International Journal of Intercultural Relations 87 (2022) 51–64

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

International Journal of Intercultural Relations

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ijintrel

Teachers' multicultural personality traits as predictors of intercultural conflict management styles: Evidence from five European countries

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Multicultural personality
Conflict management styles
Teacher-students interactions
Intercultural conflicts
Teachers

ABSTRACT

This study explored the influence of five multicultural personality traits (i.e., Cultural Empathy, Open-Mindedness, Social Initiative, Emotional Stability, Flexibility) in predicting management styles (i.e., Integrating, Obliging, Compromising, Dominating, Avoiding) adopted by teachers from five European countries (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain) to deal with intercultural conflict that may arise within classes with and between students. Potential differences according to socio-demographic characteristics (i.e., Gender, Age, Working Seniority, Country of belonging) were also examined. Data from 589 secondary school teachers indicated that teachers who were more open-minded reported greater adoption of Integrating and Obliging styles when managing intercultural conflicts with and between students; while teachers who were less culturally empathic and flexible were more likely to adopt the Dominating style, and those who possess lower social initiative and flexibility were more likely to adopt the Avoiding style. Teachers who possess lower levels of emotional stability showed greater adoption of the Obliging style. Differences across socio-demographic characteristics were also found. Findings provided evidence to develop interventions aiming to foster effectiveness in classroom management of intercultural conflicts by underlining how multicultural personality may influence teachers' ways to act and adjust to the educational demands of the increasingly multicultural school environment.

Following the significant growth in population flows, countries worldwide have become increasingly interconnected and multi-ethnic, raising people needs to effectively deal with cultural differences (Araújo et al., 2020; Lulle & King, 2016). With particular reference to Europe, despite the relevant rates of people with a migrant background (i.e., around 34 million inhabitants were born outside the EU countries and about 10% of young people born in EU have at least one foreign-born parent) there are still-existing gaps in effectively provide equal opportunities to all to enjoy their rights and participate in social life (European Commission EC, 2020). Responding to this key concern, European Commission underlined the significant role played by the education system - from early

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https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2022.01.006
Received 1 March 2021; Received in revised form 12 January 2022; Accepted 13 January 2022
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childhood - which represents the most powerful tool for building more inclusive societies by actively supporting integration for students and their families (European Commission EC, 2020). However, these high expectations resulted in crucial challenges for school professionals, which are, therefore, required to be properly trained to engage in culturally qualified educational practices (European Commission EC, 2017).

Teachers, in particular, are demanded to achieve new gold standards in classroom management, promoting high-quality learning outcomes, as well as mutual understanding, respect, and integration of migrant and minority students (Alismail, 2016; Ben-Peretz, 2001; European Commission EC, 2017). Managing relationships with and between students is one of the key duties teachers are required to accomplish. Teachers need to possess competencies in dealing with all potential conflicts that may arise during classes, also due to the differences in culture, values and worldviews (Evans, Hearn, Uhlemann, & Ivey, 2019; Han & Han, 2019; Kunemund et al., 2020). Nonetheless, despite the efforts made to support the school staff in the enhancement of intercultural competencies (Malone & Ishmail, 2020; Ponterotto, 2008), overall teachers still report difficulties in adapting their practices to the multiple backgrounds of their students, suggesting a need for professional development in this area (Burnell & Schnackenberg, 2015; Keengwe, 2010; OECD, 2014). These concerns are predominantly expressed by teachers from those European countries, such as Italy and Spain - who rapidly shifted from being almost exclusively emigrant nations to being hosting countries - rather than by teachers working in more established multicultural school contexts, such as Austria, Belgium, and Germany. The latter, indeed, are countries with a longer and well-recognized immigration history, with higher percentages of immigrant students from both the first and the second generations (OECD, 2016, 2018).

Nonetheless, despite the potential differences featuring the educational contexts at the pan-European level, the aims of supporting teachers' efficacy in classroom management, promoting high-quality teacher-student interactions and a more satisfactory class climate, are still high on the European research agenda (European Commission EC, 2017, 2020). This can be achieved by proposing evidence-based contributions feeding the development of tailored individual and organizational interventions and multicultural training for teachers. The present study targeted this pivotal aim.

Factors fostering culturally responsive teacher-students interactions: teachers' multicultural personality traits

As the world has become increasingly multicultural, research has made several efforts to identify factors potentially fostering constructive intercultural exchanges and preventing the emergency of tensions related to diversity (Gonçalves et al., 2016; Wilson, Ward, & Fischer, 2013). In this direction, research has highlighted that specific personality characteristic, such as multicultural personality traits (MP; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000), may sustain personal and relational adjustment, as well as effectiveness in intercultural contexts. This may successfully promote satisfactory interactions and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds (Ali, Van der Zee, & Sanders, 2003; Brummett, Wade, Ponterotto, Thombs, & Lewis, 2007; Euwema & Van Emmerik, 2007; Leong, 2007; Peltokorpi, 2008; Yakunina, Weigold, Weigold, Hercegovac, & Elsayed, 2012).

Specifically, Multicultural Personality (MP; Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000), also referred to as individuals' intercultural competence (Euwema & Van Emmerik, 2007), is a multidimensional construct covering five personality traits (i.e., Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness, Flexibility, Social Initiative, and Emotional Stability). MP was proposed to describe people possessing an interest in, and ability to, interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Indeed, interactions between people with different cultures and worldviews may generate complex issues and conflicts. This, in turn, may have a significant negative impact on individual and relational wellbeing. Nonetheless, dealing with such heterogeneity and diversity may also give rise to mutual inspiration, resulting in enriching exchanges and relationships (Van Der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). From this perspective, within the contemporary educational system, a growing body of research has underlined the necessity to explore teachers' propensity to adjust to multicultural environments, their ability to create inspiring and stimulating relationships with and between students, and to build a constructive and inclusive class climate (Alismail, 2016; Polat & Ogay Barka, 2014; Rychly & Graves, 2012).

In particular, with respect to Cultural Empathy (i.e., the ability and propensity to understand diverse cultural perspectives, empathizing with thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of individuals with different cultural backgrounds), this multicultural personality trait plays an increasingly relevant role among teachers working in the contemporary school environment. Indeed, teachers who gain adequate knowledge of the multiple cultural backgrounds of students (e.g., religion, traditions, customs) can better understand how these elements may influence attitudes, feelings, behaviors, and learning styles (Cruz & Patterson, 2005; McAllister & Irvine, 2002). This may raise, on the one hand, the development of a supportive classroom climate, in which students can experience their differences as recognized and respected. On the other hand, this may foster the implementation of focused activities addressing the complexity of the students' multiple worldviews.

With respect to Open-Mindedness (i.e., the ability and propensity to maintain a non-judgmental attitude toward diverse worldviews), it is pivotal for teachers also to consider how this multicultural personality trait may be useful to encourage students to maintain a non-judgmental attitude and to develop critical thinking (Adler, 2005; Hare, 2003). This is, however, possible only whether teachers can first recognize their own beliefs, and they can understand the risks related to a biased self-perception of being open-minded (e.g., considering students regardless of their cultural background, minimizing cultural differences or denying any possible differences and discriminations).

Furthermore, with regard to Flexibility (i.e., the ability and propensity to adapt to new, unknown and challenging situations), this multicultural personality trait may help teachers to adequately adjust to a wide range of situations that may occur in multicultural classes. Flexible teachers, in fact, are more likely to seek for and implement alternative strategies, with the aim to promote students' engagement and to enhance the effectiveness of their teaching practice (Rychly & Graves, 2012). Moreover, considering Social Initiative (i.e., the ability and propensity to actively approach social situations), this multicultural personality trait characterizes

teachers who wish to be on the front lines in actively preventing exclusion. They will be likely to propose inclusive practices (e.g., group work, training courses, discussion groups, networking, participation in international projects) involving students and their families, colleagues and the broader community, in the promotion of constructive exchanges (Bristol, 2015; Penuel, Riel, Krause, & Frank, 2009).

Finally, with respect to Emotional Stability (i.e., the ability and propensity to self-regulate and maintain calmness in stressful situations), this multicultural personality trait may play a pivotal role in supporting emotional regulation processes to re-establish calmness in conflictual situations that may occur during classes (Tsang, 2011). Such ability may become more and more relevant when dealing with the contemporary multi-ethnic and multicultural school context, which is featured by increasing potential mismatches between teacher-students and/or among students' cultures, perspectives, and worldviews.

Therefore, given the undeniable relevance for teachers to possess the abovementioned multicultural personality traits to engage in culturally responsive interactions with students, the present study focused on these key dimensions. The study, indeed, aimed to test their role in influencing teachers' styles of managing relationships within the classroom, with particular reference to the ways they deal with potential intercultural conflicts with and between students.

Teachers' management styles of intercultural conflicts in the school context

In recent decades, there has been increasing research interest in conflict management and negotiation processes. In particular, a specific branch of research is focused on the exploration of individuals' strategies adopted to deal with conflictual situations (Cingöz-Ulu & Lalonde, 2007; Jeong, 2009; Koc, 2010). In this field of research, the Rahim's Model of Conflict Management (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979) represents one of the most adopted models to frame perceived intrapersonal, intragroup, and intergroup conflicts within the work context. This model has also widely applied in studies focused on negotiation processes in the context of intercultural research (Bowles, 2009; Rahim et al., 2002; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000; Yu & Chen, 2008).

According to the Rahim's Model, people may use five different styles for handling interpersonal conflicts, namely Integrating, Obliging, Dominating, Avoiding, and Compromising (Rahim, 2001). Rahim's description of these styles referred to different combinations of two core dimensions, i.e., concern for self (the degree to which individuals aim at satisfying their own concern in conflict management processes), and concern for others (the degree to which individuals attempt to accomplish with the concern of the other party involved in a conflict).

In particular, when adopting an Integrating style, people have a high concern for self and a high concern for others and they attempt to reach an optimal integrative solution that overwhelms the personal vision of the problem through the recourse to openness, exchange of information, examination and exploration of differences. Conversely, when adopting a Dominating style, people have a high concern for self and a low concern for others and they wish to win/defend their own position, even by resorting to forcing behaviors. Furthermore, when adopting an Obliging style, people have a low concern for self and a high concern for others and they try to minimize differences and to emphasize commonalities with the other party, even sacrificing personal concern to safeguard the relationship. Conversely, when adopting an Avoiding style, people have a low concern for self and a low concern for others and try to avoid dealing with situations, refusing to openly face conflicts. Finally, when adopting a Compromising style, people express concern both for self and for others and they attempt to reach mutually acceptable solutions by assuming a quick, middle-ground position, characterized by the sacrifice, to some extent, of both own and other's concerns. Regarding this particular style, there is a clear consensus on the idea that it shares some common characteristics with integrating, accommodating, and problem solving strategies – rather than with avoiding and forcing styles – so that higher-order clusters of styles may be distinguished into three types, namely avoidance, competitive, and collaborative (Van De Vliert & Hordijk, 1989); the collaborative pattern of conflict management may, indeed, include people adopting strategies centered on compromising, integrating, and obliging styles (Zurlo, Vallone, Dell'Aquila, & Marocco, 2020). Nevertheless, there is also strong evidence supporting distinctiveness among the five styles (Rahim & Magner, 1995) as well as the strong theoretical distinction of compromising - both in terms of styles and behaviors - from the other styles to handle conflict (Holt & DeVore, 2005; Van De Vliert & Hordijk, 1989).

In order to assess the perceived levels of organizational conflict and individuals' strategies adopted for handling conflicts, Rahim developed and validated two measurement tools. The first one is the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory I (ROCI-I), which measures perceived levels of organizational conflict at the individual, group, and intergroup levels. The second one is the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II), which measures the styles adopted for managing interpersonal conflicts with superior (s) (Form A), subordinates (Form B), and peers (Form C) (Rahim, 1983a, 1983b, 2001). There are different forms of the ROCI-II (i.e., superiors, subordinates, peers) because people may use different styles for handling conflicts depending on the interlocutor, and adopting one among the five styles within the negotiation process may be influenced by the perceived symmetry/asymmetry of power within the relationship (Rahim, 2001). Moreover, (Rahim, Antonioni, & Psenicka, 2001; Rahim et al., 2002) underlined that the effectiveness of adopted strategies is strongly situation-specific, and, therefore, it is not possible to prescribe the "correct" way to deal with conflicts.

In line with this, referring to the school context, research has suggested that teachers may use different strategies to manage the wide range of situations that may occur with and among students (i.e., subordinates) during classes. The possibility to effectively handle the potential tensions and conflicts experienced may depend on teachers' ability to search for moment-to-moment solutions (Doğan, 2016; Morris-Rothschild & Brassard, 2006; Zurlo et al., 2020). Indeed, according to the specific situation, teachers may spend efforts and time on attempts to deepen and face the conflict, trying to carefully understand students' perspectives (i.e., Integrating style); but they may also choose to quickly reach a middle ground solution (i.e., Compromising style); to ignore/accommodate minor disruptions (i.e., Obliging style); and/or to avoid/delay any confrontation (i.e., Avoiding style) to safeguard the continuity and the

quality of the teacher-student relationship, as well as to assure the achievement of the educational goals. Nonetheless, they may also use more directive ways to handle conflicts whenever they perceive the necessity to express their authority to manage the situation and to rapidly regain control over the class (i.e., Dominating style).

However, the negotiation process can be even more complex whenever conflicts and tensions derive from differences in cultures and perspectives, therefore requiring increased time and effort to manage (Earley & Ang, 2003). In such cases, research refers to intercultural conflicts as the perceived or actual incompatibilities of values, expectations, and goals over substantive relational and/or identity issues (Deardoff, 2009; Jurtikova, 2013; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000). In the contemporary European educational context, in which teachers and students from different backgrounds are forced to interact on a daily basis (OECD, 2018), intercultural conflicts may frequently occur (Expósito, Olmedo, Pegalajar, & Tomé, 2014; Marocco et al., 2019; Marocco, Dell'Aquila, Vallone, & Zurlo, 2020) both among students (e.g., Jurtikova, 2013) and within teacher-student interactions (e.g., Kunemund et al., 2020; Zhao, 2007). Indeed, although the European educational context has become increasingly multicultural, teaching workforce comes primarily from a mono-cultural and homogeneous background (European Commission EC, 2016; Van Driel, Darmody, & Kerzil, 2016). This discrepancy between teacher and student cultural backgrounds results in increased distance between teachers and students' perspectives (Kunemund et al., 2020). Specifically, teachers and students may hold different cultural expectations and worldviews about 'teaching and learning' and about their respective roles in the classroom, with divergent classroom atmosphere models and – sometimes – even with different native languages (Al-Issa, 2005; Deardoff, 2009; Expósito et al., 2014; Hofstede, 1986; Zhao, 2007). Furthermore, the school context is one of the first places where students' values (derived from their own families of origin) encounter those held by their peers and by teachers (Cooper, Jackson, Azmitia, & Lopez, 1998).

Within this portrait, research has underlined several scenarios encompassing intercultural conflicts that may occur during classes (Al-Issa, 2005; Marocco et al., 2020; Zhao, 2007). They may primarily assume the form of miscommunications and misunderstandings - derived by substantial differences in languages and worldviews - but also of insulting, threatening, actual discrimination and xenophobic behaviors (Expósito et al., 2014; Jurtikova, 2013; Zhao, 2007). For example, during classes, both overt and covert expressions of discrimination may arise, i.e., the adoption of stereotypes and ethnic humor (Lockyer & Pickering, 2005; Oring, 2003; Stevens & Dworkin, 2019; Van Praag, Stevens, & Van Houtte, 2017; Weaver, 2011); expressions of racial and religious biases (e.g., intentional or unintentional derogatory/negative comments about race/ethnicity/religion; Dong, Day, & Collaço, 2008; Sue et al., 2007); a "color-blind" approach to diversity (e.g., treating everyone the same, regardless of their ethnic background) (OECD, 2018); practices of exclusions (e.g., dichotomization into "us" and "them"; Deardoff, 2009); but also expressions of prejudices and judgmental attitudes derived from members of an ethnic minority group (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Jurtikova, 2013).

However, although intercultural conflicts naturally and inevitably occur from the encountering of different cultures and perspectives (Euwema & Van Emmerik, 2007), they still represent a significant challenge for teachers, who need to effectively manage them within classes, rather than trying to avoid them entirely (Marocco et al., 2019). In line with this, regardless of whether the conflict arises in the interaction between a student and the teacher, or it arises originally in the confrontation between students, the teachers are still directly involved in the conflict (e.g., they witness xenophobic behaviors, injustices, misunderstandings; Expósito et al., 2014). Therefore, they are required to actively handle the negotiation process, by using their own skills to manage the classroom and conflict resolution process (Al-Issa, 2005; Van Driel et al., 2016).

Multicultural personality traits and conflict management styles

Research in the field of intercultural education has highlighted the necessity to promote teachers' intercultural competencies to foster their ability to manage intercultural conflicts effectively (Deardoff, 2009; Jackson & O'Grady, 2019; Le Roux, 2001; Loode, 2011). Teachers can, hence, drive the building and maintenance of a class climate featured by respect (Adler, 2005; Hare, 2003). When intercultural competencies are not developed, intercultural conflicts may frequently escalate (Jurtikova, 2013).

From this perspective, a growing body of research has examined how specific personality characteristics may influence the way in which people handle conflicts (Ahmed, Nawaz, Shaukat, & Usman, 2010; Antonioni, 1998; Khalid, Fatima, & Khan, 2015; Moberg, 2001; Tehrani & Yamini, 2020), also in the context of intercultural research (Dong et al., 2008; Euwema & Van Emmerik, 2007; Gonçalves et al., 2016; Yu & Chen, 2008).

In particular, several studies identified personality characteristics specifically linked to intercultural competence, such as intercultural communication sensitivity (Dong et al., 2008), intercultural sensitivity (Yu & Chen, 2008) and cultural intelligence (Gonçalves et al., 2016), as well as multicultural personality traits (Euwema & Van Emmerik, 2007) that may help to foster a better adjustment when handling conflicts within intercultural communication settings. Specifically, research has found that people possessing high intercultural competence would use a more explorative and cooperative approach in conflict management, typical for integrating and compromising styles. They would be also less likely to use more directive and/or avoiding styles when dealing with conflicts (Euwema & Van Emmerik, 2007; Yu & Chen, 2008). However, there is no clear consensus on the role personality characteristics may have in influencing the adoption of obliging/accommodating style (Tehrani & Yamini, 2020), as the latter could not necessarily convey the negative connotations of being passive or elusive; this strategy, indeed, could be also used to maintain mutual interests and to safeguard the relational harmony (Hammer, 2005; Tehrani & Yamini, 2020; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000; Yu & Chen, 2008).

Therefore, considering the specific features of the school context and of teacher-student interactions, it is possible to hypothesize that teachers possessing high levels of multicultural personality would be more likely to adopt integrating/compromising styles and they would be less likely to adopt dominating/avoiding styles when handling intercultural conflicts.

The present research

Considering the research reported above, the present study aims at investigating the associations between teachers' multicultural personality traits (Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness, Social Initiative, Emotional Stability, Flexibility) and conflict management styles adopted to deal with intercultural conflicts with and between students (Integrating, Avoiding, Obliging, Dominating, and Compromising). Moreover, research has also identified potential differences in personality characteristics and conflict management styles according to socio-demographic characteristics such as gender (Blackburn, Martin, & Hutchinson, 2006; Gayle, Preiss, & Allen, 1994; Khalid, Fatima, & Khan, 2015; Rahim, 2001; Valente et al., 2019), age and working seniority (Claessens et al., 2017; Morris-Rothschild & Brassard, 2006; Valente et al., 2019; Zurlo & Pes, 2006), and country of belonging (European Commission EC, 2013; Polat & Ogay Barka, 2014; Rahim et al., 2002; Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002). Therefore, the study also aimed to test potential differences in multicultural personality traits and conflict management styles according to the abovementioned socio-demographic characteristics. This approach, indeed, may help, on the one hand, to provide more tailored information, and, on the one other hand, to allow the generalizability of research results and of practical implications for the EU educational context.

In line with the aims of the study, the research questions and hypotheses are proposed as follows:

RQ1. Are there differences in teachers' multicultural personality characteristics and conflict management styles according to gender, age, working seniority, and country of belonging?

H1. High levels of Multicultural Personality traits are significantly positively related to Integrating and Compromising styles.

H2. High levels of Multicultural Personality traits are significantly negatively related to Avoiding and Dominating styles.

No prediction was made about the direction of the associations between Multicultural Personality Characteristics and the Obliging style due to the mixed evidence reported in previous research.

Method

Participants and procedures

National surveys were made available online and widely disseminated in five European countries (i.e., Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Spain) as part of the ACCORD Project (Attain Cultural Integration through COnflict Resolution skill Development; www.accord-project.eu). All procedures performed were in accordance with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Overall, 589 teachers completed the questionnaire on a voluntary basis.

Measures

Socio-demographic Characteristics: Participants were asked to fill a section addressing Socio-demographic characteristics, such as Gender (Male/Female), Age (Under 35 years; 35–45 years; Over 45 years), Working Seniority (Under 5 years; 5–10 years; Over 10 years), and Country of Belonging (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain).

Multicultural Personality: The Multicultural Personality Questionnaire Short-Form (MPQ-SF; Van Der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto, & Fietzer, 2013) was used to assess five key personality characteristics, which are strongly related to the well-known general personality scales of the Big Five (Euwema & Van Emmerik, 2007), and which all contributing to intercultural effectiveness. The MPQ-SF consists of 40 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Totally not applicable*, 5 = *Completely applicable*). Participants were asked to respond to personal descriptors attached to the sentence stem: "To what extent do the following statements apply to you?". The descriptors covered five multicultural personality traits: Cultural Empathy (8 items, e.g., "Sympathizes with others"), Open-Mindedness (8 items, e.g., "Seeks people from different backgrounds"), Social Initiative (8 items, e.g., "Takes the lead"), Emotional Stability (8 items, e.g., "Keeps calm when things don't go well"), and Flexibility (8 items, e.g., "Works according to strict scheme"). A higher score represents higher presence of the relevant multicultural personality trait. The tool has been adopted and tested in various populations (e.g., teachers, students, employees, spouses/children of expats, immigrants) and cultures (e.g., Spain, Italy, Germany, Britain, Netherlands, United States, Canada, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, China), including those countries involved in the present study (Leone, Van der Zee, van Oudenhoven, Perugini, & Ercolani, 2005; Van Oudenhoven & Benet-Martínez, 2015). In all cases, the questionnaire received wide empirical support internationally as one of the most valid and robust measures for assessing multicultural personality and, more generally, intercultural competence (Euwema & Van Emmerik, 2007; Hofhuis et al., 2020; Hofhuis, Jongerling, Van der Zee, & Jansz, 2020; Leone et al., 2005; Van Oudenhoven & Benet-Martínez, 2015). In the present study, Cronbach's α values of the MPQ-SF scales were all acceptable (Supplementary Table 1).

Conflict Management: The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II; Rahim 1983a, 1983b, 2001) was used to assess teachers' strategies adopted to handle interpersonal conflicts. The ROCI-II consists of 28 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 5 = *Strongly Agree*). This tool was developed to be adopted in the field of occupational research, and it measures the styles of handling interpersonal conflict between an organizational member and his/her supervisor(s) (Form A), subordinates (Form B), and peers (Form C). For the purpose of the present study, Form B of the questionnaire, assessing the management styles used to deal with conflicts with subordinates (i.e., students) was adopted. Additionally, instructions were adapted such that participants were asked to remember an intercultural conflict that occurred within classes with/between students, and to indicate the way the teacher handled it. The sentences of the original version of the ROCI-II were, therefore, used; they covered the five styles of handling interpersonal conflict: Integrating (7 items, e.g., "I try to investigate an issue with my students to find a solution acceptable to us"), Obliging (6 items, e.g., "I generally try to satisfy the needs of my students"), Dominating (5 items, e.g., "I use my influence to get my ideas accepted"),

Avoiding (6 items, e.g., "I attempt to avoid being *put on the spot* and try to keep my conflict with my students to myself"), and Compromising (4 items, i.e., "I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse"). A higher score represents greater use of a given conflict management style. The ROCI-II is a psychometrically robust tool that has been widely adopted in international research both in the domestic and intercultural contexts (Rahim et al., 2002; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000; Yu & Chen, 2008), as well as in the five European countries participating in the current study (Bilsky & Wülker, 2000; Majer, 1995; Marocco et al., 2019; Munduate, Ganaza, & Alcaide, 1993). In the present study, Cronbach's α values of the ROCI-II scales were all acceptable (Supplementary Table 1).

Statistical analysis

Continuous variables were summarized as means (± standard deviations) or means (± standard errors), as appropriate, and categorical variables were summarized as absolute frequencies (percentages). Relationships between multicultural personality traits and conflict management styles were preliminarily evaluated using Pearson's Correlations coefficient. Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) was used to respond to research question one (RQ1) to examining potential differences, respectively, in multicultural personality traits and conflict management styles scores according to gender, age, working seniority, and country of belonging. Multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA) was used to examine measurement invariance across country of belonging. Specifically, configural, metric, and scalar invariance were assessed for both the MPQ-SF and the ROCI-II, potentially allowing meaningful comparison of the mean scores across the countries (Little, 1997). Standard goodness-of-fit indices were as follows: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA $\leq$.08), Comparative Fit Index (CFI $\geq$0.90), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI $\geq$0.90), and χ^2 non-significant ($p > .05$) (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002; Hu & Bentler, 1998). However, since the χ^2 value is deeply influenced by the sample size, and we did not perform an a priori power analysis, we relied on RMSEA,CFI, and TLI values (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). Afterward, a test for latent mean comparisons allowing for partial invariance (i.e., parameters that were not equivalent across countries were allowed to vary) was performed, so as to account for measurement error. Finally, Hypotheses (H1 and H2) regarding the relationships between multicultural personality traits and conflict management styles were tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to account for measurement error, including country of belonging as covariate in order to consider its potential influence on the structural relationships examined.

All analyses were carried out using the R software environment for statistical computing. MGCFA and SEM were performed using the robust weighted least square (WLSMV) estimator through the lavaan R package (Rosseel, 2012).

Results

Preliminary analyses

As for the respondents' characteristics, 29.4% ($n = 173$) were men and 70.6% ($n = 416$) were women. The majority of teachers were more than 45 years old (Age Over 45 years: $n = 291$, 49.4%; Between 35 and 45 years: $n = 144$, 24.5%; Under 35 years: $n = 154$, 26.1%) and highly experienced (Working Seniority Over 10 years: $n = 338$, 57.4%; Between 5 and 10 years: $n = 121$, 20.5%; Under 5 years: $n = 130$, 22.1%). With respect to the country of belonging, 18.5% of the participants ($n = 109$) were from Austria, 19.7% ($n = 116$) from Belgium, 7.1% ($n = 42$) from Germany, 18.5% ($n = 109$) from Italy, and, finally, 36.2% ($n = 213$) were from Spain.

Pearson's correlation coefficient are provided in Table 1. Data provided preliminary evidence endorsing the study hypotheses.

Differences in multicultural personality traits and in conflict management styles by country of belonging

Table 2 shows differences in Multicultural Personality traits and Conflict Management styles scores according to gender, age, working seniority, and country of belonging. In particular, findings indicated that women reported higher levels of Cultural Empathy, greater adoption of Integrating and lower adoption of Dominating style than male teachers. Older and more experienced teachers reported higher levels of Flexibility, greater adoption of Integrating style, and lower adoption of the Dominating style than those younger and less experienced. Significant differences according to country of belonging were also found. Therefore, overall findings provided evidence responding to Research Question one (R1), indicating significant differences both in teachers' multicultural

Table 1
Means, standard deviations (SD) and intercorrelations between multicultural personality traits and conflict management styles.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Cultural Empathy	4.15	0.55	1									
2 Open-Mindedness	3.79	0.54	.64**	1								
3 Social Initiative	3.78	0.58	.41**	.51**	1							
4 Flexibility	2.76	0.67	-.03	.16**	.16**	1						
5 Emotional Stability	3.26	0.61	.13**	.28**	.35**	.29**	1					
6 Integrating	4.12	0.56	.45**	.46**	.28**	.08	.11**	1				
7 Obliging	3.38	0.51	.26**	.24**	.09*	-.04	-.10*	.42**	1			
8 Dominating	2.52	0.71	-.16**	-.07	-.03	-.17**	-.09*	-.28**	-.02	1		
9 Avoiding	2.80	0.74	-.06	-.03	-.15**	-.10*	-.06	-.02	.12**	.15**	1	
10 Compromising	3.66	0.61	.26**	.23**	.12**	-.03	.03	.49**	.38**	-.10*	.10*	1

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 2
Differences in multicultural personality traits and conflict management styles scores by gender, age, working seniority and country of belonging.

	Multicultural Personality Traits					Conflict Management Styles				
	Cultural Empathy	Open-Mindedness	Social Initiative	Flexibility	Emotional Stability	Integrating	Obliging	Dominating	Avoiding	Compromising
	M (± *SD*)	*M* (± *SD*)	*M* (± *SD*)	*M* (± *SD*)	*M* (± *SD*)	*M* (± *SD*)	*M* (± *SD*)	*M* (± *SD*)	*M* (± *SD*)	*M* (± *SD*)
Gender										
Female	4.19 (± 0.54)	3.78 (± 0.53)	3.81 (± 0.58)	2.78 (± 0.67)	3.26 (± 0.61)	4.15 (± 0.54)	3.37 (± 0.50)	2.48 (± 0.70)	2.80 (± 0.76)	3.68 (± 0.59)
Male	4.05 (± 0.57)	3.81 (± 0.55)	3.72 (± 0.58)	2.73 (± 0.69)	3.27 (± 0.59)	4.04 (± 0.60)	3.43 (± 0.54)	2.62 (± 0.72)	2.80 (± 0.69)	3.61 (± 0.66)
F	7.13*	0.31	2.68	0.81	0.05	4.67*	1.64	4.43*	0.00	1.89
Age										
Under 35	4.22 (± 0.47)	3.75 (± 0.47)	3.81 (± 0.47)	2.47 (± 0.62)	3.19 (± 0.63)	3.99 (± 0.57)	3.44 (± 0.51)	2.60 (± 0.65)	2.79 (± 0.67)	3.74 (± 0.63)
35–45	4.14 (± 0.53)	3.82 (± 0.49)	3.79 (± 0.49)	2.75 (± 0.62)	3.27 (± 0.57)	4.13 (± 0.50)	3.37 (± 0.53)	2.61 (± 0.72)	2.84 (± 0.84)	3.66 (± 0.61)
Over 45	4.11 (± 0.60)	3.80 (± 0.59)	3.77 (± 0.59)	2.93 (± 0.67)	3.30 (± 0.61)	4.18 (± 0.57)	3.36 (± 0.50)	2.44 (± 0.72)	2.79 (± 0.72)	3.62 (± 0.60)
F	1.92	0.57	0.27	25.42**	1.58	5.82*	1.11	4.27*	0.24	1.84
Working Seniority										
Under 5	4.15 (± 0.52)	3.71 (± 0.50)	3.76 (± 0.60)	2.55 (± 0.58)	3.21 (± 0.58)	4.01 (± 0.53)	3.47 (± 0.46)	2.58 (± 0.63)	2.78 (± 0.74)	3.73 (± 0.59)
5–10	4.19 (± 0.51)	3.84 (± 0.46)	3.84 (± 0.61)	2.76 (± 0.76)	3.20 (± 0.55)	4.08 (± 0.56)	3.38 (± 0.56)	2.57 (± 0.72)	2.81 (± 0.81)	3.66 (± 0.64)
Over 10	4.13 (± 0.58)	3.80 (± 0.57)	3.77 (± 0.56)	2.85 (± 0.66)	3.26 (± 0.61)	4.18 (± 0.56)	3.35 (± 0.51)	2.48 (± 0.73)	2.80 (± 0.71)	3.64 (± 0.61)
F	0.43	2.00	0.75	9.12**	1.85	4.57*	2.72	1.36	0.04	1.19
Country of belonging										
Austria	4.25 (± 0.45)	3.74 (± 0.46)	3.84 (± 0.57)	2.71 (± 0.62)	3.22 (± 0.62)	4.09 (± 0.55)	3.54 (± 0.46)	2.59 (± 0.67)	2.45 (± 0.67)	3.64 (± 0.71)
Belgium	4.09 (± 0.47)	3.66 (± 0.46)	3.77 (± 0.57)	2.40 (± 0.63)	3.38 (± 0.69)	3.90 (± 0.51)	3.16 (± 0.46)	2.56 (± 0.66)	2.73 (± 0.61)	3.71 (± 0.57)
Germany	4.10 (± 0.46)	3.72 (± 0.38)	3.82 (± 0.62)	2.62 (± 0.64)	3.23 (± 0.43)	4.15 (± 0.50)	3.58 (± 0.47)	2.71 (± 0.73)	3.13 (± 0.93)	3.76 (± 0.56)
Spain	4.08 (± 0.65)	3.85 (± 0.62)	3.79 (± 0.58)	2.83 (± 0.61)	3.17 (± 0.57)	4.19 (± 0.56)	3.41 (± 0.52)	2.49 (± 0.74)	2.85 (± 0.75)	3.66 (± 0.53)
Italy	4.25 (± 0.51)	3.90 (± 0.52)	3.71 (± 0.59)	3.13 (± 0.68)	3.35 (± 0.61)	4.23 (± 0.56)	3.35 (± 0.53)	2.41 (± 0.70)	3.00 (± 0.69)	3.60 (± 0.71)
F	3.09*	3.88**	0.76	19.87**	3.10*	6.99**	10.21**	1.99	11.46**	0.71

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 3
Latent mean comparison: differences in multicultural personality traits and conflict management styles scores by country of belonging.

	Multicultural Personality Traits						Conflict Management Styles					
	Cultural Empathy	Open-Mindedness	Social Initiative	Flexibility	Emotional Stability	*p*-value χ^2 test	Integrating	Obliging	Dominating	Avoiding	Compromising	*p*-value χ^2 test
	M (± *SE*)	*M* (± *SE*)	*M* (± *SE*)	*M* (± *SE*)	*M* (± *SE*)		*M* (± *SE*)	*M* (± *SE*)	*M* (± *SE*)	*M* (± *SE*)	*M* (± *SE*)	
Country of belonging												
Austria	0	0	0	0	0	**< 0.001**	0	0	0	0	0	**0.0012**
Belgium	-0.13 (± 0.06)	-0.19 (± 0.06)	-0.08 (0.08)	-0.2 (± 0.10)	-0.09 (± 0.08)		-0.16 (± 0.06)	-0.48 (± 0.10)	-0.01 (± 0.13)	0.00 (± 0.04)	0.00 (± 0.04)	
Germany	-0.14 (± 0.08)	-0.10(± 0.06)	-0.02 (± 0.11)	0.01 (± 0.13)	0.09 (± 0.11)		0.09 (± 0.08)	-0.00 (± 0.12)	0.03 (± 0.19)	0.00 (± 0.09)	0.00 (± 0.07)	
Spain	-0.17 (± 0.06)	0.07 (± 0.06)	-0.02 (± 0.07)	0.36 (± 0.09)	-0.07 (± 0.07)		0.08 (± 0.06)	-0.14 (± 0.07)	-0.16 (± 0.12)	0.00 (± 0.03)	0.00 (± 0.03)	
Italy	-0.04 (± 0.05)	0.09 (± 0.07)	0.09 (± 0.08)	0.80 (± 0.12)	0.09 (± 0.08)		0.10 (± 0.07)	-0.09 (± 0.09)	-0.40 (± 0.14)	0.00 (± 0.04)	0.00 (± 0.05)	

Notes. M, Mean score; SE, Standard Error.

personality and in styles adopted for handling conflicts by socio-demographic characteristics.

However, with respect to findings by country of belonging, findings indicated significant differences in nearly all Multicultural Personality traits (except for Social Initiative) and Conflict Management styles mean scores (except for Dominating and Compromising styles), suggesting the necessity to further investigate the potential influence of country of belonging before the main analyses are conducted. Accordingly, multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA) was used to examine measurement invariance for the MPQ-SF and the ROCI-II by country of belonging (Supplementary Table 2). In terms of the MPQ-SF, findings did not provide support for metric and scalar invariance. We then established partial metric and scalar invariance by releasing some constrained parameters (loadings and intercepts). Modification index was used to identify which item loadings and item intercepts were non-invariant. Most of the loadings and the intercepts that were not equivalent across countries and, therefore, were allowed to vary, corresponded to the items related to Social Initiative and to Emotional Stability scales. The fit for the final model for the MPQ-SF was, therefore, acceptable: RMSEA = 0.07; CFI = 0.90; TLI = 0.90. Considering the ROCI-II, only metric invariance was established. Consequently, we established partial scalar invariance by releasing some constrained parameters (i.e., intercepts). Most of the intercepts that were allowed to vary correspond to the items related to Avoiding and to Compromising scales. The fit for the final model for the ROCI-II was satisfactory: RMSEA = 0.05; CFI = 0.94; TLI = 0.94. Afterward, comparison of latent means for the MPQ-SF and the ROCI-II was carried out (Table 3), which confirmed the significant differences in multicultural personality traits (χ^2 Δ (*Df*)= 45(20); $p < .001$) and conflict management styles (χ^2 Δ (*Df*) = 63(20); $p = .0012$) across the five countries.

Relationships between multicultural personality traits and conflict management styles

Table 4 displays findings from SEM analyses exploring the relationships between Multicultural Personality traits and Conflict Management styles constructs, adjusting for country of belonging. Findings indicates that Open-Mindedness was significantly associated with higher levels of Integrating style ($\beta = 0.41, p < .01$) - partially endorsing H1 - as well as with higher levels of Obliging style ($\beta = 0.45, p < .01$). Moreover, Social Initiative ($\beta = -0.26, p < .05$) and Flexibility ($\beta = -0.12, p < .05$) were significantly associated with lower levels of Avoiding, and both Cultural Empathy ($\beta = -0.62, p < .001$) and Flexibility ($\beta = -0.21, p < .001$) were also significantly associated with lower levels of Dominating style, partially supporting H2. In addition, Emotional Stability was significantly associated with lower levels of Obliging style ($\beta = -0.20, p < .01$). No significant associations between Multicultural Personality traits and Compromising style were found.

Discussion

Responding to the widespread need to support teachers in the achievement of gold standards in classroom management within the contemporary multicultural school context (European Commission EC, 2017, 2020), the present study aimed to investigate the associations between teachers' multicultural personality traits and conflict management styles.

Firstly, referring to research question one (R1), differences in multicultural personality traits and conflict management styles scores according to gender, age, working-seniority and country of belonging were found. In particular, with respect to gender, in line with a previous study demonstrating higher levels of emotional intelligence in female teachers (Valente et al., 2019), findings indicated that women reported higher levels of Cultural Empathy compared to their male colleagues. Moreover, according to the research in the field of conflict management (Khalid, Fatima, & Khan, 2015; Rahim, 2001), female teachers were also more likely to adopt Integrating and less likely to adopt the Dominating style.

With respect to age and working seniority, older and more experienced teachers reported higher levels of Flexibility, were more likely to adopt the Integrating style, and less likely to adopt the Dominating style. From this perspective, in line with research finding that length of experience may represent a resource for teachers (Morris-Rothschild & Brassard, 2006), these results could be linked to the idea that teaching may enhance their actual ability and self-confidence to adapt to challenging situations. Therefore, they would be expected to opt for more enriching and less controlling strategies to deal with conflicts.

Furthermore, country specificities were also found, and they could reflect teachers' individual and cultural differences, as well as the specificities of the national and European educational contexts (European Commission EC, 2013; Polat & Ogay Barka, 2014; Rahim

Table 4
Relationships between multicultural personality traits and conflict management styles: path coefficients.

	Conflict Management Styles									
	Integrating		Obliging		Dominating		Avoiding		Compromising	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
Multicultural Personality traits										
Cultural Empathy	.24	.12	.19	.14	-.62***	.18	-.23	.17	.17	.14.
Open-Mindedness	.41**	.14	.45**	.17	.29	.19	.32	.19	.31	.18.
Social Initiative	-.02	.08	-.06	.09	.15	.10	-.26*	.11	-.08	.10
Flexibility	.02	.03	-.02	.04	-.21***	.05	-.12*	.05	-.01	.04
Emotional Stability	-.04	.05	-.20**	.07	-.08	.07	.03	.07	-.04	.07

Notes. SE, Standard Error. Adjusted for Country of Belonging.
*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

et al., 2002; Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002). For example, Italy and Spain only recently were converted into immigrant nations (OECD, 2016; Sanguilinda, di Belgiojoso, Ferrer, Rimoldi, & Blangiardo, 2017), and, accordingly, they report lower percentages of immigrant students from both the first and the second generation. Therefore, teachers working within these countries express great concerns about their competence to deal with multicultural/multi-languages classes (OECD, 2018). This may partly explain our findings on the greater adoption of the integrating style and the lower adoption of the dominating style by teachers from Italy and Spain. Indeed, these results could suggest teachers' need to spend more time and effort in carefully analyzing intercultural conflicts. Conversely, countries with long immigration history, namely Austria and Belgium, and, even more, Germany, are characterized by a significantly higher percentage of students from different cultural backgrounds. Germany, in particular, reports almost the highest percentage of immigrant students from the second generation worldwide (OECD, 2016). This could partly explain our findings on German teachers reporting higher scores in nearly all the conflict management styles (i.e., multi-strategic approach to conflict) as an expression of a more consolidated routine in handling cultural differences within the class. Nonetheless, these findings should be interpreted with caution in order to avoid stereotyping. Indeed, although research has underlined common characteristics within any country, as well as specific features across western and eastern cultures (e.g., individualistic and collectivistic values), people within the same country may significantly differ in their individual characteristics, beliefs and practices (Al-Issa, 2005).

From this perspective, the primary aim of the present study was to explore the associations between teachers' multicultural personality traits and conflict management styles. In line with previous research (Ahmed, Nawaz, Shaukat, & Usman, 2010; Antonioni, 1998; Euwema & Van Emmerik, 2007; Khalid, Fatima, & Khan, 2015; Moberg, 2001; Tehrani & Yamini, 2020; Yu & Chen, 2008), findings provided original evidence supporting significant relationships between teachers' multicultural personality traits and conflict management styles. In particular, findings has highlighted that teachers possessing higher levels of Open-Mindedness showed greater adoption of the Integrating styles (endorsing H1), as well as of the Obliging styles. These results are consistent with previous research finding significant associations between Openness and the Integrating style (Ahmed, Nawaz, Shaukat, & Usman, 2010; Antonioni, 1998; Khalid, Fatima, & Khan, 2015). These findings suggest that teachers' ability and propensity to understand diverse cultural perspectives and to maintain a critical and non-judgmental attitude may lead to a "mediating approach" adopted by teachers when dealing with conflicts occurring within the class. This negotiation approach, which is characterized by the prevalent recourse to integrating, obliging, and compromising styles (Zurlo et al., 2020), may represent the expression of teachers' high interest in students' needs and perspectives, high engagement in the educational relationship, and high willingness to stimulate discussion, exchange of ideas and inclusion. Therefore, this approach requires careful consideration when defining tailored interventions for supporting teachers in engaging in culturally qualified educational practices (Al-Issa, 2005).

However, findings have also suggested that teachers who, instead, possess lower levels of Cultural Empathy and Flexibility showed higher adoption of the Dominating style. From this perspective, we need to consider the undeniable necessity for teachers to also recur –whenever there are minor disruptions during classes and learning objectives should be maintained – to more directing and authoritarian strategies (e.g., by using verbal reprimands, giving demerits) (Doğan, 2016). Nonetheless, this approach may be not adequate to deal with intercultural conflicts, which do need to be faced to prevent students' feelings of not being understood and to avoid the escalation of the conflict (Al-Issa, 2005).

In the same direction, teachers possessing lower levels of Social Initiative and Flexibility showed higher adoption of the Avoiding style. These results were in line with the study conducted by Antonioni (1998) finding negative relationships between the Avoiding style and personality characteristics such as Extroversion, Openness, and Conscientiousness. Accordingly, findings indicated that teachers' lower propensity to be cooperative and on the front lines in actively proposing inclusive practices may also result in their higher likelihood to avoid facing intercultural conflicts. These findings should be carefully considered given the significant risks related to the underestimation of multicultural issues within the school context, in terms of widespread perceived social segregation, exclusion, and inequities by students and their families (Malone & Ishmail, 2020).

Finally, teachers possessing lower levels of Emotional Stability showed higher adoption of the Obliging style. This result is in contrast with the study conducted by Khalid, Fatima, & Khan, 2015, which has highlighted that individuals high on neuroticism are less likely to oblige. Notwithstanding, this finding can be understood by considering the situation-specificity of conflict management styles (Rahim, 2001). From this perspective, the adoption of the Obliging style is characterized by the attempts to reduce the differences by self-sacrificing own concerns to satisfy those concerns of the other party, so reaching a lose (teacher) – win (student) conflict resolution (Rahim, 2001). Although the adoption of this strategy can be appropriate when people believe that safeguarding the relationship and the harmony is central and it would bring benefits in future (Hammer, 2005; Tehrani & Yamini, 2020; Ting-Toomey et al., 2000; Yu & Chen, 2008), this style is more likely to be used by subordinates, rather than by people in charge of managing and leading (as the teachers are) (Rahim, 2001). Accordingly, these findings indicated that teachers possessing a lower tendency to regulate emotions during the negotiation process could be at higher risk to sacrifice their role as in charge of classroom management by accommodating students' wishes and perspectives. This can be particularly true in such cases in which teachers can feel overwhelmed and under pressure (Zurlo, Pes, & Capasso, 2016; Zurlo et al., 2020). Indeed, they would be expected to be more likely to accommodate rather than trying to reach a more satisfactory – but also effortful – solution.

Practical implications

Findings could have several practical implications for the support of school professionals (teachers, educators, school psychologists, and school leaders). In particular, these results could be used to prone the reflection upon the possibility to develop and promote more tailored evidence-based individual and organizational interventions as well as multicultural training courses disseminated within the European school context (Dell'Aquila, Vallone, Zurlo, & Marocco, 2020; Marocco et al., 2019; Vallone, Dell'Aquila, Zurlo, & Marocco,

2019; Vallone, Dell'Aquila, Zurlo, & Marocco, 2020). Indeed, the study offered an evidence-based contribution to developing interventions fostering teachers' awareness of the negotiation paths used to handle intercultural conflicts with/among students. The study findings may foster teachers' awareness of the multicultural personality characteristics that may potentially influence their own ways to act and adjust to the multicultural school context, successfully dealing with students from different cultural backgrounds.

From this perspective, although multicultural personality traits being less amenable to rapid changes and modifications, the development of tailored interventions and training courses could be targeted on the possibility to trigger and stimulate teachers' reflection and awareness processes. These interventions will be focused on how individual characteristics (i.e., multicultural personality traits) and situational characteristics (i.e. the specific intercultural conflict that occurred) interact with each other so as to significantly influence the individual strategies teachers would use to handle and regulate intercultural conflicts. From this perspective, interventions need to target the development/enhancement of teachers' competencies in 1. the careful assessment of the intercultural conflict that occurred within the class; and 2. the reflection upon their own personality characteristics (both multicultural personality traits and conflict management styles) which may prone or, conversely, represent a hindrance to face it. Indeed, interventions could also consider the possibility to effectively support teachers in achieving a greater understanding of negotiation processes. This may help teachers in the selection of the best moment-to-moment solution (Zurlo et al., 2020) to deal with intercultural conflicts.

Furthermore, interventions should also address the significant differences, that has emerged in the present study, with respect to multicultural personality traits and intercultural conflict management styles scores across socio-demographic characteristics. For example, it could be considered that men, younger and less experienced teachers may require further support in the development/enhancement of intercultural skills and competencies, and this may be also achieved, at the school levels, by fostering peer-to-peer mentoring programs.

Limitations and future research directions

Firstly, one limitation pertains to the cross-sectional design of the study, which prevents drawing any conclusions about the causal relationship between our variables. However, we can propose significant and original evidence on the associations between multicultural personality traits and conflict management styles among teachers. Secondly, the study relies on participants' self-reports; therefore, findings could be affected by the risk of social desirability bias. Thirdly, the administering of the questionnaire was online, potentially limiting the enrollment of teachers without Internet access. However, given the target population of teachers (increasingly accustomed to using ICTs), we consider this limitation could have influenced our results to a little extent. Otherwise, as the participation was on a voluntary basis, another limitation might be that teachers who were more willing and interested in achieving culturally responsive strategies for enhancing their classroom management strategies were more likely to participate in the study, while those with highly negative views of school experiences and less open to diversity might be underrepresented within the study sample. Finally, the study was carried out targeting teachers' individual characteristics only, and, although teachers were asked to remember intercultural conflicts experienced within classes (with and between students), it has not been deepened the features of the specific intercultural conflicts that have occurred. Also, although teachers participating in the study were involved in the ACCORD project, which provides an open online multicultural training course (including learning materials and lessons on intercultural and interethnic conflicts in the school context), we cannot accurately know the specific situation the participants had in mind when completing the survey. Future studies could also explore the characteristics of the specific conflict that has occurred (e.g., communicative misunderstanding; incompatible goals and needs; value conflict about religion, ideologies and politics).

Author Note

We have no known potential conflict of interest to disclose.

Acknowledgements

This research has been supported by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), project ACCORD (580362-EPP-1-2016-1-IT-EPPKA3-IPI-SCO-IN) from the Erasmus+. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Appendix A. Supporting information

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found in the online version at doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2022.01.006.

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