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A Status Report on School Intercultural Mediation in Europe *

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REPORT SULLO STATUS DELLA MEDIAZIONE SCOLASTICA INTERCULTURALE IN EUROPA

ABSTRACT

This paper provides results of an investigation into the research literature of intercultural mediation and how intercultural mediation has been implemented in Europe. To this end, a systematic quantitative literature review was conducted, which identified 77 conceptual and empirical manuscripts for this study. The review showed that little agreement exists on precisely what intercultural mediation is and how it should be structured and supported as a profession. The empirical works identified in this study can be characterized as ad hoc in nature, capitalizing on circumstances. The result is a patchwork of concepts and studies that collectively do not provide sufficient support or foundation for the use of intercultural mediation. In order to move the field forward, we argue that an immediate next step should be the development of a well-thought, systematic research

* The authors collegially contributed to the preparation of the paper; however, A. Portera wrote the paragraphs 1 and 4; M. Milani is the author of paragraphs 2 and 3; M.S. Trevisan is the author of paragraphs 5 and 6.

program, grounded in the existing literature. A strong recommendation found in the literature is the use of evaluation to illustrate the value of intercultural mediation. Evaluation can provide data that could help those in authority make defensible decisions about policy support for intercultural mediation. Finally, considering the current situation in European schools, we propose that in the field of mediation the intercultural approach be implemented.

Keywords: Education; Evaluation studies; Intercultural education; Intercultural mediation; Systematic literature review.

1. INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the third millennium has seen people from different nations become more dependent on people whom they have never seen before. The spread of mass media, the advancement of information technology, geo-political changes affecting nations, and the establishment of new markets imply stronger ties between different geographical areas, greater mobility, and more interdependence.

This study explores how diversity and mediation affect the professional setting, the contents and goals of mediation, with particular focus in schools and educational settings. The paper provides the results of a systematic quantitative literature review of intercultural mediation and how it has been developed and implemented in Europe. Books and articles focused on intercultural mediation in Europe and published over the last 10 years in English, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and French were identified and retained for this study. Given the increasing diversity in European schools and educational institutions, we propose that intercultural mediation be implemented. We further argue that intercultural competences be obtained by professionals who research, evaluate, or otherwise work in educational settings.

2. SYSTEMATIC QUANTITATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to construct a rigorous theoretical knowledge base with respect to the research studies carried out in the context of intercultural mediation in Europe, a Systematic Quantitative Literature Review (SQLR) was used.

The work involved five phases (Briner & Denyer, 2012): (1) define the topic and the relative research questions, (2) identify key words to be used in the search string, (3) identify the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the material, (4) identify and search databases, and (5) analyze the selected material. The first step is crucial because the research questions guide «the review by defining which studies will be included, what the search strategy to identify the relevant primary studies should be, and which data need to be extracted from each study» (Briner & Denyer, 2012, p. 117). Three research questions were identified: What disciplines analyze more deeply the theme of (inter)cultural mediation in Europe? What are the main fields of empirical research and the theoretical reflections on this topic? What methods are used in empirical research to collect data?

In order to enable the SQLR of titles, abstracts and keywords, a search string of keywords was developed: intercultural mediation, cultural mediation, cross-cultural mediation, language mediation, linguistic mediation, language facilitation, intercultural facilitators, cross-cultural negotiation, intercultural consultation.

To allow the material to be selected and analyzed in accordance with the aims of this paper and with the defined research questions, inclusion and exclusion criteria were identified for the systematic review. The search focused on books and articles published in peer-reviewed journals in English, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and French in the last decade that explored intercultural mediation in Europe. Studies prior to 2011 or conducted outside Europe were excluded. Journal articles were identified using the Scopus, ERIC and Web of Science databases. Books and monographs were consulted by manually searching the Internet and Google Scholar, using keywords, or by conducting a specific search for authors who are most frequently mentioned in the collected works.

Texts and articles were analyzed by first reading the abstract to understand whether the contribution could be regarded as eligible on the basis of the selected inclusion criteria. Whenever reading of the abstract was insufficient to determine inclusion, the entire contribution was read. In the end, 77 contributions were retained and placed in a summary table (*Tab. 1*). Each table entry specifies the author(s), title, journal or publisher, database used to collect the data, year, type of research or study, and the subject area and the specific topic.

Table 1. – Contributions retained.

#	AUTHOR	ARTICLE/BOOK TITLE	SOURCE	SEARCH ENGINE	YEAR	TYPE OF STUDY	DISCIPLINE AREA AND RESEARCH CONTEXT
1	Adams H., Alonso Rodríguez P.	The linguistic and interpreting needs of security forces in Gran Canaria: a preliminary study	Revista de LLengua i Dret / Journal of Language and Law	Web of Science	2019	Quantitative	Translation Studies (Legal Issues)
2	Agoston M.	Forms of cultural mediation in the translation studies discourse	Revista Transilvania	Scopus	2019	Conceptual Article	Translation and Comparative Studies
3	Alcaraz Quevedo <i>et al.</i>	Atención a mujeres inmigrantes en un programa de mediación intercultural en salud	Revista Española de Salud Pública	Scopus	2014	Mixed Methods	Medical Science (Healthcare)
4	Akbari A., Ahmadi Darani P.	The status of intercultural mediation in translation: Is it an absolute licence?	Topics in Linguistics	Scopus	2017	Conceptual Article	Translation Studies
5	Arvanitis E., Kameas A.	Intercultural Mediation in Europe. Narratives of Professional Transformation	Common Ground	Manual Search	2014	Conceptual	Varied domains
6	Balkan O.	Between Civil Society and the State: Bureaucratic Competence and Cultural Mediation among Muslim Undertakers in Berlin	Journal of Intercultural Studies	Scopus	2016	Qualitative	Ethnography (Private Services)
7	Baraldi C.	An Intercultural Perspective on Interpreting as Mediation	Lingue Culture Mediazioni / Languages Cultures Mediation	Web of Science	2014	Conceptual Article	Language Studies and Translation Studies (Healthcare)
8	Baraldi C.	Interpreting as mediation of migrants' agency and institutional support. A case analysis	Journal of Pragmatics	Scopus	2018	Qualitative	Translation Studies (Social Work)
9	Baraldi C., Rossi E.	Promotion of participation and mediation in multicultural classrooms	Irish Educational Studies	ERIC	2011	Mixed Methods	Communication Studies (School)

#	AUTHOR	ARTICLE/BOOK TITLE	SOURCE	SEARCH ENGINE	YEAR	TYPE OF STUDY	DISCIPLINE AREA AND RESEARCH CONTEXT
10	Bortignon M.	En el umbral sensible entre culturas: Lectura, mediación y sensaciones en Jaime Huenún y Luciano Cecchinel	Revue Romane	Scopus	2018	Conceptual Article	Literature
11	Brownlie S.	Using cultural categories for opposition and brokering in conflict mediation	Language and Intercultural Communication	Scopus	2018	Qualitative	Intercultural Communication Studies (Family and School)
12	Busch D.	Does conflict mediation research keep track with cultural theory? A theory-based qualitative content analysis on concepts of culture in conflict management research	European Journal of Applied Linguistics	Manual Search	2016	Qualitative	Conflict Management Research
13	Catarci M., Fiorucci M.	Intercultural Education in the European Context. Theories, Experiences, Challenges	Routledge	Manual Search	2015	Conceptual	Education
14	Čebroň U.L. <i>et al.</i>	Evaluation of the Implementation of Intercultural Mediation in Preventive Healthcare Programmes in Slovenia	Public Health Panorama	Manual Search	2017	Quantitative	Medical Science (Healthcare)
15	Cestaro M.	Mediazione interculturale	Studium Educationis	Manual Search	2014	Conceptual Article	Education
16	Chouliaraki L., Orgad S.	Proper distance: Mediation, ethics, otherness	International Journal of Cultural Studies	Manual Search	2011	Conceptual Article	Ethics
17	Consorti P.	Conflitti, mediazione e diritto interculturale	Pisa University Press	Manual Search	2014	Conceptual Article	Juridical Field
18	Coutinho E. <i>et al.</i>	The Informal Intercultural Mediator nurse in Obstetrics Care	Computer Supported Qualitative Research (Springer)	Scopus	2016	Qualitative	Medical Science (Healthcare)

#	AUTHOR	ARTICLE/BOOK TITLE	SOURCE	SEARCH ENGINE	YEAR	TYPE OF STUDY	DISCIPLINE AREA AND RESEARCH CONTEXT
19	Coyer G.	Médiation interculturelle: Une mutuelle interprétation	Evolution Psychiatrique	Scopus	2014	Conceptual Article	Psychiatry
20	Daniels H.	Mediation: An exposition of the socio-cultural gaze	History of the Human Sciences	Manual Search	2015	Conceptual Article	Education
21	Dasli M.	Reviving the 'moments': From cultural awareness and cross-cultural mediation to critical intercultural language pedagogy	Pedagogy Culture and Society	ERIC	2011	Conceptual Article	Language Studies
22	Davitti E.	Dialogue interpreting as intercultural mediation: Interpreters' use of upgrading moves in parent-teacher meetings	Interpreting	Scopus	2013	Qualitative	Translation Studies (School)
23	Espinosa Zárate Z.	El cultivo de la creatividad para el diálogo intercultural	Revista Española de Pedagogía	Scopus	2019	Conceptual Article	Education
24	Esposito M., Vezzadini S.	La mediazione interculturale come intervento sociale	FrancoAngeli	Manual Search	2011	Conceptual Article	Varied domains
25	Farini F.	Interpreting and Intercultural Mediation in Italian Healthcare Settings	Journal of Intercultural Communication	Scopus	2013	Qualitative	Language Studies and Translation Studies (Healthcare)
26	Filmer D., Federici F.M.	Mediating migration crises. Sicily and the languages of despair	European Journal of Language Policy	Scopus	2018	Qualitative	Language Studies (Social Work)
27	Fiorucci M.	Educatori e mediatori culturali: elementi per la formazione interculturale degli educatori	Pedagogia Oggi	Manual Search	2017	Conceptual Article	Education

#	AUTHOR	ARTICLE/BOOK TITLE	SOURCE	SEARCH ENGINE	YEAR	TYPE OF STUDY	DISCIPLINE AREA AND RESEARCH CONTEXT
28	García Viudez B. <i>et al.</i>	Metodología eclética y mediación intercultural en la enseñanza de español a sinohablentes de nivel inicial	Studia Romanica Posnaniensia	Scopus	2016	Quantitative	Language Studies (School)
29	Gavioli L., Baraldi C.	Interpreter-mediated interaction in healthcare and legal settings	Interpreting	Scopus	2011	Qualitative	Translation Studies (Healthcare and Law)
30	Genova A., Barberis E.	Social workers and intercultural mediators: challenges for collaboration and intercultural awareness	European Journal of Social Work	Scopus	2018	Conceptual Article	Social Work
31	Guidère M.	La médiation humanitaire multilingue	Revue Française de Linguistique Appliquée	Manual Search	2011	Conceptual Article	Linguistic and Translation Studies (Humanitarian Aid)
32	Guido M.G.	Variazioni e negoziazioni di significato attraverso l'inglese 'lingua franca' in contesti migratori	Lingue e Linguaggi	Manual Search	2015	Qualitative	Language and Translation Studies
33	Guo Z.	Young Children as Intercultural Mediators. Mandarin-speaking Chinese Families in Britain	Multilingual Matters	Web of Science	2014	Qualitative	Language Studies (Family)
34	Gutiérrez L., Tejero González J.M.	Interculturalidad y mediación cultural en el ámbito sanitario. Descripción de la implementación de un programa de mediación intercultural en el Servicio de Salud de Castilla-La Mancha	Panace@	Scopus	2017	Conceptual Article	Medical Science (Healthcare)

#	AUTHOR	ARTICLE/BOOK TITLE	SOURCE	SEARCH ENGINE	YEAR	TYPE OF STUDY	DISCIPLINE AREA AND RESEARCH CONTEXT
35	Ilie L. <i>et al.</i>	Actuación del intérprete-mediador en el ámbito sanitario en situaciones comunicativas problemáticas y conflictos culturales: análisis y comparación entre intérpretes con y sin formación en diferentes pares de lenguas (español > árabe, francés, inglés y rumano)	Panace@	Scopus	2014	Mixed Methods	Translation Studies (Healthcare)
36	Lazzarini G., Stobbione T.	Mediare tra culture. Il ruolo del mediatore interculturale tra inclusione sociale e promozione delle diversità	FrancoAngeli	Manual Search	2017	Qualitative	Sociology (Healthcare)
37	León-Pinilla R. <i>et al.</i>	La interpretación en el contexto de los refugiados: valoración por los agentes implicados	Sendebarr	Scopus	2016	Mixed Methods	Translation Studies (Social Work)
38	Lleó Guerrero C., Torroba Hernán B.	Interpretación médica y mediación intercultural: dificultades y recursos en el campo de la fecundación in vitro	Panace@	Scopus	2014	Conceptual Article	Translation Studies (Healthcare)
39	Katan D.	In defence of the cultural other: Foreignisation or mindful essentialism?	Springer	Scopus	2019	Conceptual Chapter	Translation Studies
40	Katan D.	Translation at the cross-roads: Time for the transcreational turn?	Perspectives	Scopus	2016	Conceptual Article	Translation Studies
41	Kelly M. <i>et al.</i>	The Palgrave Handbook of Languages and Conflict	Springer	Manual Search	2019	Conceptual Article	Language Studies (Various Topics)

#	AUTHOR	ARTICLE/BOOK TITLE	SOURCE	SEARCH ENGINE	YEAR	TYPE OF STUDY	DISCIPLINE AREA AND RESEARCH CONTEXT
42	Kyuchukov H.	Roma mediators in Europe: a new Council of Europe programme	Intercultural Education	ERIC	2012	Conceptual Article	Education
43	Leone P.	Co-costruzione di competenze linguistiche e culturali attraverso la riflessione e la discussione	inTRAlinea	Scopus	2018	Conceptual Article	Language Studies (School)
44	Makin D.A.	Popular punitivism and cultural mediation: The case of Spain	International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice	Manual Search	2013	Conceptual Article	Law (Criminal Justice System)
45	Margutti P.	Agire in lingue diverse. Riflessioni sul binomio 'forma e azione' nelle pratiche comparative	inTRAlinea Special Issue: Translation and Interpreting for Language Learners (TAIL)	Scopus	2018	Conceptual Article	Language Studies
46	Marques J.C. <i>et al.</i>	Migration and Integration Processes in Portugal: The Role of Intercultural Mediation	Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences	Scopus	2019	Conceptual Article	Sociology (Welfare System)
47	Márquez M.J. <i>et al.</i>	La voz de Tsuru. Un relato biográfico-narrativo sobre mediación intercultural y su sentido resiliente en el ámbito educativo	Educar	Scopus	2018	Qualitative	Education (School)
48	McConachy T., Liddicoat A.	Meta-pragmatic Awareness and Intercultural Competence: the Role of Reflection and Interpretation in Intercultural Mediation	Intercultural Competence: Alternative Approaches for Today's Education (Palgrave Macmillan Ltd.)	Scopus	2016	Conceptual Chapter	Language Studies (School)
49	Mecea M.	Training in intercultural mediation in a multicultural university: cocontributions for fostering international stability	AI & Society	Scopus	2015	Conceptual Article	Education (University)

#	AUTHOR	ARTICLE/BOOK TITLE	SOURCE	SEARCH ENGINE	YEAR	TYPE OF STUDY	DISCIPLINE AREA AND RESEARCH CONTEXT
50	Meylaerts R. <i>et al.</i>	Cultural Mediation in Europe, 1800-1950	Leuven University Press	Scopus	2018	Conceptual Article	Varied domains (translation studies, literature, music, visual arts, and design)
51	Mladovsky P. <i>et al.</i>	Responding to diversity: An exploratory study of migrant health policies in Europe	Health Policy	Manual Search	2012	Qualitative	Medical Science (Healthcare)
52	Montalt-Resurrecció V., Shuttleworth M.	Research in translation and knowledge mediation in medical and helathcare settings	Linguistica Antverpiensia	Manual Search	2012	Conceptual Article	Translation Studies (Healthcare)
53	Mora Castro A.	Génesis y resolución de conflictos relacionados con la instalación de mezquitas y oratorios: el caso del oratorio de Singuerlín (Santa Coloma de Gramenet)	Migraciones	Scopus	2017	Qualitative	Education (Public Services)
54	Pena Díaz C.	Public Service Interpreting and Translation (PSIT) as a Social Integration Tool	New Voices in Translation Studies	Scopus	2016	Quantitative	Translation Studies (Healthcare)
55	Pena Díaz C. <i>et al.</i>	Las funciones del mediador intercultural en el ámbito sanitario: habilidades y conocimientos	Tonos Digital	Scopus	2014	Conceptual Article	Communication Studies (Healthcare)
56	Petrova O.V.	Cultural, Communicative and Relevance Factors as the Bases for Decision Making in Translation	Journal of Siberian Federal University	Scopus	2018	Conceptual Article	Translation Studies
57	Raga Gimeno F.	Etnopsiquiatría como mediación intercultural	Panace@	Scopus	2014	Conceptual Article	Ethnopsychiatry (Psychiatric Services)

#	AUTHOR	ARTICLE/BOOK TITLE	SOURCE	SEARCH ENGINE	YEAR	TYPE OF STUDY	DISCIPLINE AREA AND RESEARCH CONTEXT
58	Ramírez Guetón P.M. <i>et al.</i>	Linguistic mediation: An effective way for plurilingual teaching	Revista Electronica de Veterinaria	Scopus	2018	Mixed Methods	Language Studies (School)
59	Ribas M.A., Vargas-Urpi M.	Strategies in public service interpreting. A roleplay study of Chinese-Spanish/Catalan interactions	Interpreting	Scopus	2017	Qualitative	Translation Studies (Welfare System)
60	Rubio L., Nogués M.	Interpretació o mediació intercultural? El cas dels usuaris magribins dels serveis públics de salut	Quaderns. Revista de Traducció	Scopus	2017	Qualitative	Translation Studies (Healthcare)
61	Rudvin M., Pesare F.	Interpreting and Language Mediation for Victims of Human Trafficking: The Case of CIE, Detention Centres for undocumented migrants in Bologna, Italy	Trans. Revista de Traductologia	Scopus	2015	Qualitative	Language Studies (Criminal Justice System)
62	Ruiz Mezcuca A., Soria López E.	La interpretación social y la mediación intercultural en el ámbito escolar. Un estudio exploratorio sobre las necesidades de interpretación en la ciudad de Córdoba	Sendebarr	Scopus	2016	Mixed Methods	Translation Studies (School)
63	Salmeri C.	The translator as an Intercultural Mediator. Translation and Cultural Influences	Lebende Sprachen	Scopus	2014	Conceptual Article	Translation Studies
64	Sani S.	The Profession and the Roles of the Intercultural Mediator in Italy	Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences	Manual Search	2015	Conceptual Article	Social Sciences School and Healthcare

#	AUTHOR	ARTICLE/BOOK TITLE	SOURCE	SEARCH ENGINE	YEAR	TYPE OF STUDY	DISCIPLINE AREA AND RESEARCH CONTEXT
65	Seller E.P.	Mediation as a public service to local government in contemporary relational societies	Revista Brasileira de Gestao e Desenvolvimento Regional	Scopus	2014	Conceptual Article	Language Studies (Welfare System)
66	Sturm G. <i>et al.</i>	Adapting services to the needs of children and families with complex migration experiences: The toulouse University Hospital's intercultural consultation	Transcultural Psychiatry	Scopus	2017	Qualitative	Psychology (Healthcare)
67	Tarozzi M.	Translating and Doing Grounded Theory Methodology. Intercultural Mediation as an Analytic Resource	Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research	Manual Search	2013	Qualitative	Translation Studies
68	Trevisan M., Carey J.C.	Evaluating intercultural programs and interventions	Intercultural mediation, counselling and psychotherapy in Europe	Manual Search	2020	Conceptual Article	Varied domains (Education, mental health, public health and social welfare)
69	Turk M., Ungerleider J.	Experiential Activities in Mediation-Based Training: Cyprus, 1997-2013	Conflict Resolution Quarterly	Scopus	2017	Qualitative	Conflict Management
70	Valero-Garcés C.	Comunicación con población extranjera en el ámbito sanitario. Iniciación a una base de datos sobre artículos de investigación	Panace@	Scopus	2013	Conceptual Article	Communication Studies (Healthcare)
71	Vargas-Urpi M.	Coping with Nonverbal Communication in Public Service Interpreting with Chinese Immigrants	Journal of Intercultural Communication Research	Scopus	2013	Qualitative	Communication Studies (Welfare System)

#	AUTHOR	ARTICLE/BOOK TITLE	SOURCE	SEARCH ENGINE	YEAR	TYPE OF STUDY	DISCIPLINE AREA AND RESEARCH CONTEXT
72	Vargas-Urpi M.	Empoderamiento or asimilación? estudio de dos casos de comunicación mediada en el ámbito educativo Catalán	TRANS. Revista de Traductología	Scopus	2017	Qualitative	Translation Studies (School)
73	Vargas-Urpi M., Arumí Ribas	Estrategias de interpretación en los servicios públicos en el ámbito educativo: estudio de caso en la cominación chino-catalán	inTRAlinea. Online Translation Journal	Scopus	2014	Qualitative	Translation Studies (School)
74	Vargas-Urpi M.	Official bilingualism meets <i>de facto</i> multilingualism: public service interpreting for the Chinese in Catalonia	International Journal of the Sociology of Language	Scopus	2018	Qualitative	Translation Studies (Welfare System)
75	Vargas-Urpi M.	Public Service interpreting for Chinese immigrants in Catalonia: a study based on interpreters', coordinators' and users' views	Language and International Communication	Scopus	2014	Mixed Methods	Translation Studies (Welfare System)
76	Vargas-Urpi M.	Sight translation in public service interpreting: a dyadic or triadic exchange?	The interpreter and Translator trainer	Web of Science	2019	Mixed Methods	Translation Studies (Welfare System)
77	Weissman D.	La médiation linguistique à l'université: propositions pour un changement d'approche	Ela. Études de Linguistique Appliquée	Manual Search	2012	Conceptual Article	Translation Studies (University)

3. DATA ANALYSIS

While SQLR does have weaknesses and limitations such as language, date restrictions, as well as accessibility or availability (Tight, 2019), its major strength is that it attempts to establish in a methodical way of accounting for what research exists. SQLR also establishes what research has not been done and therefore, what research could be given priority in the future. As for the first question, «What disciplines analyze more deeply the theme of (inter)cultural mediation in Europe?», our findings suggest that various scholars have developed their own concepts of mediation and have done so, unconnected to previous ideas in the literature. In addition to this fragmentation, there is little agreement on the use of the terms that refer to intercultural mediation. In particular, of the 77 journal articles and books included in this review, the majority focused on translation studies (35.5%), closely followed by linguistic studies (20%). In fact, whereas much of the discussion focused on how intercultural/cultural mediation can open communication channels and «translate» cultural diversity to reflect the full range of meanings that a language bears, less attention was given to mediation as a multi-faceted concept with its own specific niche within educational practice. This becomes more evident when examining the main topics of the empirical research and theoretical reflections. These topics are primarily concerned with the removal of linguistic obstacles that prevent and hamper communication between services/institutions and foreign beneficiaries, in order to identify opportunities and positive solutions to prevent and overcome potential conflicts (34 contributions out of 77, equal to 44.5%). These topics are essential in order to provide hospitality, orientation and support to people who are still unable to read and understand the codes of the new society they would like to integrate into. This, however, is merely one «ingredient» of mediation, which appears more akin to an active and dynamic process capable of generating a different relational dimension in which each participant, starting from different points of view, can develop new perspectives and potential solutions to the problem that have yet to be contemplated.

The public sector emerges as the one that received the most attention, with just over half of the contributions (48 out of 77) indicating the need of improving the quality and adequacy of the services offered, especially when it comes to identifying the implicit and explicit needs of the immigrant beneficiaries. More specifically, the sectors revealing the most urgent need for mediation between different cultures are: educational institutions (particularly the university and secondary school sectors); judicial institutions (detention facilities, courts); social work; and healthcare (hospitals

and social services). In fact, of the 48 contributions pertaining to studies and research conducted in the public field, 19 concerned health services, which are faced with a two-fold problem: the institutional response to new needs/necessities expressed by the beneficiaries, but also the individual response by the single healthcare operators. In this sense, several articles drew attention to the importance of understanding meanings in the representation of health, illness and healthcare activities, since the discomfort suffered by the client or patient often derives from situations characterized by a strong cultural connotation (e.g.: rituals, beliefs concerning food, personal hygiene, etc.). One key issue in all studies identified in this specific context concerns physical and emotionally complex issues of considerable importance, such as sexuality and/or maternity. These issues bring healthcare operators face-to-face with demands for help based on culturally different concepts of life, well-being, care and physical contact that are often not shared by the Western hospital care system. Across the articles and books reviewed, evaluation studies on (inter)cultural mediation were only addressed in three works (Mladovsky *et al.*, 2012; Čebroň *et al.*, 2017; Trevisan & Carey, 2020) with attention to issues related to the importance of conducting culturally responsive evaluation of interventions in order to improve programs, services and, ultimately, the lives of those receiving services. With regard to the final research question, «What methods are used in empirical research to collect data?», notably 24 contributions (31%) used qualitative research approaches while 5 (6.5%) used quantitative methodologies. 40 documents (52%) were categorized as conceptual, describing (inter)cultural mediation or strategies to improve it, but not empirically examining such interventions. Decidedly less consistent (used in 8 contributions, equal to 10.5%), were the mixed-method approaches in the review. The irony is that there is broad recognition for the value of using a multi-faceted and differentiated methodological approach to researching the social context, an approach that honors and provides information from different perspectives (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

4. MOVING THE FIELD FORWARD

A finding from the SQLR, is that in Europe mediation is associated with translation and linguistic understanding. Intercultural mediation is implemented most frequently in the healthcare sector, largely associated with communication channels to translate cultural diversity. In educational

institutions, the (inter)cultural mediation is poorly implemented with the frequent aim of addressing potentially emotionally complicated issues such as sexuality. Therefore, in European schools and educational institutions there is a need to *invest in authentic intercultural mediation*, both on a practical, professional level, and when conducting research of intercultural mediation within education. Regarding the difference between multicultural and intercultural approaches, as detailed in other publications (Portera & Grant, 2017; Portera & Milani, 2019), the term *multicultural* refers to a sort of peaceful coexistence of cultures. Based on the principle of cultural relativism, the multicultural approach is related to the concepts of preserving the uniqueness of single cultures. Therefore, the main interventional aim of multicultural mediation is the acknowledgment of and respect for cultural diversity (which is important but not sufficient in education or mediation fields, where changes are necessary). On the other hand, *intercultural education* but since the Second World War constitutes of a real Copernican revolution. First, concepts such as identity and culture are no longer approached rigidly, but dynamically, not limited by national borders, they are multiplex and negotiated. Secondly, the intercultural approach considers otherness and emigration not just as risk factors, instead as *opportunities* for enrichment. In mediation the intercultural approach is highly indicated, because it overcomes the peacefully coexistence *side by side* (as in a condominium), and implies real encounter, interaction and conflict management. At the *practical-operative, methodological and vocational level* of mediation, it is necessary for operators to acquire essential *intercultural competences* (IC's).

A model of IC was developed based on research conducted by Portera and Milani (2019). First, in the area of the *Self*, there are some *Attitudes* embedded, including openness, sensitivity, decentralization, curiosity, humility, flexibility, respect, responsibility, critical thinking, acceptance, empathy and congruence. Second, in the area of *Knowledge*, the most important IC's are: awareness of the cultural self, knowledge of one's own culture and the culture of others, verbal-linguistic, nonverbal and paraverbal knowledge, and interdisciplinary knowledge. Finally, the area of *Skills* includes linguistic (multiple languages) and communicative proficiency; observation, analysis, and interpretation of subjective and empirical reality; and thereby establishing positive social relationships. In summary, mediators need to develop IC's related to acceptance, empathy, congruence, awareness, and the ability to handle stereotypes and prejudice. More studies on intercultural mediation are crucial. This research, grounded in intercultural education theory, should analyze both barriers and limitations; and effective forms of intervention, methods, practices,

settings, etc. Further, the research methods need to be suitable for considering all factors, dynamics, and mechanisms related to the interactions between mediators and clients; and also those related with the reality of the clients, within the political, juridical, social and economic contexts. Last, but not least, more study on evaluation of praxis and vocational models of intercultural mediation are needed.

5. EVALUATION AS A CRITICAL NEXT STEP

In Canada, Bowen (2001) provided the first evidence of health care disparities among immigrants. The report cited language barriers and lack of cultural competence among health care providers as key factors that contribute to health care disparities among immigrants. Smedley, Stith, and Nelson (2003) also provided evidence for health care disparities among ethnic minorities in the United States. Both reports recommended the development of policies and programmatic mechanisms that could mitigate this situation, such as the requirement for obtaining cultural competence among health care providers. In addition, both reports recommended the systematic and ongoing evaluation of these efforts. One reason for this recommendation is that evaluation provides a form of accountability and transparency to tax payers for the implementation of intercultural mediation programs and interventions funded with tax revenue. Further, important outcomes can be documented in the evaluation to show the impacts that result from the use of intercultural mediation. Evaluation will reveal for example, whether or not health care disparities are reduced through use of intercultural mediation. Another reason for use of evaluation is to provide information to program staff concerning what is working well and what aspects of intercultural mediation services need improvement. Program staff can then use this information to make important changes to improve programs and services. In this review of the literature, the policy study by Mladovsky, Rechel, Ingleby, and McKee (2012) recommended evaluating health care services provided to immigrants throughout Europe as a means to support existing country policies that require the provision of intercultural mediated health care service for immigrants or the development of such policies. In this SQLR, only two reports of evaluation of intercultural mediation for health care of immigrants could be found. Čebren, Pistotnik, Jazbinšek, and Farkaš-Lainščak (2017) conducted the first documented evaluation of intercultural mediation in Slovenia. Health care prevention information was provided to Albanian women residing in

Slovenia, through two different workshops. All information was provided in the Albanian language. A questionnaire was administered to workshop participants. Results show that participants valued the information provided and all stated that receiving the information in Albanian provided greater understanding and meaningfulness, than might otherwise be the case. Results indicate that the use of an intercultural mediator shows promise as an effective health care strategy for serving Albanian immigrants in Slovenia. It is further possible that this strategy could be successfully implemented for other immigrant populations in other sectors, such as education and social service sectors, and in other countries. Evaluation as an enterprise is a worldwide phenomenon. Many developed and developing countries have organized evaluation societies and evaluation is being used to support policy development and implementation by governments throughout the world (Donaldson, 2015). The United Nations (2016) has provided evaluation norms and standards for the evaluation of all United Nations sponsored projects, projects that support the attainment of worldwide sustainable development goals. The American Evaluation Association (AEA) provides a strong statement about the expectation for evaluators conducting evaluation with cultural competence (AEA, 2011). The AEA document argues that no evaluation is culture free and that to be responsive, evaluators must recognize and acknowledge the power differential that often exists between the dominant society and the programs and services that are provided to support marginalized groups within the said society, such as immigrants. Trevisan and Carey (2020) provide an evaluation framework that could be used to organize and implement evaluation of intercultural programs and interventions. The framework has five elements. The first one is the development of a logic model that shows how the resources and elements of a program go together to generate outcomes. Second, evaluation questions are developed to focus the evaluation. Third, an evaluation design is developed that provides answers to the evaluation questions. Fourth, once data is collected, data analysis is performed and findings are generated. Fifth, evaluation reporting and use of the evaluation is conducted. Key elements of this framework include stakeholder involvement in all aspects of the evaluation. Further, care must be exercised to ensure that language is not an issue in any aspect of the evaluation. Thus, translating all aspects of the evaluation into the language for the cultural group being served is central to ensuring a culturally responsive evaluation. And, use of evaluation methods that are viewed with validity by the cultural groups is key to successful evaluation in this context. In sum, the evaluation discipline and profession have and continues to embrace culture as a key aspect of evaluation.

6. DISCUSSION AND FINAL REMARKS

This literature review shows the interest intercultural mediation is afforded, particularly in Europe where immigration continues at a strong pace and thus, the need to support immigrants is great. The literature also shows that broad agreement on precisely what intercultural mediation is and how it should be structured and supported as a profession remains elusive. With the majority of the studies being conceptual articles, findings from this literature review suggest that there continues to be competition for ideas about intercultural mediation. Many of these conceptual articles do not build on previously articulated ideas or even acknowledge of previously published works. In addition, many quantitative studies were conducted with data that is more easily available, while qualitative studies tend to address the perceptions and feelings of those acting as intercultural mediators. While important contributions to be sure, the studies tend to be more ad hoc in nature, and capitalize on circumstances. As it stands, it is difficult to summarize the findings from the empirical studies, particularly in a way that could move the field forward. What the field needs now is the development of a systematic, well-structured research program that provides a solid foundation for understanding the role and benefits of intercultural mediation. Getting the support of government officials is also an important next step in the evolution of intercultural mediation and a solid research foundation would help this effort. Translating works from a solid research program takes a good deal of thought and foresight about how best to reach people in government. Tailoring this translation within each country will likely be a critical aspect of this work. A key mechanism to reach policy makers and decision makers in any country with the potential value of intercultural mediation is the use of evaluation. When thoughtfully done, evaluation can provide solid data and information that could help those in authority make defensible decisions about policy and support for intercultural mediation. A structured approach to developing a research base to inform intercultural mediation as a strategy and profession is a critical next step.

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RIASSUNTO

Il presente contributo si focalizza sui risultati di un'indagine della letteratura rispetto alla mediazione interculturale e su come essa è stata implementata in Europa. A tal fine, è stata realizzata una revisione sistematica quantitativa della letteratura attraverso l'identificazione di 77 contributi sia teorici che empirici. Tale revisione ha messo in luce come manchi una larga condivisione su cosa sia di preciso la mediazione interculturale, così come rimane vaga la modalità mediante la quale dovrebbe essere strutturata e supportata la professione del mediatore interculturale. Infatti, gli studi tendono a essere realizzati ad hoc e capitalizzati occasionalmente. Il risultato è un patchwork di concetti e studi che non forniscono un sufficiente supporto o fondamento per l'esercizio della mediazione interculturale. Ciò di cui il settore avrebbe necessità è lo sviluppo di un programma di ricerca sistematico e ponderato, nonché radicato sulla letteratura esistente. Gli autori ritengono che un mezzo valido per raggiungere e informare le autorità decisionali sul potenziale della mediazione interculturale sia l'uso della valutazione, dal momento che potrebbe fornire valide indicazioni sulle strategie da adottare. Infine, tenendo conto della situazione attuale nelle scuole europee, gli autori ritengono che l'approccio interculturale, nel campo della mediazione, debba essere preso in considerazione.

Parole chiave: Educazione; Educazione interculturale; Mediazione interculturale; Revisione sistematica della letteratura; Studi di valutazione.

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