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Intra-University Mediation on the Road to the Sustainable Development Goals: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

Mediation as a formula for resolving conflicts is becoming increasingly relevant internationally as a mechanism for a peaceful conflict resolution. In Europe, many countries are enacting legal regulations, and European directives promote the use of mediation to resolve disputes between individuals, companies, institutions, etc.

Mediation has a wide range of possibilities in terms of fields of action: family, judicial, school, community, etc. One of those becoming increasingly relevant is intra-university mediation, as a mechanism for resolving conflicts between the people/agents involved, among the students themselves and their peers. Moreover, mediation is related to education and the culture of peace, which are critical aspects of a more autonomous and independent society that can solve conflicts.

Bearing in mind the possibilities provided by mediation and as a horizon for intra-university mediation, we propose a systematic review that pivots on three axes: a) conflict and mediation as a means to resolve dissent; b) intra-university mediation, experiences, and possibilities; c) intra-university mediation and its relationship with the Sustainable Development Goals.

To do so, a systematic review has been carried out in scientific databases using a qualitative methodologyin order to identify the role of mediation in the university environment and the benefits that the university community and society can obtain. Among the main findings is the evidence that educational mediation at the university level is viable and is widely developed internationally.

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1. Introduction

The present research work is the result of the Eramus+ LIMEdiat – Licence Européenne en Médiation pour l'Inclusion Sociale (European Degree in Mediation for Social Inclusion) project, involving: the University of Minho (Portugal), the University of Murcia (Spain), Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers (CNAM) (France) and the University degli Studi di Cagliari (Italy).

Mediation in the educational context can accompany any student from school to university. In a transcendental sense, it could also be said that "mediation" is a historical sociological constant. It is a crucial element of civilization, as evidenced in the French historian Georges Dumézil's studies, specialized in Comparative Mythology, on the trifunctional architecture of societies from India to the confines of Europe (Dumézil, 2002). It is not, therefore, an end in itself. However, we speak of mediation as a structuring sociological category or mediation in the broad sense, i.e., "a hermeneutic principle that can be usefully applied to an infinite number of domains" (Simmel, 1981: 164).

Ibn Jaldun (2008). Six (1997) considers that there are four types of mediation:
1. "Creative mediation" that aims to foster new links between individuals or groups.
2. "Renewing mediation," which reactivates relationships in conflict.
3. "Preventive mediation" to avoid the explosion of conflict; and
4. "Curative mediation" to help the parties to find a solution.

Among the entities that have favored its dissemination is the Mediation Forum, which held its first congress in Havana (Cuba, 1998); Sardinia (Italy, 2000), Buenos Aires (Argentina, 2003); Switzerland (2005), and a long etcetera, bringing together scholars and professionals who carry out practices for a global culture of peace (Castanedo, 2020: 96).

Sustainable Development Goal (herein SDGs) number 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions in the (United Nations, 2015) focuses on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building accountable and effective institutions at all levels. This goal should be seen as transversal to all the proposed goals, as its existence promotes the rest of the goals through its ten targets. These goals relate to the four approaches proposed by Baruch and Folger in 1996: stories of satisfaction, social justice, oppression and transformation.

The culture of peace is defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (herein, UNESCO) as a set of values, attitudes, traditions, behaviors and lifestyles based primarily on respect for life, an end to violence and the promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation; total respect for and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms; commitment to the peaceful settlement of conflicts and respect for and promotion of equal rights and opportunities for women and men. The aformentioned finds in mediation an effective tool for the achievement of this laudable goal. The culture of peace proposed by the UN is based on education, sustainable economic and social development, democratic participation, understanding and tolerance. In this sense, the new Spanish law 3/22, in Article 5, contemplates alternative means of resolving conflicts of coexistence, indicating that: "Without prejudice to the development that the Autonomous Communities may carry out within the scope of their competencies, the universities will develop in their Norms of Coexistence alternative means of resolving conflicts of coexistence based on mediation, be applied before and during the disciplinary procedure." This text opens up the use of alternative means of dispute resolution (herein, ADR) in a positive way, including mediation, intending to promote a peaceful, inclusive and diverse society where full respect for and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms prevails.

Mediation and Conflict: two inseparable and complementary phenomena

Mediation is understood as an ethical communication process based on the participants' responsibility and autonomy. There have always been experiences of "mediation," although it has not always been mediated or theorized about. It is precisely in this sense that we can speak of an "implicit or unspoken mediation theory" that runs through the history of conflict resolution.

We are at a time when it has been shown that punishment and other options are not the best way to resolve existing conflicts. Conflict in the University is a complex reality that sometimes goes

beyond the teaching authorities to resolve, despite existing legislation. This legislation, which is designed to sanction or discipline conflictive behavior, does not originate in the behavior of the student body but rather in the poor functioning of the University itself and the absence of positive conflict management strategies. The lack of respect for the diversity of cultures and people in the university community is another source of conflicts that mediation can manage positively. In the educational institution, it can, within the framework of its socializing faculties and transfer to society, put an end to symbolic violence understood as: those "acts that harm the cultural integrity of an individual or collective actor, which have as their prototypical procedure discrimination, stigmatization, or the degradation of what is different for unfounded or arbitrary reasons" (Míguez, 2006: 10).

The conflict "ends in one of the usual ways -by victory and defeat, by reconciliation, by compromise – this structure is transformed into that of the state of peace; the central point communicates to the other energies the transformation that has occurred in it, passing from excitement to calm" (Simmel, 1926: 346). Baruch and Folger link mediation to the story of transformation that involves changing people, and thus society as a whole, to create change. This goal is concretized in transforming people from being dependent beings interested only in themselves (i.e., weak and selfish people) to being secure and self-confident individuals, willing to be sensitive towards others (strong and considerate people). The achievement of this transformation promotes the manifestation of the intrinsic good, at the highest level, in human beings (Baruch, Folger, 1996).

Conflicts in the university environment

Universities have unique characteristics that differentiate them from other settings where conflicts arise. The University is characterized by interdependence among its members, heterogeneity, scarce resources, and hierarchization (Barsky, 2002). In addition to the bureaucratic structure, "the vertical and horizontal relationships that overlap and change with different academic, organizational and power objectives are together a favourable field for the emergence of existing conflicts. In other words, conflicts in the University are inevitable" (Holton, Phillips, 1995: 79). They occur within and between the different strata that are part of its organization (Baldridge, 1971). The parties involved in the conflict are: students, lecturers, service managers, or administrators and can arise due to external factors (Etim, Okey, 2013; Adeyemi, Ademilu, 2012). Situations that may give rise to conflict include:

a. Between teachers, government officials, and students: 1. Complaints about examination dates and times. It is incompatible for a student to attend two exams of enrolled subjects on the same day and at the same time; 2. Discriminatory rules, capricious evaluations, awarding of courses or grants without objective criteria; 3. Teaching load over their recruitment; 4. Lack of transparency in the awarding of curricular internships; 5. Situations of social, cultural, religious, or sexual discrimination; and, 6. Situations of undervaluing or sexual harassment (Warters, 1995: 73).

b. Student-to-student conflict: Difficulties in teamwork, lack of coordination and respect for group work deliverables; Difficulties in living together in shared flats; Confrontations over ideological, religious, cultural, etc. issues (Gibson 1995: 27).

c. Conflict between teachers: Use of offices, distribution of resources, etcetera.; Situations of bullying or harassment at work; Violent communication; Discriminatory and abusive rules in allocating teaching or academic responsibilities.

d. Organisational conflicts, where interpersonal relationships are often intertwined with teaching tasks (Hearn, Anderson, 2002). These include: The department's structure, organization, and relationships (Gmelch, Carroll, 1991); Conflict between departments due to ideological differences between teachers; Scheduling of classes, allocation of positions, etcetera; Discriminatory allocation of resources or allocations.

Situations of harassment of students are exceptional cases that can be referred to the courts with the consequent administrative sanctions and psychological treatment (Knight, 1995), as well as the harassment of employees (Briefs, 1993).

Intra-university mediation and its connection with the Sustainable Development Goals.

In the year 2000, the United Nations Millennium Declaration was signed in New York, where 8 Goals were established to be achieved by 2015 to reduce world poverty. These 8 Goals were not achieved; years ago, the United Nations began working on the SDGs, whose leaders signed a

commitment to achieve them by 2030 (UN, 2015). We have gone from 8 to 17 goals that seek to improve the world, eradicate poverty, and protect our planet from its natural risks. The 17 SDGs are heterogeneous, referring to social, economic, political, ecosystemic, and community spaces. One of the most important is SDG 4: Quality Education, the backbone of a critical and constructive society towards our planet and society as a whole.

According to the United Nations, Goal 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable access to quality education. This goal promotes acquiring the knowledge, skills, and values needed to function well and contribute to society. The targets of this goal range from ensuring universal numeracy and basic literacy for youth, expanding the overall number of scholarships available to developing countries, and ensuring equal access to affordable, quality technical, vocational and tertiary education. Specifically, its target 4.7 is fully linked to the academic sphere as it seeks to ensure, from 2015 to 2030, "that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development" (UN, 2015). Thus, guaranteeing and improving coexistence and developing a culture of peace are the University's duty and responsibility within the SDGs' framework to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

This goal, the inspiring principles, and values it pursues are not only connected to mediation but also play a crucial role as a driver of social change. This is where the possibilities of education and the SDGs emerge, both in learning and in acquiring competencies related to knowing how to be and be. For UNESCO, education's commitment to the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda means "achieving social well-being, sustainable development, and good governance" (UNESCO, 2014: 2).

Nevertheless, another SDG is closely linked to mediation: Promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 16). Mediation seeks to resolve and mitigate the effects of conflict, making it a tool for social change, removing blockages from people or social agents, and facilitating autonomy in peaceful decision-making. Intra-university mediation presents this opportunity, that of transferring the possibility of resolving conflicts peacefully to society. This spirit should permeate disagreements in the academic sphere, as well as in the private sphere and, of course, with any social agent: company, neighbors, and Etc. Based on the information searches carried out, the following Table 1 shows the potential of mediation from the perspective of SDGs 4 and 16:

Table 1. Possibilities and challenges offered by intra-university mediation in the face of conflicts

SDGs	Target by 2030	Potential conflicts	Opportunities from the use of mediation
4	Ensure equal access for all men and women to quality technical, vocational and higher education, including university education	Difficulties of coexistence	Collaborative governance universities
4	Ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development, including through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development.	Discrimination and confrontation in the classroom on different grounds. Transgression of human rights (freedom, equality, etcetera.)	Collaborative governance in universities Implementation of mediation services and/or positive conflict management in universities Training in Appropriate Means of Dispute Resolution

SDGs	Target by 2030	Potential conflicts	Opportunities from the use of mediation
4	Build and adapt education facilities that are sensitive to the needs of children and persons with disabilities and gender differences, and that provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.	Exclusion of students on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, religion, culture, disability, etc.	Training in Appropriate Means of Dispute Resolution
16	Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates worldwide	Existence of violent communication in society	Coexistence programmes in universities
16	Promote the rule of law at national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	Lack of confidence in people's capacity and ability to respect rights	Promote mediation as an Appropriate Means of Dispute Resolution in universities
16	Ensuring inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels that responds to the needs of the community	Lack of a culture of dialogue in society	Training and awareness-raising of the university community through coexistence projects in universities

Source: Own elaboration

2. Methodology

A systematic review was carried out in scientific journal databases to answer the following questions. Has there been any research on the effectiveness of mediation in universities? Are there any previous experiences? Questions connected with the objective of determining the viability of intra-university educational mediation and its connection with the SDGs. The aim of this axis is to articulate measures for the peaceful resolution of conflicts within the framework of quality education and the eradication of social inequalities.

Inclusion criteria

This general objective is broken down into three specific objectives: a) to analyse the theoretical bases of conflict and mediation as an instrument for conflict resolution, b) the possibilities of implementing intra-university mediation in the higher education system, c) the inclusion of intra-university mediation and its connection with the SDGs. The verification system was based on PRISMA guidelines and Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions to ensure transparent and complete reporting in our study. For this purpose, the PRISMA protocol (Urrútia, Bonfill, 2010) and the indications of a systematic review (Moher et al., 2016) were applied. Data extraction was carried out by two researchers and reviewed by two others. Our strategy included three phases. First, potentially valuable articles were identified by their titles and abstracts. In a second phase, their contents and results were analysed and finally rated for review.

Each publication was analysed considering keywords, type of research, analysis of results and conclusions, and guidelines were used to analyse quality, transparency and replicability (Díaz-Iso et al., 2020).

The inclusion criteria were: 1) studies published between 1971 and June 2022; 2) articles in journals indexed in Scopus, WoS (Web of Science), SciELO, LATINDEX, DIALNET, MEDLINE, ELSEVIER and Google Scholar. 3) Publications dealing with the search keywords conflict, educational mediation, collaborative university, SDGs, peace education. 4) Articles written in English or Spanish and 5) peer-reviewed publications. The exclusion criteria: 1) Not having the established search keywords. 2) Not related to the object of study. 3) Date of publication.

The boléan operators used were ("and" and ","). In total, there was a sample of 116 articles, of which 27 remained after a thorough evaluation, which allowed us to confirm the viability of mediation in the university.

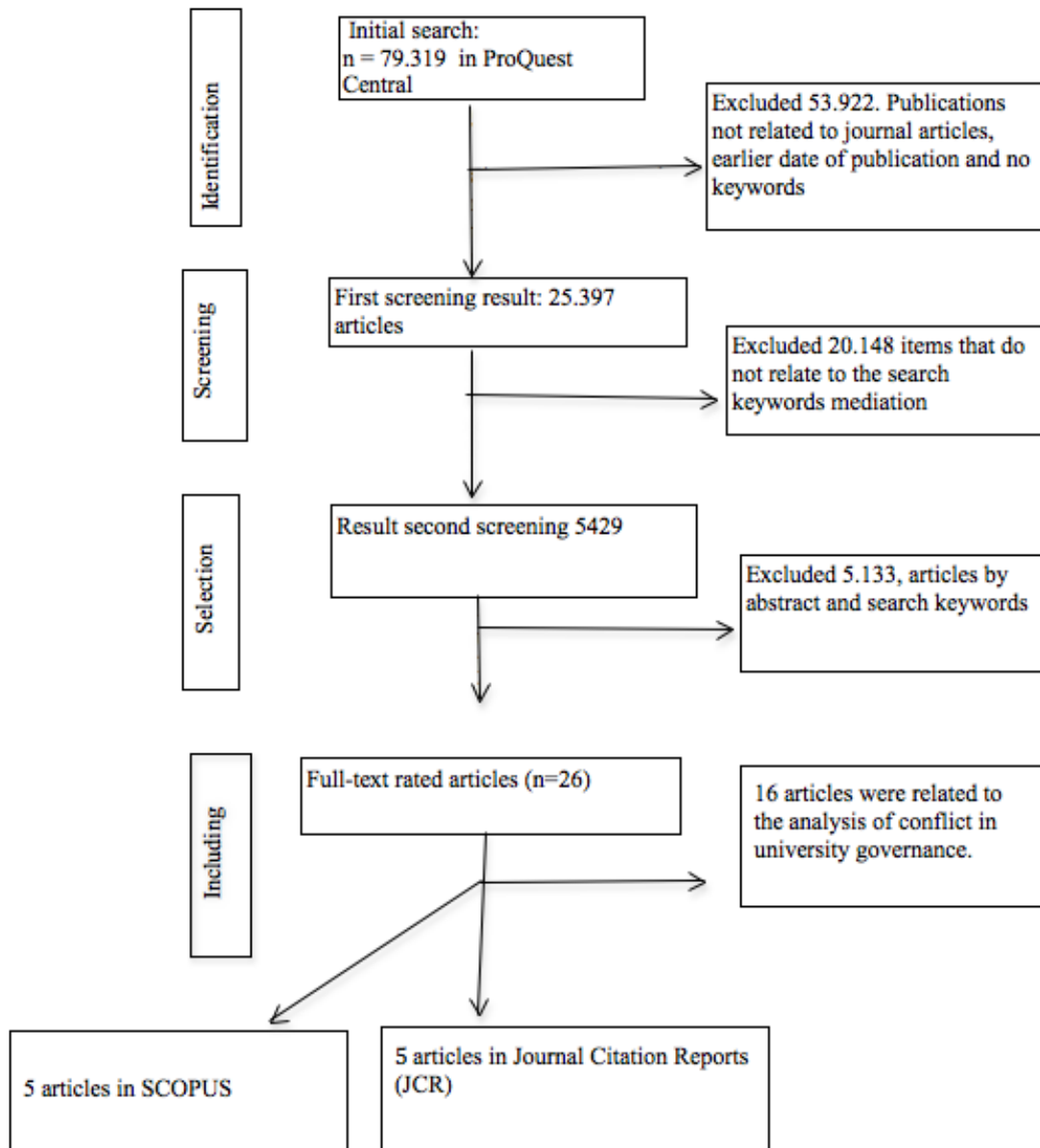**Procedure for the selection of articles according to PRISMA protocol**

Fig. 1. PRISMA flow diagram of study selection

3. Results

It should be noted that in this selection process, a wide-ranging screening of publications unrelated to our object of study and did not respond to our research question was carried out. In the SCOPUS database, of 118 articles obtained in the first search, only the following publications, shown in Table 2, met the inclusion criteria.

Table 2. SCOPUS publications meeting the search criteria

	Article title	Author	Year	Journal	Citations
1	Analysis of the causes of conflicts at universities and alternative methods of resolving them. Part I: Mediation in academic disputes |	Gmurzyńska, E.	2021	Studia Iuridica Lublinensia 30(1), pp. 55-101	1
2	The effect of psychological capital between work-family conflict and job burnout in Chinese university teachers: Testing for mediation and moderation	Pu, J., Hou, H., Ma, R., Sang, J.	2017	Journal of Health Psychology, 22(14), pp. 1799-1807	41
3	Developing and testing a scale to assess Teachers' attitudes toward peer mediation of student disputes	Gunduz, N., Uzunboylu, H. and Ozcan, D.	2017	Social Behavior and Personality, 45 (10), 1745-1760	9
4	Theoretical guidelines on persuasive communication and its relation to organizational conflict mediation at national experimental universities in the state of Zulia	Basanta Zamudio, G.J., Romero Parra, R.M.	2010	Revista de Ciencias Sociales 16(1), pp. 28-38	3
5	'If your only tool is a hammer, any issue will look like a nail': Building conflict resolution and mediation capacity in South African universities	Harris, G.	2008	Higher Education 55(1), pp. 93-101	

Source: Own elaboration

Other relevant articles by Barsky (2002), with the title: Structural sources of conflict in a university context, have been published in journals that entered SCOPUS in later years, which is why they do not appear in the table but do appear in our analysis given their impact. The following articles were found in the Journal Citation Reports (herein JCR) and are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Publications in the JCR that meet the search criteria

	Article title	Author	Year	Journal	Citations
1	Sustainability and Conflict Management in the University Environment. Analysis of Students of the Degrees in Labour Relations and Human Resources, and Social Work at the University of Granada (Spain)	Martínez, R. and Lozano, A.M.	2021	Sustainability, 13, 13431. Q2	1
2	Conflict and health: a paradigm shift in global health and human rights.	Singh, S., Orbinski, J.J., & Mills, E.J.	2007	Conflict and health, 1(1), 1-2. Q2	16
3	Sources of Japanese University Conflict: Organizational Structure and Issues.	Marsh, R.M.	1982	Journal of Conflict Resolution, 26(4), 730-756.	8

| 4 | Review Section: Mediation: An Analysis, Review, and Proposed Research. | Wall Jr, J.A. | 1981 | Journal of conflict resolution, 25(1), 157-180. | 310 |
| 5 | ICPSR: Resources for the Study of Conflict Resolution: The Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. | Beattie, R. | 1979 | Journal of Conflict Resolution, 23(2), 337-345 | 2 |

Source: Own elaboration

4. Discussion

Universities cannot merely act as distributors of knowledge and training students from a professional orientation. However, they must develop a critical nature and construct alternatives to the current problems and challenges of the society in which we find ourselves. In the analysis of the publications found, four lines of research can be seen in response to the conflicts that it has, which we shall now analyze.

Collaborative paradigm versus collaborative governance in the University

The first line of research that can be systematized is the proposal for a collaborative organization. Conflicts have been part of academic life since antiquity (Holton, 1995). The cooperative paradigm has been developed in the university community to use the approach to conflicts that arise within it and avoid the judicial route. This is precisely where José Ortega y Gasset subtly calls "integrating talent" (Ortega y Gasset, 1940: 119) has to be brought to bear. This process will make it possible to construct a social perception and representation of the cooperative way of dealing with conflicts at the University. The effectiveness of the construction of these social representations is more significant than any training program Ortega y Gasset stated in his lecture Mission of the University "to know is not to investigate. To investigate is to discover the truth or its inverse: to demonstrate an error. To know is simply to become well aware of that truth, to possess it once it has been made, achieved [...] science is creation, and pedagogical action aims only to teach that creation, to transmit it, inject it and digest it" (Ortega y Gasset, 1940: 98-99). At the same time, the function of the University appears to be subordinate to the transmission of culture, which is the natural organ. In this context, the "Orteguian" notion of "culture" refers to the system of vital ideas that mark the level of time, that is, a repertoire of "clear and firm ideas about the Universe, positive convictions about what things and the world are" (Ortega y Gasset, 1940: 74). In its most excellent sense, "general culture", the content of the famous "Faculty of Culture" initiated by Ortega in his famous lecture and later recurrently proposed as a pedagogical model by his disciples and readers (Jiménez, 1971; Fernández, 1994: 95-122), is nothing else.

In this sense, collaborative governance in university centers has been favored in American universities. This process was developed in American colleges and universities between 1970 and 1980 (Kriesberg, Neu, 2018), thanks to the funding of studies on the benefits of positive conflict management and mediation training for the members of these centers to resolve their conflicts collaboratively. In this way, recourse to judicial proceedings was avoided, as well as the economic and social cost entailed. This line is in parallel with the paradigm of restorative justice, and its emerging practices constitute a new and promising area of study for the social sciences, where three themes must be taken into account:

(a) The window of the social discipline. This image is related to Johari's window by presenting the potentialities in a graphic form. It states that the therapeutic strategy is the most socially controlled and supported practice, enabling collaborative problem solving (Wachtel, 2000; Wachtel, McCold, 2000).

b) The role of stakeholders (McCold, 1996; McCold, 2000), who participate and reflect in the search for the best way to redress the harm caused, based on a collective commitment.

c) The typology of restorative practices (McCold, 2000; McCold, Wachtel, 2002) extends responsibility to stakeholders and the community.

The emphasis on lifelong learning would be reflected in the humanistic theory of Carl Rogers (1982), which has influenced teaching practice through, above all, one essential key:

the importance of individualization of teaching. These principles of the teaching-learning process are as follows:

1. The human being possesses a natural potential for learning, an ambivalent need to learn and evolve, to expand knowledge and experience, and an innate curiosity for his world that the educational system must not stifle.

2. The student learns when he perceives study as necessary to his own goals, as an enrichment of himself.

3. Learning that involves changes in the organization of the "Self" is less well assimilated, and there is a tendency to reject it.

4. Most meaningful learning is achieved through practice and when the learner participates responsibly in the learning process.

5. Learning that embraces the whole person, his or her affectivity and intellect, is the most enduring.

6. Independence, creativity, and self-confidence are facilitated by self-evaluation and self-criticism, leaving the evaluation of others in second place.

7. The most valuable learning in the modern world is "learning the learning process," which means a continuous attitude of openness towards experiences and incorporating the change process (Rogers, 1982) – not forgetting that the achievement of learning is related to an environment that positively stimulates the teaching-learning process. Therefore, speaking of a program referring only to formal theoretical contents is impossible.

Intra-university mediation services. International perspective.

The second line of research relates to the commitment to mediation in the university context. More and more universities are using Alternative Dispute Resolution, including mediation, to deal with conflicts between individuals and groups (Doelker, 1989; Harrison, 2007).

Various forms of conflict resolution for students, academics, and administrative staff have been implemented at the University (Barsky, 2002). These services have different modalities: 1. They are exclusive to resolving the conflicts of the components of the University where they are located; 2. They are a public service to which all citizens have access; and 3. These are programs to improve university coexistence.

States that different figures have incorporated mediation in Spanish universities. The mediation process is committed to a specific intervention focused on the interests of each party, giving real protagonism to the actors in the conflict, providing the participants with a great deal of learning throughout the process, among many other advantages, including confidentiality, speed, control of the process, monitoring, proposals aimed at improving coexistence in the specific case and towards the future, etcetera.

This is reinforced by the publication of Law 3/2022, of 24 February, on university coexistence, which aims to bring about essential changes in the university environment towards creating a culture of dialogue and peace in the academic environment. At the same time, training has been developed through different courses, masters or postgraduate courses in mediation (Rosales, García, 2019). In Spain, this movement began in 1999 at the University of Murcia. In the United Kingdom, universities such as Durham University; Cambridge; University Leeds; The University of Manchester; Bristol; St. Andrews; Oxford; University College London; University of York; the University of Sussex, and the University of Dundee, among others, have a mediation service that is sometimes open to the general public. The United States has the following universities: the University of Washington, Indiana University Bloomington, The University of Memphis, and The University of Alabama, among others, also have these mediation services.

In Canada, there are different universities such as the University of Ottawa (Office for the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment of the University of Ottawa, University of Ottawa Faculty Association, Office of the Ombudsman), the University of St. Paul (Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution), Carleton University, which offer different mediation services, in different modalities through professionals trained in mediation.

These proposals have spread internationally, reaching Mexico at the University of Guanajuato; the Faculty of Law of the National University of Cuyo (Argentina), a country that has a Degree in Conflict Resolution and Mediation at the National University of Tres de Febrero (Argentina); Otago University (New Zealand), and Australia (Gmurzyńska, 2021).

Promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies and inclusive quality higher education (SDGs 4 and 16).

In this line, there is a previous movement in the University for the achievement and development of the goals, SDG-4 and SDG-16, as there are previous experiences that fight for quality and inclusive education and that, at the same time, seek the promotion of societies and citizens that use dialogue and a culture of peace.

In Spain, most mediation services are linked to services or units that favor coexistence and conflict resolution, strengthening the culture of peace. Among these units are the Conflict Mediation and Advice Unit (UNIMAC) of the University of La Laguna (Tenerife), created during the 2011/12 academic year. This unit is followed by the other coexistence and positive conflict resolution services that have been implemented in other Spanish universities, such as the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, University of Vigo, University of Barcelona, León, University Rey Juan Carlos, Granada, the Faculty of Education of the University of Alicante (Grau et al., 2016). In addition, there is also the University Community Attention Service (SACU) of the University of Huelva, the UC3M Mediation Group of the University Carlos III of Madrid, and the University Centre for Conflict Transformation (GEUZ) of the University of the Basque Country (Grau et al., 2016).

The United Nations University of Peace (UPEACE) in Costa Rica was created by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly simultaneously with autonomous management. Its objectives include the promotion of peace through education, fundamentally through training at the postgraduate level, and it is hoped that in the future, it will have exchange programs with undergraduate and graduate students—secondly, the UNESCO Chair for Peace Studies at the University of Innsbruck in Austria.

Along these lines, certain Spanish universities have set up research institutes. These include The University Institute for Peace and Conflict Research of the University of Granada, which brings together professors from the University of Granada to analyze the causes of violence as well as the conditions for peace to seek alternatives in behavior that lead to a model of society and national and international relations based on cooperation, respect for human rights and the existence of material and social conditions for peace. This institute runs enslavers and doctoral courses with agreements with Latin American universities (Mexico and Colombia). It is responsible for the Revista de Paz y Conflictos (Journal of Peace and Conflict). Another center with a similar activity is the Inter-University Institute for Social Development and Peace (IUDESP), which are linked to the University of Alicante and the Universitat Jaume I. This center carries out research and teaching activities on issues related to peace. These topics are direct violence, inequality, poverty, social justice, culture and education for peace, etcetera. The Doctoral Programme in International Studies in Peace, Conflict, and Development is linked to this institute.

The figure of the University Ombudsman

This figure of the University Ombudsman has an autonomous character in defending the rights and freedoms of all those who request his or her service. Mediation is not always used and is often confused with conciliation or arbitration. In Spanish universities, these services carry out extraordinary work to resolve complaints and conflicts that request this service in the university environment. It is not easy to establish the limits of their services, as they suggest, recommend and establish a solution without a mediation process from a guaranteeing position (Rowe, 1995).

Intra-university mediation: an alternative to the judicial route

Conflicts in the University may lead the parties to seek a judicial solution. The use of mediation can avoid the judicialization and excessive confrontation that this entails. Incorporating this form of conflict resolution in the university institution's heart will favor the teaching staff's feeling of belonging, who are often distanced from other colleagues or students as a consequence of the development of their lines of research or professional promotion. The University must be an example of peaceful conflict resolution and a culture of peace, and its staff must therefore be among the first bodies and individuals to become aware of this.

In summary, the study presented has rigorously followed the criteria established by (Moher et al., 2016; Urrutia, Bonfill, 2010), favouring other researchers to repeat these results. The relevance of some publications is evidenced by the impact of the journal in which they are published and by the number of citations received by other researchers.

The limitations of this study reside in the criteria established for the selection of the articles. Although it is true that scientific production on intra-university mediation is currently increasing, it is still limited compared to other scientific fields of education. For this reason, the articles selected are reduced. However, it is a starting point for further research on this subject of study.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of the publications carried out allows us to establish that mediation in the University is the strategy that allows the development of competencies and skills in its components and that its use will favor the construction of a more egalitarian, inclusive society in line with SDGs.

The development of the cooperative paradigm is necessary to establish a collaborative perspective in the university organization to address the conflicts that occur within it. Educational mediation is a way of establishing positive management of existing conflicts at the university level.

Experiences developed in countries such as the United States since 1970, thanks to research and training projects funding, attest to its effectiveness. It is widely developed internationally, in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand. In Spain, some experiences are beginning to develop and are awaiting implementation thanks to the recent publication of Law 3/2022, of 24 February, on university coexistence.

In Spain, the existing experiences can be framed within the five established lines of analysis, although their implementation has not been developed to the same extent. The creation of standardized centers and services is pending in most universities to achieve SDGs 4 and 16.

The consolidated experiences of mediation in universities make it possible to establish that mediation in this educational context is a viable process for conflict resolution. This ADR favors academic freedom and the empowerment of teachers in a process that generates personal and institutional growth. Existing mediation services in universities allow for managing and resolving conflicts before going to court and confrontation between the parties. Mediation allows for the empowerment of the opposing parties by listening to each other and establishing a satisfactory agreement.

Mediation guarantees the rights of all the parties that make up the University, strengthening the link between Education and Justice in line with the 2030 Agenda. Raising the university community's awareness, including students, teachers, and administrative and service staff, through courses on conflict management skills and techniques allows for promoting a culture of dialogue and peace.

With all this, the University becomes the driving force behind promoting the culture of peace in society through training in ADR and in training students in mediation qualifications, etcetera, to reduce existing conflicts and inequalities. Students, for their part, contribute the role of agents of change to achieve a society of dialogue and democracy in which a culture of peace prevails, as they have been protagonists in the positive management of their conflicts.

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