Psychosocial and Curricular Determinations of Intercultural Education Programs

Claudiu Marian BUNĂIAȘU¹,
Alexandru-Constantin STRUNGĂ²,
Aida Cornelia STOIAN³,
Monica TILEA⁴

¹Prof. Dr., University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Department of Communication, Journalism and Education Sciences, Romania, claudiu.bunaiasu@edu.ucv.ro

²Assist. Prof. Dr., University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Department of Communication, Journalism and Education Sciences, Romania, alexandru.strunga@edu.ucv.ro

(* corresponding author)

³Assist. Prof. Dr., University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Department of Communication, Journalism and Education Sciences, Romania, aida.stoian@edu.ucv.ro

⁴Assoc. Prof. Dr., University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Department of Romance and Classical Languages, Romania, monica.tilea@edu.ucv.ro

Abstract: The article is scientifically and axiologically justified by the assumption that the conceptual-methodological basis and the results in the field of intercultural psychosociology are sources and landmarks in the development of intercultural education and school curriculum. In this respect, this study highlighted relevant contributions in intercultural psychosociology, their educational and curricular impact and also explored some possibilities of developing intercultural education and reconfiguration of the school curriculum from the perspective of interculturalism. The article started from the general hypothesis that if we outline the students' social representations, attitudes and curricular preferences concerning intercultural education of students, correlated to the European dimension of education, then it will be possible to develop the premises for action and intervention model in the field of intercultural education curricula. The general hypothesis was operationalized in four particular hypotheses that were subsequently confirmed. The research was conducted using an adapted questionnaire (InterQ) based on authors' previous studies in the field of curriculum and was applied on a sample of 213 students from the University of Craiova. The article also includes critical analyses, personal opinions and authors' opinions on concerning socio-educational transposition of the research results from intercultural psychosociology, and also advances some directions for future research.

Keywords: *intercultural education; intercultural psychosociology; comprehensive approach of cultural diversity paradigm; intercultural competences; intercultural curriculum.*

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1. Introduction

The essential characteristics of contemporary society, which are set in the core of the values and dynamics of social relations in democratic communities, are: cultural pluralism, globalization, intercultural communication, sustainable development, solidarity, the approach of human rights as a supreme principle of social policies and human cohabitation. Research on the cultural diversity theme is of a multidisciplinary nature (cultural and social anthropology, social psychology, intercultural psychology, sociology, intercultural education) and involves fine-grained approaches to the dimensions of analysis – ethics, epistemology, politics (Proudhon et al., 2011, apud Potvin, 2014, pp.189-190, Abdallah - Pretceille, 2013, pp. 39-59). The paradigm of the comprehensive approach of cultural diversity is agnoseological and axiological referential of multidisciplinary research, which resulted both in the identification of solutions to the problems of the contemporary world and in the development and epistemological statute of scientific disciplines, such as intercultural education.

Intercultural psychosociology analyzes the relationships between the socio-cultural factors and the various components of the human personality or the psychosocial characteristics of the individuals and groups. The epistemological core of intercultural psychosociology has developed into the confluence of traditional psychology and cultural anthropology (Segall et al., 1999) and is based on the relations between: a) quantitative methodology, standardized of the traditional psychology centred on absolutist analyses of human groups without studying cultural references, sociological methodology, particularly sociology of culture methodology; b) the qualitative methodology of intercultural anthropology, centered on the study of cultural variables in identifying and analyzing the features of groups, communities; the qualitative methodology used in the theory of social representations and mental images.

2. Literature review

2.1. Theoretical frameworks in the field of psychosociology

Research into intercultural psychosociology and education is oriented towards several hypotheses derived from conceptions of the causal relationship between the characteristics of cultural diversity, intercultural processes and various registers of human personality. These hypotheses have led to several thematic sub-domains and a diverse methodological repertoire.

Starting from the assumption that a qualitative and nuanced analysis of the social and intercultural dimensions of multicultural societies is about the development of alternative and complementary reference models to regulate social relations, several studies have been carried out and some representative models have been proposed. These models have been paradigmatic and methodological milestones in the development of intercultural psychosocial and educational research.

G. Hofstede's research is a methodological milestone in intercultural psychology, the study of attitudinal patterns defining a multicultural organizational culture. Hofstede structured the group of subjects (from IBM's multinational US firm) into 40 samples corresponding to the national cultures he analyzed. The main investigative tool was the standardized questionnaire, whose results in the national samples were analyzed comparatively, using the factorial analysis technique.

The national cultural patterns in the organizational environment were grouped into five factors, integrated into a structural axiological model (Hofstede, 2003): individualism /collectivism (focusing on one's own person/focusing on the success of the whole team or group); the distance to power (the relationship between decision-makers factors and employees, officially or informally established); avoiding uncertainty (the attitude towards change); masculinity/femininity (focusing on efficiency and high performance versus focusing on the quality of organizational relationships); short/long term orientation (emphasis on strategic decisions, organization dynamics versus opportunistic attitude).

S. Schwartz's model proposes a typology of social values, grouped on the basis of their motivational level. Ten categories of fundamental values were identified (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001, apud Gavreliuc, 2011, pp. 136-137): 1. Goodwill; 2. Self-Direction; 3. Universalism; 4. Safety; 5. Conformism; 6. Achievement; 7. Hedonism; 8. Stimulation; 9. Tradition; 10. Power. Within these categories of general values, Schwartz has developed a grid of 57 individual values, correlated to the common motivational criterion (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001, apud Gavreliuc, 2011, p. 136).

Using the same research methodology as the Hofstede model, Schwartz verified some fundamental assumptions: 1) The ten types of values are universal, transnational and transinstitutional, differentiating individuals based on the importance they attach to these values in the global social system; 2) The ten types of values lie in an interactional dynamic, which implies compatibility and opposition relations between them. This assumption has been confirmed by the analysis of the differences between assessments of the great importance given to certain values and the low

scores for other values (in the case of the same individual or between different national cultures).

F. Trompenaars' model integrates the intercultural perspective of previous models. Seven dimensions of the value system were identified, that relate to the following polar relations (Trompenaars, 2012): universalism-particularism; individualism-collectivism; specific - diffuse; realization - description; effective involvement-affective neutrality; internal control - external control; sequential time approach - synchronous time approach.

2.2. The psychosocial and curricular impact of contemporary interculturalism research

The processes of interculturalism, analyzed from a psychosocial perspective, represent a basis for the development of intercultural education and for the development of curricular programs focused on the affirmation of cognitive and social performances in the context of cultural diversity. In the optics of postmodern pedagogy, intercultural education values the subjective dimension of interculturalism and the perspectives of the paradigm of education for cultural diversity. The interculturalism processes and the ways of achieving intercultural education are grounded in the idea that "understanding the cultures does not mean acquiring knowledge about them, but making a step, a move, a mutual recognition of man by man, is to learn to think about another, without entering a master speech before leaving the primacy of identification and marking. For this, the intercultural approach must be global and multidimensional in order to achieve dynamics and complexity and to avoid the classification process" (Abdallah-Preteceille, 1999, pp. 59-60).

The basic processes explored by the intercultural psychosociology and detailed through social and intercultural learning situations in formal, non-formal and informal educational contexts are: acculturation, enculturation, social cognition and socialization.

Acculturation refers to the processes and phenomena by which individuals or socio-cultural groups acquire the values and models of other cultures, spontaneously, forcibly or imposed (Abou, 2009). Extensive investigations of acculturation have been carried out by Berry and his collaborators, which have been legitimized and substantiated by the analyzes of types of changes specific to acculturation that can cause anxiety and depression, marginalization and social exclusion, psychosomatic diseases (Berry et al., 1987; Rudmin, 2008, apud Gavreliuc, 2011, p.56). Starting from the analyzed problematic contexts, Berry and his collaborators carried out the research of the two types of relationships: a) the distinction between

adaptation and acculturation; b) the relationship between adaptation strategies (assimilation, integration) and their effects in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals or cultural groups (preservation/abandonment of cultural identity references; desire, motivation to establish social relations with other cultural groups).

The overall conclusion of Berry's research is that none of the types of acculturations are the result of voluntary activities for the individual, being the negotiating effect of the social actors. In our opinion, intercultural education has as a mission the awareness of the process of acculturation, through educational and curricular programmes and strategies appropriate to the environment in which the acculturation takes place, as well as to the cultural pattern of the groups and individuals who voluntarily engage in socio-cultural integration. In this respect, the objectives of intercultural education programmes should be centered on the development of intercultural competences, objectified by: capacities to understand the socio-cultural references of the community in which they integrate; intercultural communication skills; socio-professional performances, asserted in the context of cultural diversity.

Enculturation is a process of informal learning of the references of cultural identity or of integrative culture, by leading individuals to acquiring attitudes and behaviours in accord with a certain cultural pattern. In a previous study, we analyzed the process of enculturation by reference to the subject of cultural learning, approached as "implicitly cultural, whose correspondent in the school education curriculum are the psychosocial elements of the hidden curriculum" (Bunăiașu, 2015a, p. 48). Starting from the premise that the cultural experience gained by informal means can be a source of development of strategies for social and cultural adaptation and integration, we advance the following hypothesis, which may lead to investigations in the field of intercultural education:

Educational and curricular programmes, developed on social and cultural learning experiences and developing the contextual elements favourable for intercultural dialogue, contribute to the development of intercultural competences of individuals (children, teenagers, young people and adults).

Unlike enculturation, socialization represents the deliberative process of developing integration capacities, of the interrelation and communication skills in multicultural environments. The means and tools of cultural and social awareness are formal, organized and coordinated by social, cultural and educational institutions.

Applied research in the field of intercultural psychosociology analyzes several types of determinations that have contributed to the conceptual and methodological development of intercultural education and the review of the curriculum from the perspective of interculturalism:

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Framework, Objectives, Hypotheses and Variables

Our survey is the first part of a larger study of the socio-educational and curricular determinations of intercultural psychology that we hope will offer new perspectives over the: social representations and mental images associated with interculturalism; the impact of the social assistance and educational counseling activities in the intercultural education programs, the integration of intercultural education competences in the framework of educational curriculum and the impact of interculturalism in teacher training strategies and policies at both European and national levels.

The issue of intercultural education has, in our opinion, deep roots in many fields of knowledge (social psychology, sociology, pedagogy, social assistance etc.) and it is, at heart, an excellent interdisciplinary area that we expect to substantially develop in the next decade, especially in the context of the immigrant crisis from Europe and United States and the rise of extremist movements rooted in fundamentalism, xenophobia, racism, homophobia and sexism. As such, an integrated approach to these great challenges need to take into account: the analysis of psychological processes of the contact between cultures, the development of psychic processes in the context of cultural relativism and the psychological dimension of cultural dialogue.

From a critical pedagogy perspective research and on the basis of these determinations we elaborated several objectives and hypotheses that integrate the analytical dimensions mentioned above, by trying to understand in the same time how the subjects view the cultural groups with a risk of cultural exclusion, the importance of intercultural education in universities, the importance of intercultural education to the European identity and understanding what type of activities are seen as appropriate for the groups that were included in the survey.

Concretely, in our research approach, we followed several objectives: (1) Understanding the impact of the current intercultural education curriculum on students for the university specializations included in the study; (2) Studying the students' attitudes to the cultural groups with a risk of cultural exclusion; (3) Studying the students' social representations on

intercultural education, intercultural education curriculum and European identity; (4) Identify and analyze curricular expectations and preferences of students from the university specializations included in the study, concerning intercultural education; (5) Analyzing the potential of an intercultural education curriculum framework for the university specializations included in the study.

We have identified the following general hypothesis: if we outline the students' social representations, attitudes and curricular preferences concerning intercultural education of students, correlated to the European dimension of education, then it will be possible to develop the premises for action and intervention model in the field of intercultural education curricula. From this general hypothesis we derived the following particular hypotheses: (1) Students consider that intercultural education is important in the construction of a European identity; (2) Students perceive children with parents that are living abroad as the group that needs the most social assistance through intercultural education programs; (3) Students perceive children with parents that are living abroad as the group that needs the most educational counselling through intercultural education programs; (4) Students consider educational counselling as the most important activity in intercultural education programs; (5) Most of the students have not experienced / witnessed any discrimination caused by the appurtenance to cultural group(s) with a risk of cultural exclusion.

To highlight the variables (perceived importance of intercultural education and educational counselling; perceived importance of social assistance and educational counselling activities through intercultural education programs; percentage of students who experienced / witnessed discrimination), we generally used as indicator the level of agreement, measured by a Likert scale with six levels of appreciation, and to highlight the importance of intercultural education for the development of European identity, we used as a 10-point scale.

3.2. Sample

The sample consisted of students from the following specializations: Primary and preschool education (undergraduate, Craiova), Primary and preschool education (undergraduate, CUDTS –Drobeta Turnu-Severin University Center), Educational management (graduate, Craiova), Educational counselling and career development (graduate, CUDTS); Conversion in Primary and preschool education (postgraduate studies, Craiova) in from the University of Craiova, Romania, Faculty of Letters, Department of Communication, Journalism and Education Sciences (n =

213). The distribution of sample specialization is the following: 34 students from Primary and preschool education (undergraduate, Craiova), first year of study; 30 students from Primary and preschool education (undergraduate, Craiova), second year of study; 40 students from Primary and preschool education (undergraduate, Craiova branch), third year of study; 16 students from Primary and preschool education (undergraduate, CUDTS), third year of study; 23 students from Conversion in Primary and preschool education (postgraduate studies, Craiova), first year; 19 students from Conversion in Primary and preschool education (postgraduate studies, Craiova), second year; 18 students from Educational management (graduate, Craiova), first year of study; 20 students from Educational management (graduate, Craiova), second year of study; 12 students from Educational counselling and career development (graduate, CUDTS), second year of study.

From the total number of 213 questionnaires, 212 were used in the study and 1 was excluded. 74% of the subjects live in the urban areas and 26% in the rural environment.

3.3. Procedure

The survey was organized between December 2017 and January 2018, with the permission of University of Craiova's rectorate. The sample comprised students from the all the Education Sciences specializations of our department (undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate) by using systematic random sampling. The InterQ questionnaire was applied during the seminar activities. The authors distributed the instruments online using Microsoft Forms tool. The general response rate was approximately 42,6%, for the students from all specializations.

3.4. Instrument

The first version of the InterQ questionnaire included 20 items organized into several categories: closed questions (17), open questions (3). At the level of content, the questionnaire measured the relationship between different variables such as:

- information sources concerning intercultural education (first item);
- The level of agreement to a series of statements (items 2, 3, 5, 6);
- Analysing several understandings of intercultural education (item 4) and its European importance (item 13);

- The inclusion of marginalized groups in educational programs (items 7 and 8);
- Potential cases of discrimination (items 10 and 11);
- Demographic data from the sample (items 14-20).

In the context of the present study, we understand by the notion of “cultural groups with a risk of cultural exclusion”, the appurtenance to several social categories: different ethnicities e.g. Roma, Hungarian; children with parents who are work abroad; immigrants and refugees; persons with other sexual orientation; persons with a different religion; persons with other confession but the same religion).

In the construction of the research instrument we used a 6-point unbalanced Likert scale because, according to Evans and Heath (1995): “(...) The unbalanced scales have slightly higher reliability than the balanced scales (...) Unbalanced scales also display a slightly stronger relationship with social characteristics, but they do not differ in their pattern of association with political preferences” (Evans & Heath, 1995, pg. 191).

The questionnaire was based on other similar investigative instruments related to intercultural education curriculum, from the perspective of the European dimension of education (Bunăiașu, 2015b), high school and adult education curriculum preferences (Bunăiașu, 2008; Bunăiașu, 2009), and in impact studies concerning the curriculum reform (Bunăiașu, 2011). We want to mention the methodological character of our investigative approach, focused on validating the questionnaire as an instrument to identify attitudes towards many different levels of intercultural educational curriculum, at national level. In this regard, we intend that, following the validation process, to advance the idea of standardization of this instrument for measuring attitudes intercultural education curriculum, in the context of European education.

We propose a study on internal consistency reliability, by calculating the Cronbach alpha for the questionnaire applied to students. For the questionnaire applied to students, we obtained a gross Cronbach alpha of 0.938, and a result of 0.946 for the standardized form (correlation-based form).

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the instruments, based on standardized items

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.938	.946	30

Note. The table presents authors' own research on the topic

The difference between the gross coefficient and the standardized one is given by the fact that the 5 items in the questionnaire thought to be relevant for the analysis of hypotheses were converted into 30 variables, so as to create the database in the used statistics software, SPSS (version 21).

The value of Cronbach's alpha is an accepted value, which proves the reliability of the responding students' answers and the internal consistency of our questionnaire.

Other important data provided by the application of Cronbach's alpha test refers to the statistical interpretation of items, establishing the average of items, their variance, covariances between items, as well as correlations between them (Table 1).

From the presented results, we may identify an average of items of 5.166, ranging between a minimum of 1.221 and a maximum of 8.737, which suggests a significant difference between the subjects' answers to these questions, thus ensuring variability.

Table 2. Summary of Item Statistics for the instrument

Summary Item Statistics							
	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	5.166	1.221	8.737	7.516	7.158	1.029	30
Item Variances	.890	.352	3.846	3.494	10.924	.391	30
Inter-Item Covariances	.299	-.083	1.040	1.123	-12.494	.036	30
Inter-Item Correlations	.368	-.105	.872	.977	-8.317	.037	30

Note. The table presents authors' own research on the topic

3.5. Statistical Data Analysis

In the statistical analysis we used the Microsoft Forms instrument and IBM SPSS 20 and we calculated the mean, median, standard deviation and percentage frequency distribution for each of the measured variables, concerning the intercultural education, the all the students included in the sample. More specifically, we used the following indices: (1) agreement to the importance of intercultural education for the general sample; (2) agreement to the importance of including different cultural group with a risk of cultural exclusion for the general sample; (3) the global mean related to the importance of intercultural education at European level. For the analysis of demographic data, we used percentage frequency distribution.

4. Results

The first hypothesis, “Students consider that intercultural education is important in the construction of a European identity”, was confirmed.

On item 13, students quantified the importance of intercultural education in constructing European identity (1 – lowest value rank, 10 – highest value rank). An average of 8.737 was obtained for the role of intercultural education in the construction of a European identity.

The second hypothesis, “Students perceive children with parents that are working abroad as the group that needs the most social assistance through intercultural education programmes”, was confirmed.

The information in table (Table) applied to item 7 is the value of the average equality coefficient for the Hotelling’s T-Squared Test) ($F= 16.955$) at a significance threshold $p<0.01$, which proves that the hypothesis is not null, i.e., in the students’ opinion, social assistance through intercultural education programmes addressed to children whose parents work abroad is importance.

Table 3. Summary of descriptive statistics concerning students’ perceived importance of European identity

Descriptive Statistics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
To what extent do you think that intercultural education is important in developing European identity?	213	1.0	10.0	8.737	1.9610
Valid N (listwise)	213				

Note. The table presents authors’ own research on the topic

Table 4. Summary of Hotelling's T-Squared Test score

Hotelling's T-Squared Test				
Hotelling's T-Squared	F	df1	df2	Sig
140.272	16.955	8	205	.000

Note. The table presents authors' own research on the topic

Under this item, we asked the respondents to evaluate the importance of social assistance through intercultural education programmes for the following cultural groups at risk of social exclusion:

Table 5. Students' attitudes concerning the importance of social assistance through intercultural education programmes for cultural groups at risk of social exclusion

No.	Criterion	Average
1.	Children with parents abroad	89.3
2.	Roma citizens	86.4
3.	Citizens of other ethnicities	78.9
4.	Immigrants and refugees	79.8
5.	Persons with a different religion	69.5
6.	Other groups	63.9
7.	Persons with a different confession (but the same religion)	66.2
8.	Persons with a different sexual orientation	64.3
9.	Hungarian ethnics	42.7

Note. The table presents authors' own research on the topic

The third hypothesis, "Students perceive children with parents that are living abroad as the group that needs the most educational counselling through intercultural education programmes", was confirmed. Under item 8, the respondents evaluated the importance of educational counselling through intercultural education programmes for the following cultural groups at risk of social exclusion:

Table 6. Students' attitudes concerning the importance of intercultural education through intercultural education programmes for cultural groups at risk of social exclusion

No.	Criterion	Average
1.	Children with parents abroad	90.6
2.	Roma citizens	90.6
3.	Citizens of other ethnicities	79.4
4.	Immigrants and refugees	77
5.	Persons with a different religion	76.1
6.	Other groups	71.8
7.	Persons with a different confession (but the same religion)	71.4
8.	Persons with a different sexual orientation	66.7
9.	Hungarian ethnics	65.8

Note. The table presents authors' own research on the topic

The fourth hypothesis, "Students consider educational counselling as the most important activity in intercultural education programmes", was confirmed.

The distribution of results for the 213 student subjects, under the variables representing the relevant activities of intercultural education programmes, is a single-mode (mode 6 – for most variables, mode 5 only for the variable on the problem-solving activity), symmetrical (with a Skewness value lower than the significance threshold, $p=1.96$) distribution.

Calculating the Pearson correlation between Educational counselling and the other activities proposed for intercultural education programmes, we can identify a significance threshold lower than 0.05, which means that, in the respondents' opinion, all mentioned activities are relevant for the development of intercultural education programmes.

Table 7. Summary of Pearson correlations between educational counselling and the other activities.

Educational counselling	Social assistance	Personal development	Problem solving	Conflict management	Foreign language communication	Use of new information and communication technologies	Education for democratic citizenship	Development of European identity	Education for human rights
Pearson Correl	.681	.573	.523	.519	.356	.307	.416	.379	.381

ation Sig. (2- tailed) N	.000 213	.000 213	.000 213	.000 213	.000 213	.000 213	.000 213	.000 213	.000 213
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Note. The table presents authors' own research on the topic

Under item 6, the surveyed individuals assessed the relevance of the mentioned activities for intercultural education programmes:

Table 8. Students' attitudes concerning the relevance of intercultural education programme activities

No.	Criterion	Average
1.	Personal development	93.0
2.	Human rights education	92.0
3.	Educational counselling	91.6
4.	Management of conflict situations	89.2
5.	Communication in foreign languages	86.8
6.	Education for democratic citizenship	86.0
7.	The use of new information and communication technologies	85.0
8.	Social assistance	84.9
9.	Development of European identity	84.9
10.	Problem solving	82.6

Note. The table presents authors' own research on the topic

The last hypothesis, "Most of the students have not experienced / witnessed any discrimination caused by their inclusion in cultural group(s) with a risk of cultural exclusion, was also validated. Under item 10, the respondents were asked to mention whether they encountered, during the study programme they are registered in, discrimination situations due to a colleague's inclusion in a cultural group with a risk of social exclusion. 9% of the respondents answered affirmatively, 87% provided a negative answer, and 10% said that they did not know.

5. Limits and Discussions

We consider that the high score for item 13 (8.73), a result confirming the first hypothesis, is relevant, since: a) it reflects an accurate perception of the importance of intercultural education by students included in the research sample; b) it opens new opportunities for drawing up and implementing intercultural education programmes in higher education and, in particular, at the University of Craiova; c) it confirms that the subjects included in the sample are close to their peers from other European countries, in terms of social representations and mental images, which creates the premises for common educational approaches at a European level.

The second hypothesis is also confirmed, outlining the subjects' awareness of the educational implications of the demographic phenomenon of migration. Students take note, with concern, of the importance of social assistance through intercultural education programmes mainly directed at children with parents abroad. The high percentage achieved in this context (89.3%) shows, on the one hand, the professional identity of subjects (students in the Pedagogy of Primary and Pre-School Education specialisation, teaching staff, school managers) and, on the other hand, the acute need to implement cultural education programmes including social assistance activities directed at children with parents abroad.

The third hypothesis is confirmed as well, focusing on two cultural groups at risk of social exclusion, who obtained an equal percentage under item 7: children with parents abroad and Roma people. Firstly, the results show the very high importance assigned to educational counselling activities, revealed by the higher score obtained by these activities, generally compared to social assistance ones. The high percentages obtained for the first two groups may be explained through the direct, concrete pedagogical experience accumulated by the subjects in the sample. Secondly, the obtained results underline significant differences between the importance assigned to social assistance and to educational counselling for various cultural groups at risk of social exclusion. For instance, Hungarian citizens (42.7% social assistance, 76.1% educational counselling), immigrants and refugees (79.8% social assistance, 77% educational counselling). These percentages reflect certain social representations (Hungarian citizens need educational counselling rather than social assistance), as well as a diffuse knowledge of cultural groups at risk of social exclusion (immigrants and

refugees). This latter group is not very familiar to the students in our sample, which could have social, cultural and educational implications. This social and educational representation opens the path towards the elaboration and implementation of intercultural educational programmes in the field of higher education.

The fourth hypothesis is also confirmed, given the high percentage assigned to personal development activities (93%), human rights education (92%) and educational counselling (92.6%). Personal development is perceived by the subjects as highly important for intercultural education programmes. Moreover, the subjects understand that the trainees in such programmes have a lot to gain on a personal, interpersonal and institutional level. Human rights education is also seen as fundamental to these programmes, which requires, in our opinion, some specific curricular intervention to be detailed in the conclusions section. Educational counselling is seen as a basic component of intercultural education programmes. Its relevance, as well as the relevance of other activities approached by our study, unfairly neglected in other European and national initiatives, should be based on intercultural psychosociology, which could open the path for comprehensive social and curricular research.

The last hypothesis is confirmed, as most students (87%) state that they have not found social discrimination situations so far. We consider that these results are contradictory to studies undertaken in the field, which, on the contrary, reveal problematic, potentially discriminating attitudes of large parts of the Romanian population, compared to the European average. These results may be explained in three ways: a) a confirmation bias, possibly reflected by the subjects' tendency to hide the cases of discrimination they may have found; b) the affective implications and the social and personal sensitivity associated to the approach of taboos (discrimination of immigrants, of persons with a different sexual orientation, etc.) from the perspective of the majority; c) it is also possible that the subjects may not accurately perceive the concept of discrimination and how it happens in everyday life. These three aspects can also be targeted by intercultural education programmes in higher education, which will be detailed in the last section.

6. Conclusions

Integration into the curriculum of the objectives, content and methodology of intercultural education is currently a priority of curriculum

policies, if we relate to educational systems within the European Union. Impact studies and comparative analyzes reveal differences between countries, highlighting the consistency of interculturalism in Western and Northern Europe curricula, limited to reproductive curriculum models without addressing the multidisciplinary intercultural curriculum paradigm (intercultural psychology, intercultural sociology, anthropology) and capitalizing on the comprehensive approach of cultural diversity.

In general, the thematic studies and research works analyze the curricular consistency of interculturalism processes, referring, especially, to two variables: a) the contexts of multiculturalism in which the curriculum is being developed and institutionalized; b) the degree of decentralization of the national curriculum (Nedelcu, 2008; Banks, 2001, Lorcerie, 2003; Meunier, 2008). In our opinion, the criterion for the curricular transposition of intercultural processes, explored by intercultural psychology, would be more relevant for analyzing and highlighting the characteristics of curricular models. In this way, the analysis and development of the intercultural curriculum would focus on situations of intercultural learning experiences, which would enable the development of intercultural competences and the achievement of social performance, in the context of cultural diversity.

The analysis of the impact of intercultural psychosocial research reveals complex analyzes in this respect and educational and curricular models for the development of for the development of intercultural education programs and intercultural curriculum. However, there is not enough research focused, on the one hand, on the operationalization of curriculum resizing models (Lunenbergh, 2002; MacDonald, 2003; Buyurgan & Kiassat, 2017) and, on the other hand, the validation of methodological reference frameworks on intercultural curriculum.

Starting from these limits of the field investigations and from the necessity of the curricular transposition of the interculturalism process, in the paper *Development Directions of the Intercultural Curriculum in Romania, from the Perspective of the European Dimension of Education* (Bunăiașu, 2015a), several methodological tools are developed: a) curricular audit tools, regarding the intercultural dimension of the curriculum; b) the methodological model of the design, implementation and evaluation of the intercultural curriculum; c) model of a cross-curricular educational curriculum *Social Relations in Multicultural Society*, which operationalizes the methodological model. Also adding the ways of professional development of teachers in the field of intercultural curriculum (Strungă & Bunăiașu, 2013; Bunăiașu & Strungă, 2016), we outlined a methodological basis for further investigations.

As future research directions, based on intercultural psychosociology, we mention:

a) shaping a curricular reference framework of the European intercultural curriculum aimed at developing the intercultural profile of European citizenship and responding to the current needs of the European community, marked by multiculturalism and the problems generated by the cultural integration of immigrants; this approach could be ultimately grounded in all the theoretical models of intercultural education and cultural psychosociology presented in this paper.

b) developing **didactics** of interculturalism, centred on strategies, programs and training situations that facilitate the development of intercultural competences;

c) development of social assistance and socio-educational counselling programs for pupils and students in multicultural schools and universities as well as for adults. Beneficiaries of these programs may be subjects in several situations: 1) belonging to minority or cultural groups that are in the process of integration into the culture of the majority population; 2) cultural groups at risk of social exclusion; 3) students, students involved in intercultural learning programs, developing intercultural competences and exercising intercultural communication skills (school curricula, extracurricular programs, educational partnerships, non-formal education programs, university academic programs, summer schools).

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