework synthesizes contemporary perspectives from educational psychology and the sociology of education. A central pillar is **Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977)**, which posits that prosocial behaviors—such as dialogue and peaceful resolution—are acquired through observation and modeling. This underscores the necessity of institutionalizing mediation programs to provide students with constructive behavioral models within the educational system (Bandura, 1977, p. 32).

4. Contextual and Empirical Foundations of the Framework

4.1. Theoretical Background and National Context Statistical data from the **Algerian Ministry of National Education (2021)** indicate a rising trend in school violence among middle school students, particularly in the forms of verbal and physical aggression. These findings underscore the inherent fragility of the current educational climate and the absence of robust alternative conflict-management mechanisms. While official data provide a descriptive overview, there is a distinct lack of longitudinal analytical research addressing the root determinants of this phenomenon. This gap highlights the urgent

necessity for preventive and developmental interventions, such as peer mediation (Ministry of National Education, 2021).

International precedents further point to the potential of school-based mediation. In **Canada**, the "Peer Mediators Program," active since the 1990s, has been reported to help reduce conflicts, highlighting the value of student agency in dispute resolution (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). Similarly, in the **United States**, peer mediation programs have been described as a non-punitive alternative for managing student disputes (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). Regional initiatives in **Tunisia and Morocco** have also yielded promising preliminary results, though these programs remain localized and have yet to achieve nationwide institutionalization (Chelbi, 2020).

Consequently, contemporary educational trends advocate for a fundamental paradigm shift: moving away from rigid, top-down disciplinary measures toward collaborative, dialogical approaches that prioritize citizenship education and active student participation.

4.2. Review of Peer-Reviewed Literature Scholarly research across Arab and Western contexts consistently identifies mediation as a critical tool for reducing aggressive behavior, though findings vary regarding implementation efficacy.

- **Regional Perspectives (Algeria & Morocco):** Bouchair (2018) reported that mediation may reduce the intensity of aggressive conduct in Algerian schools, provided there is high-quality mediator training and strong administrative backing. In Morocco, Chelbi (2020) reported that systematic training in communication and negotiation fosters prosocial interaction, emphasizing that the *quality* of training is a more significant predictor of success than the mere existence of a program.
- **Western Perspectives: Reviews of the research, such as Johnson and Johnson (1996), indicate that trained student mediators can help disputants reach agreements, reflecting adolescents' capacity for self-regulated conflict management.** However, such success is contingent upon institutional and legal support structures, which are often less developed in many Arab educational systems.

The literature converges on several critical requirements for success:

- Rigorous training for peer mediators in active listening and negotiation.
- Sustained administrative and institutional commitment.
- The adoption of mediation as a formal alternative to traditional punitive discipline, which often exacerbates institutional tension (Bouchair, 2018; Chelbi, 2020; Johnson & Johnson, 1996).

4.3. Empirical Field Studies Field research within Algeria indicates a strong student disposition toward resolving conflicts through dialogue when provided with a secure environment. Ben Daoud (2019) reported that a considerable share of the adolescents surveyed preferred mediation to direct confrontation. Furthermore, Gharfi (2021) reported that experimental mediation workshops in Algiers were followed by a decrease in physical altercations. These findings suggest that mediation is viable in the Algerian context if properly calibrated to local socio-cultural conditions.

In the broader Arab region, Al-Hawamdeh (2020) in Jordan found that peer mediation effectively reduced verbal aggression, suggesting its transferability to culturally similar contexts. Despite these successes, most initiatives remain small-scale or experimental. This underscores the imperative for a comprehensive, sustainable, and formally integrated framework for peer mediation within the national educational policy.

4.4. Additional Regional and International Studies Further Algerian, Arab and international studies help situate the proposed framework within the wider evidence base. They differ in design, population and outcomes, and are reviewed here to clarify what they contribute and where the evidence remains limited.

Algerian studies: **Laaraba and Oumlili (2023)** examined manifestations of violence among adolescent students in secondary schools in Sétif using a descriptive design. Violence directed at classmates emerged among the most widespread forms, and differences by sex were found in favor of males, whereas no differences by age were observed. These findings underline the importance of addressing violence between peers, which is precisely the target of peer mediation. **Khalifia and Madouri (2020)** proposed school mediation as a strategy for reducing bullying, drawing on the regulatory texts that govern school life and recommending that the school project, its committees and its stakeholders be activated. Their contribution is conceptual and regulatory rather than empirical.

Arab studies: **Hammam (2013)**, in a master's thesis at the Islamic University of Gaza, examined the effectiveness of a student mediation program on problem-solving ability and anger control among student mediators in the upper basic stage. **Amin (2014)** tested a cognitive-behavioral counseling program to reduce school violence among secondary school students, using experimental and control groups; improvements favoring the experimental group were reported and appeared to be maintained at follow-up. Although the intervention was not peer mediation, the study shows that structured school-based programs can reduce violent behavior over time. In Oman, **Al-Ghutami et al. (2021)** combined descriptive and quasi-experimental methods to assess student mediation from the viewpoint of social workers and psychologists and to test a training program for student mediators; specialists valued student mediation as a means of solving problems, and the training program was reported to be effective in favor of the post-test.

International studies: **Stevahn et al. (2002)** found that students who received conflict resolution and peer mediation training integrated into a social studies course learned and applied negotiation and mediation procedures more fully, and developed more positive attitudes toward conflict, than untrained students; benefits for academic achievement and retention were also reported. **Schellenberg et al. (2007)** evaluated an existing peer mediation program in an elementary school and reported fewer out-of-school suspensions after its implementation, retention of mediators' knowledge at a three-month follow-up, and successful resolution in the mediation sessions that were monitored. **Usó et al. (2016)** compared a secondary school with a peer mediation program to one without and reported more pro-victim attitudes, a smaller increase in negative bullying roles, and a better school climate in the school with the program. **Bonafé-Schmitt (2006)** presents peer mediation in schools as an alternative to violence, emphasizing its educational and social dimensions.

Taken together, these studies suggest that peer mediation and related school-based programs can support constructive conflict management. However, evidence from Algeria and the Arab region remains limited and largely descriptive or conceptual, and several international studies rely on short-term or single-site designs. These limits reinforce the need for the pilot phase and the longitudinal evaluation proposed in this framework.

5. Structural Components of the Proposed Framework

5.1. Primary Objective: Operationalizing Peer Mediation The fundamental purpose of this framework is to establish a viable, scalable model for implementing peer mediation within the Algerian educational system to mitigate adolescent school violence.

- **Scope:** The framework constitutes an integrated applied model that synthesizes theoretical principles with practical execution. It defines the specific responsibilities of all stakeholders—including students, mediators, faculty, administration, and parents—while providing a concrete roadmap for institutional adoption.
- **Target Audience:** Algerian educational institutions, encompassing the student body, teaching faculty, administrative leadership, and the parent-teacher community.

- **Implementation Mechanisms:**

- Developing a comprehensive mediation curriculum including specific objectives, procedural stages, and evaluation metrics.
- Authoring a standardized "Peer Mediation Manual" to serve as a national reference for school-based practitioners.
- Embedding mediation practices into both extracurricular and co-curricular institutional activities.
- Initiating a pilot phase in representative schools to refine the model prior to nationwide rollout.
- Formulating evidence-based policy recommendations for the Ministry of National Education to institutionalize mediation within national reform agendas.

5.2. Conceptual Integration and Pedagogical Application This dimension focuses on establishing a robust theoretical foundation for peer mediation, articulating its psychological and social significance as a transformative alternative to traditional punitive measures.

- **Scope:** Central emphasis is placed on the internalization of core values, specifically constructive dialogue, tolerance, mutual respect, and non-violent negotiation.
- **Target Audience:** Students (to cultivate prosocial values), educators (to facilitate the transition), administrators (to provide structural support), and parents (to reinforce the school-home partnership).
- **Implementation Mechanisms:**
 - Facilitating specialized workshops and seminars to translate complex mediation concepts into accessible, age-appropriate educational content.
 - Disseminating instructional materials, such as brochures and digital media, to promote the mediation culture within the school environment.
 - Incorporating mediation-based activities into civic education and school life sessions to reinforce empathy and cooperative problem-solving.

5.3. Contextual Implementation Procedures for the Algerian Setting This component involves designing structured, practical protocols that integrate peer mediation into the Algerian school system while respecting local cultural norms and institutional realities.

- **Scope:** Establishing rigorous selection and training criteria for adolescent peer mediators, overseen by professional educational and psychological staff.
- **Target Audience:** Primarily the adolescent student body, with active guidance from pedagogical and administrative coordinators.
- **Implementation Mechanisms:**
 - Identifying student candidates demonstrating high levels of emotional intelligence, communication competence, and neutrality.
 - Providing advanced training modules for mediators focusing on active listening, impasse management, and agreement formulation.
 - Establishing a dedicated "Mediation Unit" in each institution, comprising peer mediators, a faculty coordinator, and a school psychologist or counselor.
 - Securing confidential, neutral spaces within the school facility dedicated exclusively to the mediation process.

5.4. Cross-Cultural Benchmarking and Regional Knowledge Transfer The framework draws on successful international and regional (Arab) precedents—specifically from Canada, the United States, Morocco, and Tunisia—to extract adaptable strategies for the Algerian context.

- **Scope:** Evaluating peer mediation efficacy in diverse settings to identify evidence-based practices that improve interpersonal relationships and reduce institutional conflict.
- **Target Audience:** Educational policymakers, institutional leaders, researchers in school health psychology, and practitioners.
- **Implementation Mechanisms:**
 - Synthesizing comparative reports on regional and global peer mediation success stories.
 - Hosting academic symposia to discuss the transferability of international models to the Algerian socioeconomic landscape.
 - Utilizing documented "success stories" as motivational benchmarks for local educational stakeholders.

5.5. Barrier Analysis and Strategic Mitigation This component involves diagnosing potential systemic hurdles—such as infrastructure limitations, cultural resistance, or training gaps—and proposing feasible, evidence-based solutions.

- **Scope:** Recognizing that limited exposure to modern pedagogical approaches may impede initial adoption, the framework prioritizes continuous support and professional development.
- **Target Audience:** Faculty, administrative staff, and parents as primary partners in institutional change.
- **Implementation Mechanisms:**
 - Providing ongoing professional development for staff in conflict resolution and psychosocial support.
 - Engaging families through awareness initiatives to ensure community-wide support for non-punitive discipline.
 - Implementing a rigorous monitoring and evaluation system to track program outcomes and adjust strategies in real-time.
 - Integrating school health and psychological services into the mediation workflow to address the underlying causes of recurrent aggression.

Convergence with School Health Psychology

The proposed framework is intrinsically aligned with the objectives of **School Health Psychology**. By fostering emotional regulation, social competence, and interpersonal resilience, peer mediation creates a psychologically secure institutional climate. This approach reduces chronic stress and aggression while significantly enhancing the mental health and well-being of the student body—fundamental pillars of a sustainable and productive learning environment.

6. Prerequisites for the Implementation of the Peer Mediation Framework

To ensure the successful integration and sustainability of peer mediation within the Algerian educational system, several foundational requirements must be met across material, human, technical, legislative, and community dimensions.

6.1. Material and Financial Requirements

- **Dedicated Budgetary Allocation:** Establishing a specific financial framework to equip mediation facilities and facilitate the logistical costs of training workshops. **The absence of sustainable funding is widely regarded as a barrier to program continuity.**
- **Pedagogical Resources:** Developing and distributing specialized materials—such as instructional brochures, posters, and diagnostic booklets—to instill a mediation culture, a strategy advocated by **Crawford & Bodine (2001)**.

- **Infrastructural Standards:** Designating a dedicated mediation space that is characterized by neutrality, quietude, and a psychologically supportive atmosphere.
- **Fiscal Sustainability:** Ensuring recurring financial resources to transition the program from an occasional intervention to a permanent institutional fixture.

6.2. Human Capital and Professional Requirements

- **Faculty Mentorship:** Training a multidisciplinary team of educators in mediation methodologies to serve as institutional facilitators. **Bickmore (2002)** demonstrates that active teacher engagement is a critical predictor of program efficacy.
- **Specialized Psychological Support:** Integrating school counselors and psychologists to oversee complex interpersonal disputes. **Professional psychological expertise is important for navigating the psychological nuances of adolescent conflict.**
- **Expert Training Modules:** Utilizing specialized practitioners to equip peer mediators with high-level competencies in active listening, empathy, and principled negotiation (**Crawford & Bodine, 2001**).
- **Rigorous Selection Criteria:** Identifying student mediators based on documented responsibility, neutrality, and emotional maturity.
- **Administrative Leadership:** Securing the active commitment of school leadership. Evidence from **Moroccan initiatives** suggests that administrative disengagement is a significant structural obstacle to success (**Ezzaytouni, 2015**).

6.3. Technical and Technological Requirements

- **Digital Integration:** Equipping institutions with advanced audiovisual and digital tools to enhance the delivery of training modules.
- **Data Management Systems:** Adopting electronic frameworks for the confidential documentation of mediation sessions and the longitudinal tracking of conflict resolution outcomes.
- **Communication Platforms:** Developing school-based digital portals to facilitate awareness and streamline communication between mediators, faculty, and the parent-teacher community.
- **Multimedia Resource Repositories:** Establishing a digital library of training manuals and interactive resources.

6.4. Legislative and Regulatory Requirements

- **Institutional Formalization:** Incorporating peer mediation into the school's internal regulations as a recognized preventive and disciplinary mechanism (**Johnson & Johnson, 1996**).
- **Legal Reform:** Updating educational legislation to position mediation as a legitimate alternative to traditional punitive sanctions.
- **National Standardization:** Developing a unified national procedural guide for peer mediation to ensure consistency across the Algerian territory (**UNESCO, 2017**).
- **Curricular Integration:** Embedding mediation activities within the official "School Life" and "Citizenship Education" curricula to normalize prosocial behavior.

6.5. Community and Socio-Cultural Requirements

- **Restorative Paradigm Shift:** Promoting a fundamental cultural transition within the school community from retributive punishment to restorative dialogue.
- **Parental Engagement:** Launching awareness campaigns to educate families on the psychological and social benefits of mediation, an approach successfully utilized in **Jordan (Abu Ghazaleh, 2012)**.
- **Civil Society Partnerships:** Collaborating with NGOs and youth associations to expand the program's impact.

- **Eco-Systemic Support Networks:** Building a collaborative nexus between the school, the family, and the wider community.

7. Institutional Stakeholders and Functional Responsibilities

The successful operationalization of the peer mediation framework necessitates a multi-sectoral approach, defining the specific mandates of various governmental and civil society bodies.

7.1. Ministry of National Education As the primary regulatory authority, the Ministry is responsible for:

- **Policy Formulation:** Developing national strategies that formally recognize peer mediation as a pillar of school violence prevention.
- **Regulatory Oversight:** Establishing the legislative frameworks and standardized protocols required for institutional adoption.
- **Strategic Integration:** Aligning mediation initiatives with overarching national educational reforms.

Reference: Bickmore (2002) emphasizes that high-level institutional frameworks are indispensable for the structural success of school mediation.

7.2. Provincial Directorates of Education (Directions de l'Éducation) These bodies serve as the regional bridge between national policy and school-level execution:

- **Field Monitoring:** overseeing the implementation of the mediation framework across provincial districts.
- **Capacity Building:** Supervising regional training programs for both student mediators and faculty supervisors.
- **Administrative Coordination:** Facilitating communication between the Ministry and individual school leadership.

7.3. School Administrations (Primary, Middle, and Secondary) The school leadership acts as the direct implementer of the program by:

- **Resource Management:** Allocating dedicated, neutral spaces for mediation activities.
- **Personnel Selection:** Appointing supervising faculty and overseeing the selection process for peer mediators.
- **Cultural Leadership:** Championing a restorative rather than punitive institutional climate.

7.4. Pedagogical Staff and School Counselors These practitioners provide the frontline technical and psychological guidance:

- **Direct Supervision:** Mentoring peer mediators and providing oversight during complex disputes.
- **Skill Acquisition:** Delivering specialized training in active listening, dialogue, and negotiation.
- **Classroom Integration:** Actively promoting a culture of peace and prosocial behavior within the learning environment.

7.5. Universities and Research Institutions The Ministry of Higher Education plays a critical role in the academic and scientific sustainability of the program:

- **Curricular Reform:** Integrating peer mediation into the training modules for students in Psychology and Educational Sciences.
- **Empirical Validation:** Conducting applied research to assess the effectiveness of mediation within the specific socio-cultural context of Algeria.
- **Professional Development:** Offering advanced, continuous training for practicing educators.

7.6. Ministry of Finance Fiscal support is the cornerstone of program longevity:

- **Budgetary Appropriation:** Allocating the necessary funds for the structural equipment of mediation units.
- **Logistical Funding:** Supporting the recurring costs of training materials and extracurricular school activities.

7.7. National Institutes for Teacher and Inspector Training These institutes ensure the professional readiness of the workforce:

- **Pre-service Training:** Including specialized mediation modules within the core curricula for future teachers and inspectors.
- **Standards Enforcement:** Preparing an inspectorate capable of evaluating and supporting mediation implementation in the field.

7.8. Civil Society and Professional Associations Non-governmental organizations provide essential community and expertise-based support:

- **Advocacy and Awareness:** Organizing community workshops to promote non-violent conflict resolution.
- **Technical Expertise:** Providing supplementary psychological and social expertise to schools.
- **Social Synergy:** Strengthening the nexus between the school and its surrounding social environment.

7.9. International Intergovernmental Organizations (UNICEF, UNESCO) Global partners provide technical and logistical benchmarking:

- **Technical Assistance:** Offering international expertise, global best practices, and high-quality training toolkits.
- **Strategic Support:** Providing financial and logistical aid for large-scale pilot projects.
- **Global Standards:** Assisting in the development of national manuals aligned with international human rights and peace education standards.

8. Identification of Strategic Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

The transition from a punitive disciplinary model to a restorative peer mediation framework in Algeria faces several structural and cultural obstacles. Addressing these through evidence-based solutions is essential for institutionalizing the program.

8.1. Insufficient Community Awareness regarding Peer Mediation

- **Challenge:** A significant portion of the parent-teacher community perceives mediation as a "luxury" or an ineffective substitute for traditional discipline, leading to skepticism and low adoption rates.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Execute targeted awareness campaigns via local associations and school media. Engaging parents in orientation sessions is critical to demonstrating the efficacy of mediation in fostering a safe learning environment (Moussaoui, 2020, p. 88).

8.2. Deficit in Specialized Professional Competencies

- **Challenge:** The absence of certified trainers within the educational sector hinders the qualitative implementation of mediation protocols.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Forge strategic partnerships between the Ministry of National Education and universities. This involves the specialized training of psychology and education faculty to provide updated, research-driven curriculum for school-based mediators (Bouchareb, 2019, p. 134).

8.3. Constraints in Material Resources and Infrastructure

- **Challenge:** Chronic underfunding and the lack of designated, neutral spaces within overcrowded schools impede the practical execution of mediation sessions.

- **Mitigation Strategy:** Formally mandate the allocation of specific mediation rooms within institutional facilities and earmark a dedicated portion of the school support budget to sustain program logistics (UNESCO, 2017).

8.4. Institutional Resistance to Pedagogical Innovation

- **Challenge:** Entrenched preferences for traditional, top-down disciplinary measures among some administrative and teaching staff create resistance to participative conflict resolution.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Implement professional development workshops that illustrate the correlation between mediation and an improved psychosocial school climate, emphasizing the reduction of the administrative burden on teachers.

8.5. Absence of a Formal Regulatory Framework

- **Challenge:** The current lack of explicit legal and administrative texts prevents the formal integration of peer mediation into the Algerian school hierarchy.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Advocate for ministerial amendments to incorporate mediation as a recognized component of "School Life Projects" (*Projets de vie scolaire*) and structured pedagogical activities (Ministry of National Education, 2021).

8.6. Sociocultural Context (Specific to Guelma and Eastern Algeria)

- **Challenge:** Regional reliance on authoritarian hierarchies (the patriarchal figure, the teacher, or the principal) as the sole arbiters of conflict complicates the acceptance of peer-led, horizontal techniques.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Culturally calibrate the mediation content by integrating local values of solidarity and traditional restorative wisdom. Utilizing regional linguistic nuances and proverbs typical of the Guelma community can bridge the gap between tradition and modern practice (Ben Taher, 2018, p. 76).

8.7. Risk of Superficial or Symbolic Implementation

- **Challenge:** The danger of the program becoming a mere formalistic or "token" activity without generating substantive behavioral change or measurable impact.
- **Mitigation Strategy:** Establish rigorous longitudinal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms. This requires standardized reporting by program coordinators under the direct oversight of local educational committees to ensure accountability and impact assessment.

Limitations of the Proposed Framework

Peer mediation is not suitable for every incident. Cases involving serious physical violence, sexual harassment, threats with weapons, or sustained bullying with a marked imbalance of power should be referred to the school administration, counselors and, where necessary, the competent authorities rather than to peer mediators. Mediation presumes voluntary participation and a rough balance of power between the disputants; where these conditions are absent, it may place pressure on the weaker party. Peer mediators also need protection: they should not be exposed to confidential or high-risk disputes and should receive ongoing supervision from a counselor or psychologist. Finally, much of the evidence discussed in this paper comes from short-term studies, often based on self-report and conducted in other contexts; its transferability to Algerian schools has yet to be tested empirically, which is why the pilot phase and the longitudinal evaluation proposed above are essential.

Table 1 summarizes the framework as a logic model linking inputs, processes, outputs and evaluation indicators.

Inputs	Processes	Outputs	Evaluation indicators
Ministerial and legislative backing; dedicated budget; trained faculty coordinator; school psychologist or counselor; neutral mediation space	Selection and training of peer mediators; mediation sessions; awareness activities for students, teachers and parents; ongoing supervision	Mediators trained; disputes handled; agreements reached; awareness workshops delivered	Violent incidents and disciplinary sanctions (before and after); share of mediated disputes ending in agreement; student-reported school climate and sense of safety; mediator and teacher feedback; pilot-phase review

Conceptual Model of the Proposed Framework

Proposed Evaluation Design

The framework is intended to be tested empirically. A first step would be a pilot phase in a small number of representative schools, in which the program is implemented and the model is refined before wider use. A quasi-experimental design is proposed, comparing one or more schools implementing the peer mediation program with comparison schools that do not, with measurements before implementation, immediately afterwards and at a follow-up point. The primary outcome would be students' violent behavior, measured with a validated school violence scale, complemented by the indicators summarized in Table 1: recorded violent incidents and disciplinary sanctions, the proportion of mediated disputes that end in agreement, students' perceptions of school climate and safety, and feedback from mediators and teachers. Because adolescents are involved, the evaluation should secure the consent of school administrations, parents and students, protect the confidentiality of mediation sessions, and exclude cases of serious violence from mediation. Results from the pilot phase would be used to revise the framework before it is implemented more widely.

Conclusion:

School violence among the adolescent population is a multifaceted psychosocial phenomenon that necessitates interventions transcending traditional punitive models. Within this context, peer mediation emerges as a robust educational and psychological mechanism, effectively bridging the gap between prevention and active intervention. By repositioning students from passive subjects of discipline to active agents in conflict resolution, this framework fosters a more resilient and communicative student body.

The proposed model provides a structured, pragmatic approach toward establishing a secure and sustainable institutional climate. It is designed to enhance emotional well-being, mitigate aggressive behavioral patterns, and internalize core values of dialogue, empathy, and tolerance. Ultimately, the framework contributes to the cultivation of a generation equipped with the competencies required for non-violent dispute resolution—a fundamental pillar of school mental health promotion and proactive citizenship.

Recommendations for Future Research

Building upon the conceptual and empirical foundations of this study, future scholarly investigations should explore the following dimensions:

- **Comparative Institutional Analysis:** Assessing the longitudinal impact of peer mediation on the educational climate through comparative studies of schools with and without established mediation programs.
- **Competency Development:** Investigating the specific correlation between peer mediation participation and the enhancement of students' interpersonal communication and social intelligence.
- **Psychological Adjustment:** Examining the relationship between peer mediation and broader indicators of student mental health, including emotional regulation and internal stability.
- **The Academic-Institutional Nexus:** Analyzing the role of higher education institutions in the specialized preparation of student mediators to

bolster community engagement and psychosocial expertise.

- **Regional Case Studies:** Evaluating the localized implementation and socio-cultural adaptation of peer mediation frameworks in Eastern Algeria, with a specific focus on Guelma Province.
- **Sustainability and Longitudinal Impact:** Conducting long-term assessments to determine the durability of mediation programs and their enduring influence on institutional culture and student well-being.

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