

Mediation

A CURRENT REVIEW AND THEORY DEVELOPMENT

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The mediation literature of the past decade is organized into six topical areas: the determinants of mediation, mediation per se, approaches employed by mediators, determinants of the mediation approaches, outcomes of mediation, and determinants of the mediation outcomes. The literature that describes mediation per se, mediation approaches, and outcomes is very descriptive rather than theoretical. The literature that deals with the determinants of the mediation, approaches, and outcomes is quite descriptive but also provides an ample base for theory development.

“**T**he women of the North people (Vikings) do not fight among themselves, and often did I see them intercede in a growing brawl of two men, to quench the rising anger” (Fadlan, quoted in Crichton 1976, 111). As this entry from Ahmad Ibn Fadlan’s diary in 922 reveals, mediation has lengthy historic roots, and recent reviews indicate that it has been used extensively for decades to resolve conflict (Wall 1981; Wall and Lynn 1993). During the past decade, reports on the practice and study of mediation have increased linearly, if not exponentially, and such an expansion provides the motivation to review and analyze the mediation literature during this period. In the following pages, we proffer such a review, with an emphasis on the literature from the past 5 years.

Mediation is assistance to two or more interacting parties (Kressel and Pruitt 1989) by third parties who (usually) have no authority to impose an outcome. Not only is mediation one of the oldest forms of conflict resolution, but it is also used worldwide, with examples found in China (Cohen 1966), Korea (Kim 1986), Malaysia (Provencher 1968), Poland (Olszanska, Olszanski, and Wozniak 1993), Azerbaijan (Keller 1991), Israel (Abu-Nimer 1996), Norway (Polley 1988), and Japan (Cortazzi 1990).

AUTHORS’ NOTE: Due to space constraints, a complete list of references could not be contained within this article. Such a listing (approximately 530 in number) can be obtained from the first author at WallJA@missouri.edu.

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