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“MEDIATION IN THE WORKPLACE: THE ROLE OF
HUMAN RESOURCE IN INTERNAL DISPUTES”

by

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MEDIATION IN THE WORKPLACE:
THE ROLE OF HUMAN
RESOURCES IN INTERNAL
DISPUTES

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ABSTRACT

Conflict is natural for human beings and it is part of their history, affecting personal and professional relationships. The way individuals manage conflict can vary according to their background, education, culture and beliefs. The humanity is frequently changing and new types of conflicts and ways of managing them also arise. Many companies use conflict management as the main approach to solve disputes. However, mediation has been demonstrated to be effective in conflict resolution, as this approach facilitates communication, and give power of decisions to both parties. The objectives of this study are to investigate the contribution that mediation could bring to an organization's culture, to identify the approaches used by Irish organizations to manage internal conflicts and to demonstrate the advantages of Mediation for Irish workplace. The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Mediation in the workplace dispute. The methodology used in this study was quantitative research, as it involved surveys that were sent to HR professionals across Irish organizations. With the research it was possible to conclude that most Irish organizations are not aware of this tool. However, the study demonstrated the positive results obtained from the studied companies, demonstrating that this method helps to improve engagement, synergy and communication, increases productivity and reduce turnover.

INTRODUCTION

This work aims to evaluate the possible contributions of mediation in the management of interpersonal conflicts in organisations. We take as a reference point the basic assumptions of the techniques of conflict resolution. Alternative Dispute Resolution has become widely successful in the world. In addition, mediation is the most widely used process of ADR. This study addresses the field of Commercial Mediation in the Workplace.

Considered an important and powerful process, mediation is adopted and successfully consolidated in Ireland by the Mediation Act 2017. Mediation - as a way to positively influence the culture and climate of organisations, and with a view to the prevention and constructive resolution of conflicts. Over the past few decades, the workplace has undergone several changes, among which is human behaviour, the main change in an organizations environment is the way humans act and think in the professional environment (Folger, et al., 2013).

We are individuals different from each other, each one is marked by different ideologies and thoughts that could characterize the way each person performs in the workplace. This diversity between people, if not managed well, at certain times could cause conflicts of ideas, which could be harmful to the progress of work and to the relationships of professionals who are involved. Workplace conflicts may not always have their origin in the corporate environment, almost eighty percent of the cases are not directly recognized by the parties engaged.

The research question is what contributions could mediation bring to Irish organizations in relation to culture and conflict management? The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Mediation in the workplace dispute. The objectives of this study are to: (1) investigate the advantages of mediation

process, (2) identify the approaches used by Irish organizations to manage internal conflicts (3) demonstrate the advantages of Meditation for Irish workplace.

Mediation - a peaceful conflict resolution technique - has been successfully applied in several areas of interpersonal disputes. In general, the world economic system has shaped social paradigms and behaviours based on the principles of "competition" and "total quality, which seems to be causing reflexes in interpersonal relationships and, more specifically, generating conflicts and disputes in the most diverse relationships. In the search for a solution to organisational conflicts, they adopt certain models of interpersonal conflict management that do not always achieve the desired results.

Another motivator of this research is clearly expressed by Zikmund, et al., (2009) when they affirm that "the modern technological environment, in particular the invasion of the media and the use of electronic devices in daily life, progressively shapes another intellectual and affective behaviour". It was understood, from this statement, that some changes can bring three imbalances to a system, and interpersonal conflicts can be one of the consequences of the most usual adaptation attempt.

The continuing challenges of social change in this new century activate our ability to seek new responses and new behaviours. How to respond to such demands? How do people know what skills and competencies are needed? Is mediation a good instrument for changing culture, or is its application only resolving and not preventive? In addition to the ethical and philosophical issues linked to research, we face a series of problems related to the preparation and disposition of the participants.

In order to answer questions and concerns, theoretical support was sought in the Mediation method - a peaceful conflict resolution technique - developed by the Harvard University School of Law.

Someone facing a conflict will likely suffer certain fears that he cannot identify on his own. Conflicts are usually interpreted as a threat or harm, and the mediator seeks to hear a mixture of facts, emotions, perceptions, assumptions, stereotypes and opinions. Some of these elements may be pertinent and others not so, but the mediator has to find meaning for everything quickly, reformulate and return so that the person understands the repercussion of what he is doing or saying.

This process of educating the parties to have effective and accurate communication is a fundamental aspect of mediation. The theories that underlie mediation are comprehensive and come from different branches of science; therefore, there is a diversity of contexts in which mediation has been applied, namely: in the commercial, labour, environmental, organisational and school areas. Innumerable forms of conflict resolution have already been developed by the human being, in order to be a social being and, therefore, divergences of thoughts and different ideas could generate conflict between humans, since people have unique behavioural characteristics.

However, in the professional environment, this situation may be minimized as soon as the manager knows how to be a conflict mediator. The Human Resources manager has a fundamental role in mediation, besides knowing how to identify the different behaviours of the professionals, it is necessary to understand the causes of these conflicts and find the best solution to the problem in order to avoid the existence of a hostile workplace and the damage to the development of work in general. In addition, it happens that, more and more, there is a need to adapt to more friendly and less costly ways to dissolve obstacles, such as mediation, conciliation and arbitration, mainly when focusing on an increasingly competitive and demanding business market.

This literature focuses on the importance of policies, values, norms and procedures provisions all of them associated with positive and negative outcomes for individuals after workplace conflict.

Research methodologies and analysis techniques were used to try to understand the diversity of experiences and issues related to workplace mediation. In accordance with the deductive approach the hypothesis was developed as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Irish organizations are not aware of mediation as a type of conflict resolution.

Hypothesis 2: Mediation is an integral aspect of organizations culture.

Hypothesis 3: The professionals from Human Resources are capable to mediate conflicts through this approach.

Hypothesis 4: Mediation is effective in improving communication and engagement.

CHAPTER 1 - REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.1 Conflict Behaviour

From the beginning of recorded history, evidence of conflict seems to be present in all societies and human relationships (Moore, 2003). In general, it is completely understandable that human interaction produces conflict and their behaviour reflects on their interaction (Folger, et al., 2013). According to Cahn & Abigail (2014) conflict occurs in common sense: it refers to the idea of a clash, struggle, disagreement and war.

However, as Follet cited by Metcalf & L. (2003) observed, conflict can be considered without ethical prejudice, in which case it is not necessarily good or bad. According to his perspective, we must abandon the notion of conflict as war and only admit it as the appearance of differences: of opinions or interests. Conflict is an integral part of life, and we should channel it towards benefits for ourselves.

To illustrate this idea, Follet cited by Metcalf & L. (2003) uses two situations: that of the mechanical engineer and that of the violinist. These two professionals deal with friction positively. The engineer is concerned with eliminating friction, but he knows how to use it or capitalise on it in terms of building something positive. For example, the transmission of power by belts depends on the friction between the belt and the pulley.

The friction between the driving of the locomotive's wheels and the rails allows the train to move. In the case of the violinist, the friction of the bow next to the strings allows the sound. Furthermore, stresses Follet cited by Metcalf & L., (2003), it was through friction that primitive man discovered fire and revolutionized the human evolutionary process. However, we have to admit, observing the

daily reaction of people, that there are two apparent trends regarding the conflict: one negative and the other positive.

In the first case, conflict is seen as harmful, which must be avoided in any case, and many people claim to be averse to conflicting situations. In the second case, although the possibility of adverse effects in conflict situations is admitted, conflict situations are opportunities - because of differences of opinion and vision - for learning and enrichment in personal and collective terms. In this case, the negative aspects must be minimized in order to benefit from the conflict (Follet cited by Metcalf & L., 2003).

Conflict is the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatibility and the possibility of interference from others as a result of this incompatibility (Folger, et al., 2013, p. 4).

According to this definition, in general, conflict is the result of divergences and differences between people. People's behaviour is influenced by their way of life based on their habits, customs and traditions which may generate incompatibility among individuals; therefore, conflict has developed over time. Thus, the main concept is an opposition of ideas, people, or interests, which result in divergence or incompatibility of opinions and situations (Folger, et al., 2013).

Conflict emerges between people who have some type of relationship influenced by human behaviour. Therefore, conflict is a natural process of human interaction which may occur often or intensively depending on the type of relationship they have. In 2010, Jeong declared that conflict is an opposite social manifestation which involves two or more people.

There are cultural divides between ethnic, racial, and religious groups. There are political and

value barriers that separate conservatives and liberals, gender gaps between the sexes, economic and power divides between upper and lower economic and social classes, and age barriers between younger and older citizens (Cahn & Abigail, 2014, p. 2)

As stated by Cahn & Abigail, divergent opinions arise conflicts since people have different or similar backgrounds, habits, or customs which make them discuss in adversarial ways. Even though people try to avoid conflict, some of them will end up getting involved in it, in other words, conflict is inevitable.

A conflict occurs due to the difference in objectives and personal interests. It is an inevitable part of human interaction which may relate to disagreement, non-cooperation, opposition, among others. Besides the different factors mentioned above, there may be interference by one of the parties involved, that is, whether an individual or group attempts to achieve their own interconnected objectives, the other party may end up interfering with their search to achieve their goals (Cahn & Abigail, 2014).

Gallo (2017) says that conflicts are divided by types with their own characteristics, for instance, relationship conflict is the one that arises between individuals when two or more people face a situation differently. Task conflict is directly related to the performance of activities in which the parties are unable to achieve the goal. Process conflict refers to disagreement over procedures or methods. Status conflict emerges in a situation in which a job is concluded and only one person or manager received a credit for it.

Conflict interaction may be promoted through competition, battle and fight. Although it is a dispute, when there is group collaboration, members work together in order to win this dispute. In other words, the team is encouraged by competition to cooperate with each other in order to achieve their goals

and defeat the other group (Moore, 2003).

All things considered; the authors demonstrated that behavioural relation between people is directly connected to conflict. They highlighted that, in the present time, conflict is inevitable and always evident. However, understanding it, and knowing how to deal with it, is fundamental to one's personal and professional success (Cahn & Abigail, 2014; Folger, et al., 2013; Gallo, 2017; Jeong, 2010; Metcalf & L., 2003; Moore, 2003).

1.1.1 Workplace Conflict

Over the past decades, societies have experienced transitions in different sectors such as technology, economy, politics, among others. In general, these changes have generated some instabilities in organizational environments which affect the labour market directly. As a result, organizations and companies have been developing a new structure of interconnected conflicts (Hughes & Byrd, 2015).

Conflict can be a severe problem in an organisation, as it is capable of generating situations that can make coexistence among employees impossible. For Robbins (2002, pp. 373-374), the conflict is "[...] a process that begins when one of the parties realises that the other party affects or may affect, negatively, something that the first considers important".

Therefore, conflicts are part of the life of every organization and, in many cases, they are fundamental, not necessarily negative. However, it is worth mentioning that, for the conflict to reach its objectives, it must be well-managed and conduct the organization towards positive changes for example, it could innovate, create strategies, increase production, make new products, etc (Folger, et al., 2013).

Workplace conflict can be defined as involving differences of view and conflict between individual employees and their employer; among individuals; and between groups of employees, whether unionized or not, and their employer (Teague, et al., 2015, p. 2).

Teague's, et al., (2015) agree completely with Cahn & Abigail, (2014) words and highlighted that sometimes, this disagreement emerges from supervisors to subordinates or in reversed order. Generally, workplace conflict is a result caused by misunderstanding rather than bad faith, different backgrounds, different interests, different opinions on procedures and policies, etc (Waring, 2020). Every worker has their own behaviour, personality, beliefs, tradition, customs, and all co-workers constitute the workplace.

The authors have mentioned that there are several definitions of conflict; for a better understanding of conflict in the workplace context, it is most appropriate to say that it is a misunderstanding of information, divergence, absence of agreement or understanding, opposition of interests and opinions between people or groups related to the coexistence of people and social groups (Cahn & Abigail, 2014; Folger, et al., 2013; Teague, et al., 2015).

According to Chen, et al. (2016) the interference that expands because of conflicting relationships could go beyond the limit of what is acceptable in the work environment, making it impossible to reach organizational goals. Therefore, workplace conflict may be frequently recognized in an organization and it is unavoidable to interpersonal relationship because of these incompatible relationships within the workplace.

Workplace conflict involves a dispute between two or more co-workers in an organization. Most of them involve misunderstanding, differences of opinion on procedures and policies, different perspectives at work, etc. Analysing workplace conflict is difficult because it arises in different

settings, in other words, many levels of conflict may occur. Therefore, companies, corporations and organizations should be prepared to deal with it. Furthermore, Human capital is extremely important to the workplace, people must be in synergy (Pathak, 2010).

Nowadays, daily work has a strong influence on people's lives and emotions. For example, workers and co-workers are engaged in an important work project which may result in positive feelings, just as a discussion may lead to feelings of concern. Accordingly, it is essential that the workplace, in some way, provides a pleasant work environment, as it is perceived that a good environment influences productivity, and, consequently, the progress of work (Lipsky, et al., 2003).

Although co-workers often try to avoid conflict, it occurs all the time. By ignoring and rejecting it, some employees assume a passive stance, or they do not make any interaction with it, which may generate damage to an individual's health and well-being. Therefore, the management of conflict is essential to identify, characterize, and analyze the occurrence (Dreu, et al., 2007).

All things considered; it is extremely important not to avoid workplace conflict and essential for organizations to improve and develop their policies and procedures in consideration of their own employees. According to Cahn & Abigail (2014), an organization should identify the workplace conflict in order to know the goal or goals that employees are trying to achieve. This process of identity concerns an adversarial path that a person desires for himself or herself and it is common for workers to do something without the consent of their head supervisors.

Organizations often engender conflict when they create issues for parties, such as struggles over promotion, battles over which projects should be funded, and debates over strategic directions. Sometimes conflicts in organizations are displaced: Parties angry due to perceived personal slights may express their frustration in ways that are more legitimate to the

organization, such as attacking a plan the transgressor is presenting in a meeting. By cloaking their personal grievance in formal terms, they are able to exercise their anger. Organizations also constrain conflict behaviour. In organization that is comfortable, conflicts may be suppressed (Folger, et al., 2013, p. 6).

Nowadays, companies must be prepared and should have managers or supervisors who are able to lead people and deal with conflicts; soft skills are required more than ever for better communication. When managing a team or group, leaders should support their employees in performing the tasks and at the same time, they should be able to identify conflict from the beginning and to know how to deal with it (Shearouse, 2011).

Therefore, managerial competence has considered communication skills as essential for the workplace and the key to transform a destructive conflict into a constructive conflict and achieve success. As reported by Folger et al. (2013), misunderstandings and communication problems are affecting business environments and are usually the most common causes of conflict.

Conflict interaction is influenced by the interdependence of the parties. Interdependence determines parties' incentives in the conflict. There is an incentive to cooperate when parties perceive that gains by one will promote gains by the other or losses for one party will result in corresponding losses for the other. There is an incentive to compete when parties believe that one's gain will be the other's loss (Folger, et al., 2013, p. 5).

One of the main causes of workplace conflict are changes. These changes arise mainly due to market pressure, forcing the organizations to adapt to new realities. There is a wide range of changes such as behavioural, technological, structural, which aim to improve efficiency in the search for results, to increase or maintain profits, to reduce costs, to update organizations in all aspects, to grow or remain in the market (Deutsch, et al., 2006).

On the other hand, if workplace conflicts are not properly and timely managed, they may become harmful, and produce unfavourable consequences for everyone involved (Lipsky, et al., 2003). The question that arises is how organizations deal with their conflicts and what is, or should be, the role of the Human Resources in managing conflicts. A lot of internal disputes in the workplace are resolved on a day-to-day basis through dialogue and common sense. However, when the differences are not solved, they become conflicts and the results may be costly for the relationship between employees and the corporation.

Individuals and organizations have been harmed by workplace harassment (Lopez, et al., 2009). The majority of workplace harassment is destructive and violent; however, it is crucial to have acknowledgement in management with a collaborative approach to reaching a settlement (Insenhart & Spangle, 2000). The workplace has been frequently involved in different negative conflicts, and the most common are bullying and sexual harassment (Cassidy, et al., 2014). Moreover, discrimination of gender, sexuality, race, migration and religion, among other examples that constitute a list of violent and destructive conflicts.

Humiliation, psychological or physical, non-verbal or verbal abuse are among the various types of mistreatment from employees to supervisors or from managers to subordinates. Coworkers have been experiencing bullying in the workplace and this has been causing damage to the organizational environment (Einarsen, et al.; Rayner & Keashly; cited by Einarsen, et al., 2009). Bullying in the workplace is defined by an unpleasant and hostile environment where colleagues repeat offense against an employee (Einarsen and Raknes, cited by Einarsen, et al., 2011). The organizational environment has been damaged by workplace bullying in a range of ways, among them are absenteeism, turnover, productivity, effects on observers and witnesses, etc (Einarsen, et al., 2009).

According to Barmes (2016, p. 13-14) workplace bullying is classified by these negative behaviours mentioned below:

Persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, abuse of power or unfair penal sanctions, which make the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, which undermine their self-confidence and which may cause them to suffer stress.

Workplace sexual harassment has been defined as a form of gender harassment that is a disagreeable behaviour of a sexual nature (Einarsen, et al., 2011). Das (2009) explains that sexual harassment is a form of conflict that takes place in a business environment where the majority of cases of the victims are women rather than men. A hostile organization has addressed this type of behaviour, to the victim's characteristics and the social context is influenced by derived criminology issues¹.

On the other hand, when conflict is professionally managed, it is beneficial for the building of knowledge and for the whole organizational environment. In addition, conflict may develop team effectiveness and become constructive while it may stimulate creativity and innovation. As it has been pointed out, conflict may improve the quality of decision-making by admitting all the individuals to be evaluated, especially those that are defended by minorities or unusual (Teague, et al., 2015).

All in all, conflicts are important or essential to the workplace since each particular way to execute a job and different points of view may deliver new ideas and make employees more engaged and competitive in the organization (Teague, et al., 2015). It is crucial that employees are satisfied with their work and proud of their performances. Consequently, this contributes significantly to teamwork.

¹ Criminology issues: (1) the power differentials approach, and (2) a “routine activities” (Das, 2009, p. 909)

since it allows employees to be more committed to the organizational environment and more and more connected to it.

1.1.2 Conflict Management

Conflict management is fundamental and an imminent tool to organizations, moreover, communication is regarded as the key to managing it. Landau, et al., (2001, p. 5) declared that organizations usually “hate conflict” and that in the past, it was considered as “shameful”. However, over the past few years, conflict management has been improving and developing.

Conflict management is the communication behaviour we employed based on our analysis of a conflict situation. Productive management of conflict situations includes flexibility and the belief that all conflicting parties can achieve their important goals (Cahn & Abigail, 2014, p. 23).

Evidently, conflict emerges all the time in a business environment, organizations should be prepared to manage conflict with flexibility and communication behaviour. Therefore, considering tools to manage, analyze, and examine conflict in a profound way may transform destructive conflict into constructive (Desivilya & Lidgoster, 2010).

As explained by Van Slyke in 1999, initially, it is essential to understand that the factors could affect the process of resolution; afterwards, it is advisable to develop and improve strategies to recognize “solutions to conflict”. Therefore, these variables establish a fundamental role in demonstrating if conflict attempts to be constructive or destructive. Conflict is affected by the variables below:

The nature of the issue; the size of the conflict; issue rigidity; the situation and the environment; individual personalities, traits, and dispositions; conflict management orientation and strategies cultural influences; and conflict management skills (Van Slyke, 1999, p. 15).

Gross et al. (2013) had mentioned that it is evident that the workplace productive capacities are directly connected to impacts of conflict, as a consequence, the most negatively affected areas are “in terms of legal liability, adverse publicity, and social outcomes”. Therefore, they had emphasized that conflict management instead of concentrating on workplace productivity, should focus exclusively on the concern for employees. In addition, they considered that this attitude collaborates and cooperates with a positive view of the business environment and it will decrease “negative external consequence conflict”.

According to Folger, et al. (2013) , organizations should identify the common ground of the conflicts as well as analyse the difference between them; this process is fundamental to have control over conflict and escalate its cycle. The benefit of differentiation is that there is a preparatory understanding of both parties’ interests, issues and positions, which coordinates the legitimacy of their issues and, eventually, both parties may see that they could contribute to resolving it. Cahn & Abigail (2014) agree with Folger et al. (2013) about the differentiation phase and the importance of managing conflict. This part produces interaction pattern which is prevalent in conflict communication.

Follett cited by Metcalf & L. (2003) distinguishes three methods for dealing with conflicts, which she defines as follows: domination: when it involves victory on one side over the other. This is the easiest way to deal with conflicts, particularly when people want quick results, but it is generally not the most suitable in the long run. An example of this type of solution has been observed in war conflicts

or wars, which are often recurrent. Commitment: when the parties involved give up something or give in a little in order to have the conflict suspended and resume the regularity of the situation. This type of solution is the basis of union tactics and collective bargaining in the area of work. Integration: involves the Integration of two desires that are preserved through a solution that does not imply sacrifices for the parties involved in the conflict. Follett exemplifies with a simple fact experienced by her (Follett cited by Metcalf & L., 2003).

In the Harvard library, once, in one of the smaller rooms, there was someone who wanted the window open. Follett (cited Metcalf & L., 2003) preferred to keep it closed. To resolve this conflict, they decided to open the window of the adjoining room, where no one was sitting. Now, this solution did not involve Domination, and neither did it involve Commitment because there were no restrictions on the parties' desire, but Integration. Follett did not want the north wind to blow directly over her, and her roommate just wanted a more ventilated environment, no matter where it came from the breeze. According to the author, this type of solution is still a challenge for decision-makers in conflict situations.

Deutsch, et al., (2006) points out that there is a conflict when incompatible activities appear. An activity that prevents or interferes with the appearance or effectiveness of another activity incompatible with it. Such activities can originate in one person, between two or more people, between two or more groups.

By analyzing and examining human behaviour, different conflict styles arise which are recognized by the nature and quality of interaction. Assertiveness and cooperation are specified components based on conflict behaviour (Schermerhorn et al., cited by Folger, et al., 2013). Competition and self-interest and persuasive techniques are evident characteristics of behaviour that an assertive individual

address (Thomas, cited by Blair & Desplaces, 2018). As a consequence, this type of individual does not consider others' interests. Neglecting to his or her interests is a prevalent behavioural characteristic of an apathetic individual; however, this type is cooperative (Ruble & Thomas, cited by Folger, et al., 2013).

Therefore, the context of dispute is considered a collaborative approach that provides satisfaction to achieve a solution for both parties. Even though a collaborative approach is the best option, it is not often possible due to completely different "limited resources, time constraints, opposing values, and incongruent goals" (Thomas, cited by Blair & Desplaces, 2018 p. 40). Conflict management provides a manager or leader with a strategy to minimize impacts arising from human relations within the workplace. The cause of conflict could be diverse, however, lately, there has always been a factor of human behaviour.

According to Folger et al (2013, page 141,142)

[...] a critical requirement of constructive conflict management is thorough and successful differentiation of conflicting positions. Before they can move to an integrative solution, parties must raise the conflict issue and spend sufficient time and energy clarifying, pursuing the reasons behind those positions, and acknowledging their differences. By bringing the conflict out, a triggering event sets the stage for constructive resolution. It opens the possibility of clearing away problems and tensions that undermine relationships or group performance.

There is, of course, no guarantee that a constructive resolution will happen. [...] uncontrolled escalation and destructive avoidance can also develop during differentiation. How the parties handle differentiation is the key to whether it becomes destructive or constructive. And how differentiation is handled depends in on specific responses to the triggering event, which are shaped by parties' access to and use of power.

Conflict management within a private or public organisation, it is necessary to recognise the existence of several forces acting simultaneously. The most significant is the interaction between the individuals that compose it. It should also be noted that among the prominent roles of the manager is the search for better results for the organisation. What differs public from private administration is the purpose. A private sector company aims to increase its profit and the public sector company aims to increase the efficiency and effectiveness rates that do not necessarily correspond to profit but to a better rendering of services to society (Cahn and Abigail, 2014; Folger, 2013).

The private and public sector is composed of employers and employees that normally have interest conflicts. With the daily coexistence in the workplace it is natural to have people disagreeing about ideas, behaviours and way of doing things. Being necessary for managers to develop a knowledge about conflict management. It is possible to observe the great importance of training the management team and HR employees to manage organisational conflicts, within the private and public organisations (Cahn and Abigail, 2014; Folger, 2013).

As explained by Folger et al., (2013), conflict may be a very stressful part of life even though it emerges naturally; however, there is a wide range of tools to manage them. Improving and developing methods to professionally manage conflict is crucial. Therefore, constructive conflict is related to the efficiency and efficacy in solving problems and making the whole organization's environment evolve.

1.2 Alternative Dispute Resolution

Alternative Dispute Resolution is an exploration of systems and methods which help solve divergences and or differences between people that have appeared along the process of human race. Consequently, ADR has become widely successful in the world (Waring, 2020).

Indeed, there is now increasing recognition of fact that every type of dispute can be the subject of a dispute resolution process. From business controversies to labour management disputes, ADR is becoming the preferred choice for resolution of conflict and disagreement, and the reasons are not hard to find. Litigation is a stressful undertaking. It is a costly, lengthy, public exhibition of differences, leading to a great deal of ill-will between litigants. In contrast, ADR processes are usually faster, less expensive, less time-consuming, and more conclusive than litigation (Fiadjoe, 2004, p. 1).

Therefore, several of types of ADR methods have occurred to make it easy for people to reach a better outcome. In addition, Waring in 2020 (p.135) has mentioned that “there is a whole range of ADR options available today”. Nonetheless, ADR is defined by a range of processes that help disputants resolve conflicts or disputes out of the court. However, litigation has been included as one of the diversity of techniques of dispute resolution (Fiadjoe, 2004).

It is extensive the applicability of ADR such as administrative practice, business, family, etc. In some cases, it should be applied before going through the court (Goldberg, et al., 2012). In general, ADR is a private process which regards people and companies addressing the importance at national, international or both levels (Fiadjoe, 2004). In relation Fiadjoe, (2004) and Goldberg, et al., (2012) words this type of process could be useful for communities’ dispute, relationships, companies, international institutions, internal relations, etc. Nowadays, thinking about conflicts, ADR is the key to solve them, therefore, making it more practical and worthwhile for range types of disputes.

Conflict is the outcome of misunderstanding rather than bad faith, different perspectives, differences of opinion on procedure and policies, divergent interests, etc (Waring, 2020). In these cases, ADR is perfectly appropriate to help disputants reach a better solution for both sides. The purpose of this method is to provide control to disputants' controversy (Brunet, et al., 2016). Looking at the literature about ADR, you may find different methods, approaches, tactics, or school of thoughts to solve disputes. In general, all of them are structured and interactive to facilitate the communication between disputants. Therefore, ADR has expanded the way of thinking about solution to reach a settlement.

Over the past decades, ADR has developed in a variety of systems such as adjudication, arbitration, conciliation, mediation, med-arb, mini-trial, negotiation, neutral evaluation, settlement conferences, summary jury trial, among others (Waring, 2020). As a result, there was an increase in demand for settling disputes without going through litigation.

Fiadjoe (2004) made an observation that ADR has preferentially been increasing due to the benefits it offers to disputants on their battles such as less stress, low-cost, speed, privacy, confidentiality and etc. It is worth mentioning that ADR is entirely supportive, flexible and sensible to contribute with the disputants in their main goal. The main benefit of ADR is that both disputants may eventually reach an agreement, which may be 'ruled' by the court. Whereas, in litigation a judge who will decide in favour or against the dispute may impose an unacceptable agreement between the disputants and they may feel that the judge has failed to understand them.

Nonetheless, numerous ADR methods share common, overlapping characteristics. For example, ADR methods such as negotiation, mediation and arbitration occur silently and privately. Disputants who strongly desire a lack of publicity are attracted to these methods. Similarly, both negotiation and mediation keep the disputants themselves in control of the controversy. No third party such as a judge, arbitrator, or jury is involved in "deciding" the dispute. These devices promote party control. Expense is another consideration that is highly

relevant. Adjudicatory mechanisms such as trial or arbitration involve more out-of-pocket expenditures than do negotiation and mediation (Brunet, et al., 2016).

As highlighted by Brunet, et al. (2016), both mediation and negotiation both do not have a third part in deciding the dispute, in other words, the disputants have the power to determine their outcome. These types of ADR make disputants more connected to achieve a better solution. Comparing Waring, Bunet et al., and Fiadjoe; they agreed that ADR is an effective tool to solve diversity disputes and also, they mentioned that this technique is immediately available for the disputants, as a consequence, this system is growing in order to resolve conflicts.

Brunet et al., (2016) emphasized that the disputant should also take into account the expenses if they chose ADR instead of going to court. Therefore, this modern method provides to the parties the power to choose who will be their mediator or arbitrator, consequently, it delivers privacy and a confidential meeting. Likewise, another observation is that the authors discuss the possibility of using mediation and/or negotiation to reach an agreement. The most common ADR is mediation, though its primary decisions could be made in an attempt to positively affect the natural course of human relations.

Besides, ADR is a way of dealing with relationship conflicts such as fights between families or neighbours, workplace conflicts, etc, through which an impartial third party assists people to better communicate, to negotiate and, if possible, the parties will reach the expected results. Theory and practice were included by scholars and researches in the field of ADR and Mediation; therefore, mediation has been used extensively to solve conflicts, in addition, it gives the opportunity to build stronger individuals, more satisfying relationships, and better societies (Roberts, 2007).

1.2.1 Mediation

Mediation in Ireland is supported by the Mediation Act, 2017 (S.I. No. 27 of 2017) which became operable on 1st January 2018 (ADR Guide 2018). Mediation is the most common process of ADR; this process is focussed on assisting a communication between disputants or parties during their disputes. The mediation process has been regarded as a negotiation facilitator between disputants; if the parties are engaged to have a better communication, this technique provides problem solving and may develop an agreement (Menkel-Meadow, et al., 2013).

Deutsch, cited by Herrman S. (2006), asserted that Mediation is an interactive tool forward to a constructive outcome and highlighted the benefits of going through it in case any conflict happens. According to the quotation, when disputants look at conflict from a new perspective, they are able to analyse the purpose of Mediation.

The goal of formal mediation is to change a competitive conflict to a co- operative interaction characterized by: (a) effective communication, (b) less obstruction, (c) orderly discussion, (d) confidence in one's ideas coupled with support for the ideas and concerns of other participants, (e) coordinated efforts to resolve the conflict, (f) high productivity, (g) power-sharing and mutual power enhancement, and (h) acceptance that the problem is a mutual problem that can be overcome (Deutsch cited by Herrman S., 2006, p. 22).

Looking at the characteristics mentioned in this study, Mediation has promoted the disputants to develop an overview of their conflict and to become productive and hard-working to solve their problems. Other characteristics must have pointed power-sharing and mutual power enhancement, in

other words, the disputant has to commit by producing mutual contribution to problem solving (Moore, 2014).

Mediation empowers both parties to be interactive allowing them to reach new perspectives and to find better solutions for their conflict. Moreover, cooperative parties provide a constructive outcome that is quicker than the non-interactive. On the other hand, in litigation, both disputants cannot contribute to the agreement on the solution, because they have to accept what the judge has decided (Herrman S., 2006).

As stated by Kovach (2014), there are some fundamental and attractive characteristics in this process, such as privacy, confidentiality, self-determination, saving time and cost, the opportunity for preserving relations, the potential for creative solutions, flexibility and informality in the process and avoidance of legal precedent.

Goldberg et al. (2012) describe the main advantages, among them is privacy, which is the process designed to protect the confidentiality of exchanged information. Another advantage is the reduction in expenses with mediation for an individual party as the mediator's fee is usually split between both parties. However, it may also have some disadvantages such as the time delay in resolution or if there is a failure to engage with one of the disputants.

In case of justice the fundamental cause of disadvantage for instance, one of the parties has higher power than the other one, in this case, the dispute becomes impracticable as a result of improper one of parties has inequality should not bargain the settle. Another example, a dealing about discrimination claims or antitrust could be enforced by court and there the judge would decide on the case (Menkel-Meadow, 2013).

It is possible to apply the mediation process in communities' disputes, civil, religion, business, etc (Kovach, 2003). In addition, the use of the mediation process has increased due to the majority of benefits. According to the authors, some of the characteristics have been identified as voluntary and conciliatory, which means that if the parties intend to achieve an agreement, both disputants have to be involved to solve their divergence. It has a wide range of qualities to mediate if you experience conflict, as the authors said that you have to analyse the pros and cons, which means that you need to give the opportunity to yourself improve your efforts to reach a solution (Goldberg, et al., 2012; Kovach, 2003; Menkel-Meadow, et al., 2013).

Even though some scholars recognized three stages, others established significant amount of variety (Alfini, et al., 2006). However, as agreed by Alfini, et al. (2006) and Goldberg et al. (2012), they believe that the mediation process consists of five stages. The first stage or the beginning consists of a pre-mediation, in which the mediator accesses initial information about the dispute. At the second stage is about understanding the conflict and developing the information. According to Goldberg, et al., (2012) in this moment, the mediator may announce a caucus if she or he considers it necessary.

At the third stage, the parties begin the dispute by specifying their issues, at this moment, both disputants require their own priorities. At the fourth stage, the mediator supports the clients in identifying their strengths and weaknesses to be able to develop direct and indirect negotiations in an attempt to reach a mutually satisfactory solution. During the fifth and last stage, the mediation is concluded, where both parties seal with the mediator representing each party an agreement for settlement. In other words, the mediator represents both sides of the solution to the statement (Goldberg, et al., 2012).

A “selective caucus” mediator might suggest a caucus when, for example, communication becomes so heated or the parties so volatile that constructive progress is threatened, an apparent power imbalance suggests that individual explorations of the underlying dynamic is necessary, or the mediator wants to “reality check” that proposals being considered are doable and optimal (Menkel-Meadow, et al., 2013, p. 234).

Practice for mediation may be classified in models which include facilitative mediation, evaluative mediation, transformative mediation and narrative mediation. Facilitative mediation is the traditional and original style of mediation in which the mediator attempts to facilitate the negotiation between the parties in conflict. Evaluative mediation is the style of mediation that focuses more on the outcome, and not on the interest or needs of each party. In transformative mediation, the mediator focuses on each party being able to understand the interests of the other. Narrative mediation is relatively new, this style focuses on the story of each party involved, reshapes the conflict and reaches an agreement (Goldberg, et al., 2012).

Analysing all this context of the process, an effective mediation provides the main goal to achieve a settlement to parties involved without risking the uncertainty of a court (Menkel-Meadow, et al., 2013). Mediation is an essential and widely used tool in demands that requires the presence of the mediator to resolve issues under debate. Such importance is revealed on account of the mediator has a specialist in negotiation techniques, that is, a third party alien to the conflict, who is brought into the negotiation process (Alfini, et al., 2006).

1.2.2 The Mediator

This section is about the mediator's role in the workplace mediation. It also contemplates the mediator common skill requirements such as educational degree, and/or experience, and specialized mediation training. The mediator who focuses more on the emotional aspect of the dissolution while helping the parties reach their own agreement or presumes to be fair because they are legal, may be seen as inept. Court-ordered mediations are more likely to be conducted by court personnel and it may reflect negatively, on the other hand, it may be the opposite when the parties are allowed to choose a skilled mediator for their case (Alfini, et al., 2006).

“A mediator should have communication skills and competence to manage adversarial relationships in order to reach an agreement.” (Jeong, 2010, p. 175). A third party, who conducts a mediation meeting, should be prepared to address all the information that could be interesting for both disputants. In addition, he or she has to be impartial, this person is the authority of the room mediation meeting. The mediator cannot make any decisions to solve a dispute; if any solution comes out, it must be for both parties and they have to agree (Alfini, et al., 2006).

Who should take the role of the “third person” and function as the mediator? In the view that dominates mediation, mediators are expected to be neutral. This means that mediators are unbiased, and there is no for them to take one party's side against the other. In formal or informal cases, it is not a good idea to mediate if the prospective mediator is related to one of disputants, is a friend, or knows one party better than other. Mediators must also make every effort to demonstrate their neutrality by equalizing the speaking time, giving the same amount of time and attention to both parties, and not spending time alone with one of the parties without spending the same amount of time with the other during the mediation. Certainly, mediators are not taking sides in the dispute (Cahn & Abigail, 2014).

Among the equivalent skills, the mediator's role must have organization, communication, education, negotiation, and, etc. The approach to mediation focuses on the interests of the parties and emphasizes

conflict management and conflict resolution. In addition, it is often referred to as creating an agreement; deal may help you achieve your business objectives and satisfy the other party's expectations by taking the all-or-nothing attitude out of the picture (Alfini, et al., 2006; Cahn & Abigail, 2014).

Measurement is a consensual conflict resolution procedure whereby an impartial third person - chosen or accepted by the parties - acts to encourage and facilitate the resolution of a dispute. The people involved in this conflict are responsible for the decision that best satisfies them. Mediation thus represents a mechanism for resolving conflicts by the parties themselves, who, driven by dialogue, find a thoughtful, effective and satisfactory alternative, with the mediator being the person who assists in the construction of this dialogue (Cahn & Abigail, 2014).

The role of the mediator is developed through a conversation, and in a short time, one can have a broad knowledge of the issues involved and become aware of what to do to arrive at an efficient and peaceful self-composition, essentially to be able to prevent certain conflicts (Alfini, et al., 2006). One of the main advantages of having a third person in the negotiation to resolve the conflict the parties gain time to calm down since they interrupt the conflict and the description to a third party; communication helps people to be clear, in addition to working so that those involved can hear the other party better (Cahn & Abigail, 2014).

In fact, as expressed by Cahn & Abigail, (2014), it is through dialogue between the two parties that mediation is consolidated. From the communication process between those involved, it is possible to visualise the best solution to the problems. It is necessary to consider all angles and adjust them according to the needs of the parties, instead of each one defending their own opinions. Through mediation, each party focuses on the true interest that is involved in the demand (Menkel-Meadow, et al., 2013).

Another aspect of mediation that is worth considering is that a separation should be made between personal matters and the problems brought up by each one. For the ultimate goal is the agreement between the parties. This is because, at the beginning of the procedures, there may be disagreements that must be overcome. In this sense, the role of the mediator is fundamental in order to appease possible ills, resentments and traumas that are not relevant to the process itself (Alfini, et al., 2006).

1.3 Workplace

According to Cahn & Abigail (2014, p. 250), there is a wide range type of organizations. In general, the workplace is classified by “small businesses, medium-sized companies, and large corporations”. Organizational environment is characterized by team or groups work together. Workplace can be defined two people or more who socialize, in other words, co-workers or colleagues support their own interests or they participate activity, even though, they have one affinity.

The workplace is employees or groups socializing this interaction (behaviour) could generate conflict as a result of it could affect the workplace. In addition, Human Resource Management could conduct the workplace conflict and become constructive. Furthermore, in certain circumstances HRM could implement and improve policies and procedures of the workplace (Lipsky, et al., 2003).

The way of dealing with conflict or manage them influence about the effect could be positive or negative, it has on the organization and employees, usually, the difference between destructive or constructive is the way of management. The causes of conflicts could be from internal or external pressures, misunderstandings of information processes and flows and market changes. However, in

the end, it is the people who are involved in the conflicts and their leaders or managers who need to solve them (McConnon & McConnon, 2008). These resources are connected to conflict is capital human, this factor is always an element of the problem and the solution, and as a consequence the role of Human Resource Professional in the issue begins.

Organizations have developed formal structures, such as grievance committees and ombudsman's offices, to mediate conflicts between employees and have hired mediators to cope with escalated labor-management conflict and sharp divisions between units. Mediation, though, is much more prevalent in organizations than only in terms of these formal approaches. Employees continually disagree over issues, interpersonal treatment, and attitudes. Rather than hire third party specialists, managers are expected to handle conflicts as they make decisions and resolve differences among employees. However, most managers have little formal training in conflict and are unprepared to meet the demands of mediation. (Herrman S., 2006, p. 344).

The most complex area in organization is Human Resource, company should be aware those professionals, they have renewed knowledge and information. Developing and expanding it, consequently, it brings better acknowledgements qualifications to Human Resource Management improves the support to all employees. In general, internal conflict is related to workplace conflict that as a result of co-worker's interaction in the workplace. It is essential any organization know how to managing human capital. Employees are the only source could be competitive advantage to organizational environment (Bassi & McMurrer cited by Kashyap & Chaudhary, 2019). The principal role of Human Resource Management is managed people.

1.3.1 Human Resource Management

The definition of Human Resource Management (hereinafter referred to as HRM) be understood according to one of people management, which is not restricted only to the instrumental character of

people management, but also includes a real and dynamic component, a logic of action that is at the same time political, social, ideological and behavioural time (Torrington, et al., 2014).

Therefore, the HRM of a company is made up of a group of people who recruit train and mediate for the organisation. This sector maintains as its main objective the maximisation of the return on investment directed to the hiring of employees, reducing possible financial risks to reach the balance of the needs of each individual with those of the company. Thus, people management is responsible for developing strategies focused on the well-being of workers, dealing with different management methods according to the capital provided by the company, keeping the concern on the company's organisational costs and legal procedures (Torrington, et al., 2014).

A contemporary approach was created regarding the administration of the HRM, which considered the employee as an element influenced in order to leverage the company's competitiveness in the current market. However, the power of administration depends directly on the cultural policies exercised by the company, and respect between employees and management must reign in the behavioural methods used (Beardwell & Thompson, 2017).

Currently, there seems to be a growing understanding between researchers and HRM professionals of the strategic nature of their activities. The study of the factors that contribute to the performance of people in their work it is being implemented in the organizations in order to gather information that helps in the elaboration of employee motivation strategies in order to offer a treatment according to the purposes and values that the company expresses (Armstrong, 2006).

The issue of HRM work within organisations has been focused on by scholars, in order to understand the factors that influence the performance of people in the work environment, as the organisation

depends on the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that people develop in their personal life and professional, regardless of the activity to which they are engaged (Armstrong, 2006; Beardwell & Thompson, 2017).

Labour relations have intensified debates regarding the consequences, social, economic and political, resulting from changes in the ways in which companies must conceive the organisation of work. The organisation of work means the necessary condition so that in the business process of transforming inputs into results, the participation of human beings is an integral part of the production of goods and services (Dessler, 2017).

HRM comes from four essential elements: development of capital and industrial factors, organisational factors of work, organisational principles (Beardwell & Thompson, 2017). HRM is one of the administrative actions used in the management of the set of resources: human, material and financial, deserving of a different treatment due to the purposes of the organisation and the values it expresses. The Human Resource policy is possible to be implemented by organisations regardless of their field of activity, size or quantity of available resources. The HRM grows as companies recognise the need to manage their workforce (Torrington, et al., 2014).

1.3.2 The Role of Human Resource Manager

Historically, the HR manager was responsible for each of the six HR functions. A human resource management professional is an individual who normally acts in an advisory or staff capacity, working with other managers to help them address human resource matters. Often, HR departments are created, with the central figure being the HR manager or executive. The HRM professional is primarily responsible for coordinating the management of HR to help the organization achieve its goals (Mondy & Martocchio, 2016, p. 28).

The role of the HR manager must be able to foster interconnection, cooperation and the development of an excellent organisational climate so that the various employees are involved and work towards the same goal so that the organisation grows and is competitive while promoting personal development as far as possible (Beardwell & Thompson, 2017).

The HR manager must exercise his functions and assume a leadership style, taking into account the power games of the different actors and must coordinate the activities of the members of the organisation, integrating their different nationalities in their decisions and, also, must manage the involvement and the individual motivation of the actors to create a collective culture. The HR manager must build a management style that integrates the management function and the leadership focused on HRM, taking into account his personality and behaviour as an actor within the organisation (Dessler, 2017).

The roles of the HR manager are multiple, and because of this, he must have a very broad professional profile, to be able to master his tasks and assist in other areas of the organization. According to Torrington et al., (2014), HR managers must do what is necessary to face new challenges and extract more profits from operations; managers must have the following some competencies: agents of change: initiating and maintaining changes; innovators and integrators: talent development and resource optimization; defenders of technology: connecting people through technology; strategic positioning: to help with company decisions; credibility activists: demonstrates leadership, taking on new challenges and skills that make them respected; organizational builders: creating a meaningful work environment, aligned with the company's culture and practices (Torrington, et al., 2014).

Today, HRM is much more integrated into the management of the strategic planning process, taking into account the great diversity and complexity of the organisations' environment. Thus, the role of the manager is essential for the smooth running of any organisation and any employee or middleman must incorporate this aspect of management to lead a team (Torrington, et al., 2014).

According to Beardwell & Thompson (2017), to create value and obtain results, HR professionals need to start, not by focusing on activities, but by defining goals, which guarantee the results of their work. With the goals defined, the roles of HR managers can be stimulated. Professionals need to learn to be both strategic and operational, focusing on the long and short term.

CHAPTER 2 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

2.1 Introduction

As stated by Saunders et al. (2019) the research methodology is a theory-based method that assists the researcher in the study of a phenomenon, answering the research question and its objectives. The methodology starts with the philosophy beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge and involve methodological choices, strategies, techniques, and procedures. There is a wide range of options available to the researcher to achieve the scope of the study.

In order to achieve the objectives proposed for the present study, it was necessary to establish some methodological procedures. The methodology will explain the research process, philosophies, strategies and design. Saunders, et al. (2016) emphasizes the importance of ensuring coherence in the research design to develop an effective methodology. This chapter will approach the methods applied to this study, including the research philosophy; approach; design, time horizon, data collection, data analysis and ethics.

2.2 Research Philosophy

According to Saunders et al., (2019) in business and management there are five major philosophies to undertake the study. The philosophies are Positivism, Critic Realism, Interpretivism, Postmodernism

and Pragmatism. Positivism is a scientific empiricist method designed to gather data and facts that are not influenced by human interpretation or bias. This method is usually applied in quantitative analysis and it is typically deductive, involving large samples. This philosophy looks for causal relationships to create law – like generalizations and make use of the universal laws and rules to predict behaviour and events in organizations (Saunders, et al., 2019).

The Positivism philosophy will be applied to this study, as it will be used the qualitative method to collect and analyse data. A survey was developed through google form to identify what companies in Ireland use the mediation as a method to solve conflicts. It is known that many companies in Ireland use the conflict management approach, but the research will try to find out what sectors use mediation, and what positive results this approach brought to those companies. Many organizations train the human resources professionals to act directly in the conflict resolution. The study will help to identify the statistics about what kind of conflicts occur in organizations and if the mediation applied by the HR in more effective in solving conflicts.

Through this philosophy it will be possible to create hypothesis in accordance with the literature review presented previously. According to Saunders et al. (2019) the statements will provide hypothetical explanations that can be tested and confirmed. The researcher has to remain neutral to not influence the findings. The data collected will speak by itself and provide a realistic scenario about how mediation is applied in Ireland. In the online questionnaire it was created a list of possible answers in accordance with the theory. The options created was not influenced by the researcher values. The questions will be asked in the same order to all the respondents (Biggam, 2015).

The survey contains 17 questions (see appendix 1) that tried to be precise in order to answer the research question and the study objectives. The questions were developed to be answered by the

professionals working on the Human Resources department which have knowledge about the policies and procedures applied in their workplace and that have applied some method for conflict resolution before. The surveys were sent to LinkedIn and Facebook groups to reach HR professionals. With this approach it was possible to get valid information and avoid uniformed responses given by people without sufficient knowledge and experience (Saunders, et al., 2019).

2.3 Research Approach

The approach applied to the research can be inductive, deductive, or abductive. According to Saunders et al., (2019) the deductive approach is theory driven and it is used to test a theory. On this approach the researcher adopts a theoretical position which will be tested through data collection. The inductive approach is data driven and it is used to explore a topic and develop a theoretical explanation while the data is collected and analysed. The abductive approach is used to collect data and explore a phenomenon, identifying themes and creating patterns to generate or modify an existing theory.

The method applied to this study is the deductive approach. This method will be used to test the hypothesis, examining the theory and reaching logical conclusions. Therefore, this approach is suitable to conduct scientific research, as this study starts with the mediation theory and hypothesis that posteriorly will be tested to evaluate the effectiveness of mediation to organizations in Ireland.

2.4 Research Design

The research design is a general plan undertaken to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2013, p. 12). Creswell emphasizes that every research question should be answered by the research objective. Furthermore, the design might determine and identify the target population, give details about the process of collecting the primary data, demonstrate how the findings are examined, specifying the ethical issues and the research's limitations that will be purchase in the plan. The best way to explore the answers to the research question is by following the steps of the research design.

The research design can be qualitative, quantitative or involve mixed methods. According to Saunders et al., (2019), the qualitative approach is recommended for the analysis of complex situations or extreme particularities. Saunders et al., (2019) states that the qualitative research contributes to the analysis of the interaction of certain variables, to the understanding of processes experienced by social groups, and to the understanding of particularities of human behaviour.

According to Bel et al., (2019) q the qualitative research provides a better view and understanding of the problem context, while quantitative research seeks to quantify the data and apply some form of statistical analysis. Qualitative research can also be used to explain the results obtained by quantitative research. In quantitative research it is important to determine the composition and size of the sample to in order to get statistical data. In quantitative research, the answers to some problems can be generalized, and the sample must be very well defined; otherwise, problems may arise when using the solution for generalization.

Quantitative research considers that everything can be quantifiable, which means translating opinions and information into numbers to classify and analyse them from regression and progression. Regarding to the nature of the variables studied, this research used the quantitative approach. The choice of the quantitative method for the analysis of the problem in question is due to the complexity

involved in the conflict resolution, as this study aims to identify what sectors in Ireland use this approach (Bell, et al., 2019).

When choosing the mixed method approach the researcher needs to have knowledge of the qualitative and quantitative methods and subsequently will need an extensive data collection, and a good time management to analyse the data. “The complexity of the design also calls for clear, visual models to understand the details and the flow of research activities in this design” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 298).

The quantitative method was adopted in this study and the nature of the research will be exploratory. This approach was chosen because it will help to reach a larger sample and identify what approaches are used by Irish organizations to manage internal conflicts. In addition, it will investigate the contributions from mediation to organization’s culture and conflict management. According to Saunders et al., (2019) quantitative research is characterised by the use of quantification, both in the modalities of collecting information and in the treatment of them through statistical techniques.

The survey was developed to get the sample demographic information and identify what sectors in Ireland use mediation to solve conflicts. The surveys were distributed on LinkedIn and Facebook groups to reach the professionals working in the human resources area. The research had to be applied in this area because the study will focus on the mediation applied by the human resources employees and through these respondents would be possible to collect valid data related to the benefits of this approach to organizations. One hundred and ten people answered the questionnaire containing 17 questions. Part of these professionals knew about mediation, others used different methods to manage conflict.

The hypothesis was developed in accordance with the deductive approach to test the validity of mediation theory among Irish organizations. The first hypothesis will investigate if Irish organizations are not aware of mediation as a type of conflict resolution. The second hypothesis will examine whether mediation is an integral aspect of organizations culture. The third hypothesis will evaluate if the professionals from Human Resources are capable to manage conflicts through mediation. The fourth hypothesis will analyse if mediation is effective in improving communication and engagement.

2.5 Time Horizon

According to Saunders et al., (2016) It is fundamental for the researcher to identify if the study will be a snapshot, examining a phenomenon at particular time or if the research design will be more similar to a diary, involving a series of snapshots and representing events during a period of time. The time horizon will be determined by the research question. The cross-sectional is a “snapshot” and usually employ the survey strategy and the longitudinal model study the changes and development of a phenomenon over a longer period of time. As stated by Saunders, et al., (2016, p.200):

“It is probable that your research will be cross-sectional, involving the study of a particular phenomenon (or phenomena) at a particular time. We say this because we recognise that most research projects undertaken for academic courses are necessarily time constrained. However, the time horizons on many courses do allow sufficient time for a longitudinal study, provided, of course, that you start your research early!” (Saunders, et al., 2016, p. 200).

The time horizon cross sectional will be applied to this study, as this approach is commonly used in the surveys strategy and examine a phenomenon in a single time. This approach will be applied to the

environment business as the questionnaire will be send to HR professionals to answer only once. The main characteristic of the cross-sectional approach is to select assorted clusters of individuals, who may have distinctive interests, but share common characteristics necessary to the research. The advantage of this approach to this study, is that it may help to identify the different methods used by organizations to solve conflicts. The surveys were answered by HR professionals only one time, to get the information about how mediation is applied by organizations and demonstrate the benefits reached through this approach.

2.6 Research Question

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of mediation in Irish organizations. In order to evaluate that, it is important to know if the organizations in Ireland are aware of this method and investigate what sectors use this approach to mediate conflicts. The questionnaire will support the study in this aspect, making it possible to collect the data. Then it will be asked to the respondents that apply mediation in their companies, what contributions this method bring to their organizations. The mediation can be applied by the human resources or trough consulting. This study will focus on the human resources professionals who use this approach in the companies they work for.

2.7 Data Collection

Data collection methods are strategies that enable researchers to obtain empirical data to answer their research questions. The resulting data must be analysed, interpreted and transformed into results and conclusions. For this research, the quantitative method was used, applying the survey strategy (Saunders, et al., 2019).

In order to have validity in the questionnaires, it was conducted a research to identify surveys related to this study theme that were published previously in books or academic articles. In order to identify the aspects that could contribute to answer the hypothesis, and analyse its causes, consequences, patterns and alternative solutions used by companies to mediate conflicts.

The qualitative method includes observation, experimentation, survey or inquiry. The survey was used in this research and allowed the study to demonstrate the companies that use mediation and the type of conflicts that occur within organizations. Quantitative research considers that everything can be quantifiable, which means translating opinions and information into numbers to classify and analyse them (Saunders, et al., 2019).

The questionnaire was published in LinkedIn and Facebook groups and it was available to the participants to answer during one month, from 24 of March to 24 of April. In total 110 people answered the questionnaire. The first questions were aimed to identify the respondent demographics like age, education, gender and employment status. Then, it was examined if the communication between employers and employees is effective. Whether the policies are clear and well established in the organization. The causes of internal conflicts. It was investigated if the HR provides actions to improve employee's well-being. It was identified the professionals who have applied mediation in their workplace. It was investigated if the Human Resources can be a good mediator and reach better outcomes to the companies. An analysis was developed to identify the main benefits from mediation approach to organizations in Ireland.

The survey demonstrated to be appropriate for achieving the results of this study, as the strategy created standardized questions that were interpreted in the same way by all the respondents. It helped

to collect a good amount of reliable data that can provide statistical analysis. In addition, the survey will help to identify the variables related to demographic which can be factual, attitudes, opinions, behaviours, and events. The strategy also helped to investigate what methods are used in different organizations. The questionnaire was concise and allowed the participants to answer it quickly, providing their point of view, experiences and facts related to their company strategies. In this way, it will be able to effectively obtain all the relevant data from to the research and give consistency to the study.

2.7.1 Target Population

The target population will be the professionals from the human resources area which works for organizations in Ireland. Through the research it is expected to reach different sectors in order to have a broader scenario and demonstrate in which sectors the mediation is more popular and the benefits that this approach bring to Irish organizations. The survey was sent to various groups on LinkedIn and Facebook to get a broader number of respondents, including students from 18 years old that work have built a career in this area.

According to Saunders et al., (2019) the probability sampling associated to survey research strategies where the researcher needs to make statistical inferences from sample about a population in order to answer the research question. The process is composed of three stages, first identify a suitable sample frame, decide a suitable size, select the appropriate technique, and select the sample, verify if the sample represents the target population. This sampling is suitable for more than 50 respondents. The non – probability sampling it is a non – random sampling and provide alternative techniques to select

samples, including in its majority an element of subjective judgement. This technique can be applied to any sample size (Saunders, et al., 2019).

The target population will be the professionals from the human resources area which works for organizations in Ireland. Through the research it is expected to reach different sectors in order to have a broader scenario and demonstrate in which sectors the mediation is more popular and the benefits that this approach bring to Irish organizations. The survey was sent to various groups on LinkedIn and Facebook to get a broader number of respondents, including university students that are working in the HR area and professionals more experienced which have built a career in HR.

The sample will include professionals from 18 to 55 years old, including males and females. The main objective from the questionnaire was to get a bigger number of professionals who know the HR procedures and policies and have more experience working in the area, as those professionals are more likely to have experience in solving conflicts. The survey also intended to focus more in managers and other professionals that work providing consultancy, as they have more experience with conflict resolution.

2.7.2 Survey Strategy

According to Saunders, et al., (2016, p. 181) the survey strategy is combined with a deductive research approach. It is often used to answer the "who", "where", "how much" and "how many" questions, being widely used in business and management research. Exploratory and descriptive research usually apply this strategy because it allows the collection of enormous amounts of data for statistical

analysis. Survey strategy is considered simple to explain and to understand by people in general (Saunders, et al., 2016).

The survey strategy allows the researcher to collect quantitative data which can be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. In addition, the data collected from the surveys can be used to suggest possible reasons for particular relationships between variables and to produce models of these relationships. This strategy allows the researcher to have a better control over the research process using the probability sampling (Biggam, 2015).

This approach helps to generate findings that are statistically representative of the whole population at a lower cost. The data collected using a survey strategy is unlikely to be as wide ranging as those collected by other research strategies. There is a limit regarding to the number of questions that any questionnaire can contain (Biggam, 2015). The survey developed for this study contains 17 questions that helps to identify what methods are used by Irish organizations to manage conflicts. It will also examine the approaches used by each sector, trying to identify patterns that explains why such approach is more known and applied in a specific business sector. With the questionnaire it will be possible to investigate the benefits that mediation provides to organizations, improving different aspects as demonstrated on the mediation theory.

2.8 Data Analysis

As state Saunders et al., (2019) data analysis is the heart of the research and it consists of information that should be analysed within a systematic approach to disclosing of hidden facts. The survey strategy was put in place to generate numerical data. From the moment the data is collected the

statistical method might be employed to evaluate the collected data. As stated by Saunders et al., (2016, p. 511):

Data Analysis approach allows flexibility to introduce previously unplanned analyses to respond to new findings. It therefore formalises the common practice of looking for other relationships in data, which your research was not initially designed to test. This should not be discounted, as it may suggest other fruitful avenues for analysis. In addition, computers make this relatively easy and quick. Even at this stage it is important that you structure and label clearly each graph and table to avoid possible misinterpretation. (Saunders, et al., 2016, p. 511)

According to Asadoorian & Kantarelis (2005) science of inference is statistic. Initially, the researcher will collect the descriptive statistics and subsequently it will be possible to take conclusions from the sample gathered in order to illustrate the findings of the research in large scale. Afterward, the researcher has to confirm or reject the predictions done in the research. There is a wide range of different probability models of statistics that will support the data. Significant findings are supported by statistical tests with variables that can be explained through probabilities and hypothesis.

The data collected from google forms will be downloaded in an excel file. Then, charts will be created in order to have a better visualization of the data and its patterns. The charts will connect different pieces of information, putting together the demographics and the remaining questions from the surveys that link the sectors with different methods used to conflict mediation. With the excel file it will be possible to analyse each question and make a connection with the different points and information provided by the respondents. The data will help to identify if the hypothesis reflect the reality about the mediation of conflict in Irish organizations and how the theory is applied in practice.

2.9 Ethics

It was explained to the participants that the data would be used only and exclusively for academic purpose and that the respondent's identity would remain anonymous. The participants did not sign any consent form, but when answering the questionnaire, there was an introduction explaining the nature of the research and assuring the participants rights, including anonymity and explaining how the data will be analysed, reported and saved. By answering the survey, the participants gave their consent to take part in the study. The data was collected through online surveys using the google forms. With this tool it was possible to reach a better number of respondents.

CHAPTER 3 – PRESENTATION OF DATA

3.1 Introduction

The questionnaire was distributed to LinkedIn and Facebook groups in order to reach the professionals working in human resources management. For this research it was crucial to apply the surveys strategy, as this method helped to reach a higher number of professionals and create statistical information. Through the questionnaires it was possible to get precise and valid data. According to Saunders et al., (2019) researchers have developed the sampling technique in order to investigate the activities from a selected small group and take conclusions that can be generalized representing the entire population.

The sample collected a total of 110 answers from HR professionals working in Ireland. The questions were selected to find out the quantity of employed and unemployed staff, the professionals that were self-employed, the sectors of the economy that make more use of the mediation, if the policies and procedures were clear and well established in the studied organizations, and the main causes of conflicts between organizations and its employees. In addition, it was investigated the other methods applied by Irish organizations and the popularity of this approach. The participants were also asked about the role of HR as a mediator and how effective was this approach for Irish organizations.

3.2 Questionnaire's Charts

The respondents were asked to state their gender, as demonstrated in Figure 1. According to the research, 65% of the respondents were female and 34% of the participants were male. One percent of the respondents did not want to share this information.

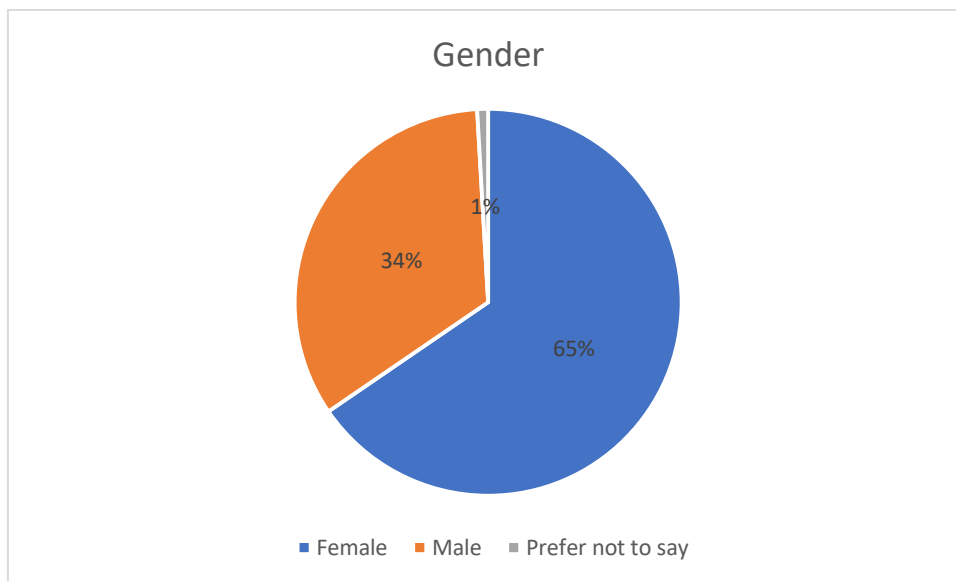


Figure 1. *Gender*

As illustrated on Figure 2, the participants were asked to state their age. According to the study, 72% of the respondents affirmed to be between 26 to 35 years old. Nineteen percent of the sample informed to be between 36 to 45 years old. Two per cent of the remaining professionals were between 46 to 55 years old, 3% represented people above 56 years old and 4% of them were in the range of 18 to 25 years old.

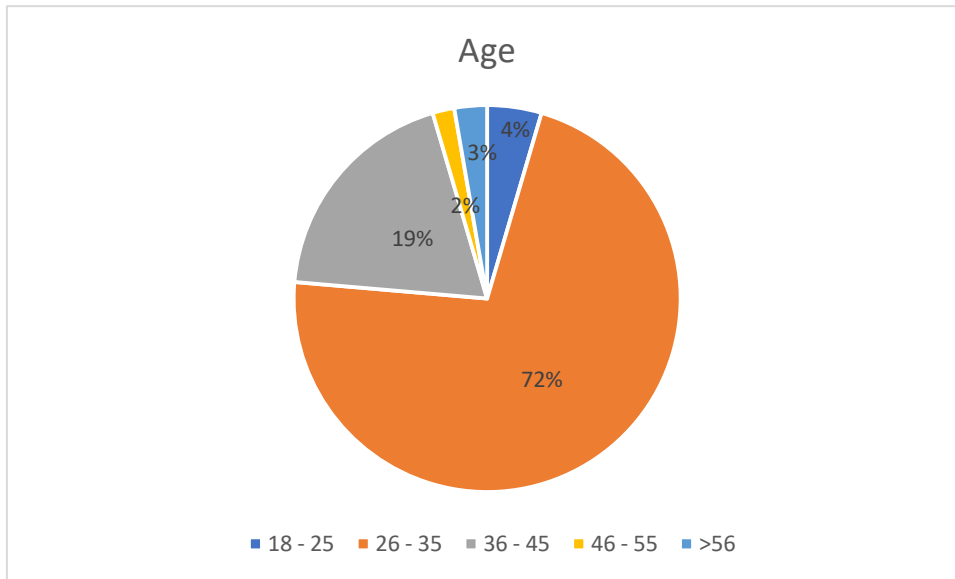


Figure 2. Age

The HR Professionals were asked about their qualification level (see figure 3) and this study demonstrated that 45 % of them hold Postgraduate diploma or Master’s Degree and 40 % of respondents affirmed they have a Bachelor’s Degree while 3% of them answered hold a PhD.

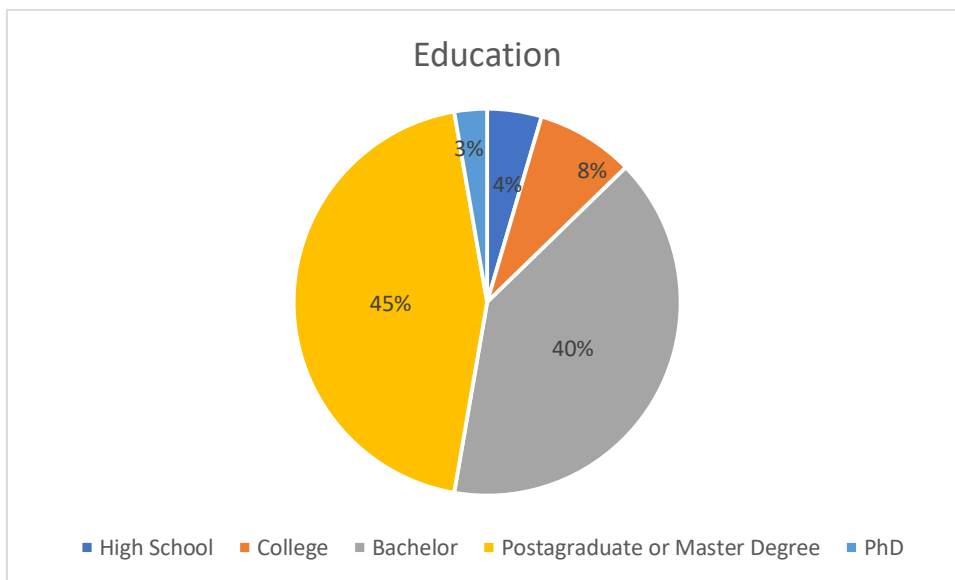


Figure 3. Education

As demonstrated in figure 4, the HR Professionals were asked about their job role. Thirty-three percent informed that worked as a manager, 27% of them affirmed work an analyst, 19% of HR

professional answered that worked as an assistant, 12% of participants informed that worked as a supervisor, 4% of respondents answered worked as an internship, 3% of participants informed worked as a consultant, 1% of HR professional answered worked as a director while 1% of them declared worked as an apprenticeship.

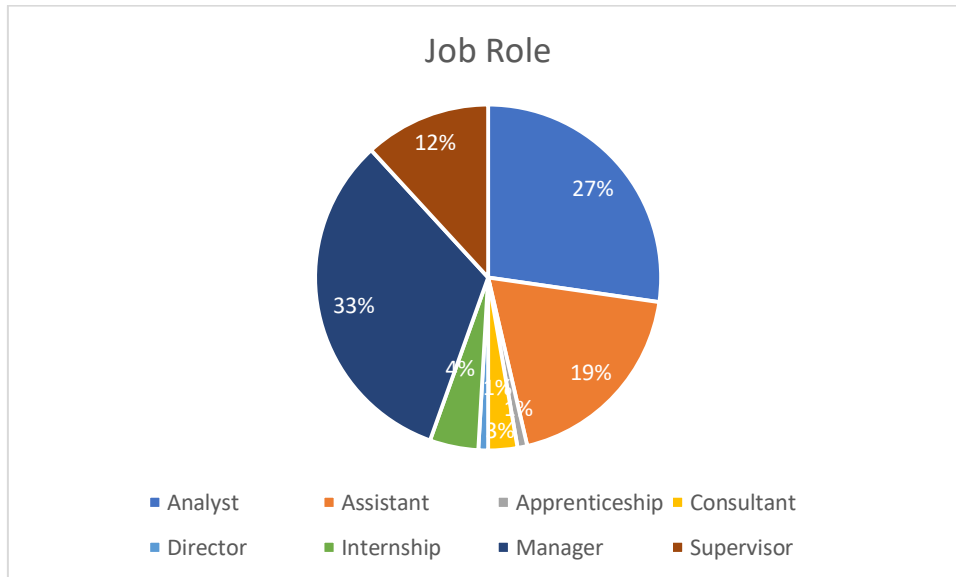


Figure 4. *Job Role*

As exposed in Figure 5, the participants were asked about their employment status. Seventy-nine percent affirmed to be employed and 10% of the respondents are self-employed and 11% unemployed.

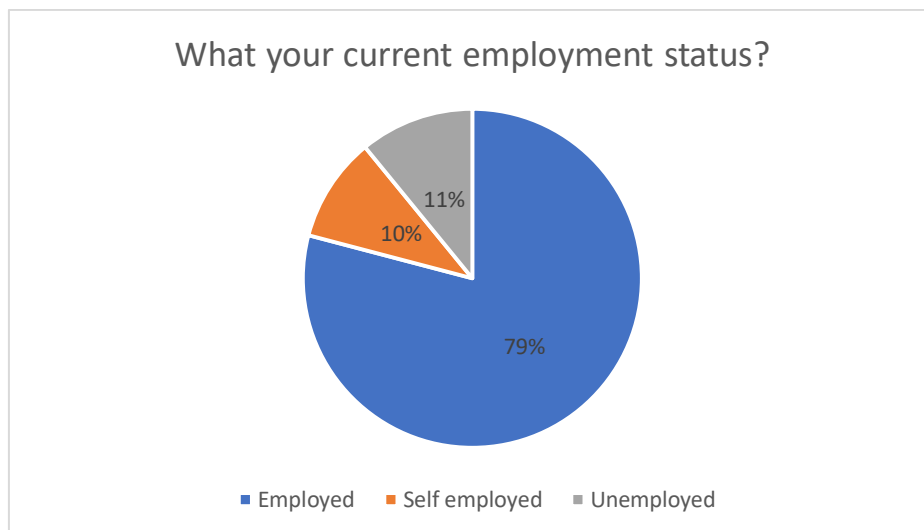


Figure 5. *Employment Status*

The participants were asked about what sectors they have worked in. Regarding to that 34 % of the respondents affirmed to work in the Engineering sector, 13% work in hospitality, 12 % work for Banking and finance, 10 % work for business and enterprise, 8% affirmed to work in IT, Software, Computers & Technologies and 8% work for the health sector. The remaining respondents worked for Advertising and Marketing is 3%. Three percent of participants answered worked 3% arts, law and legal, life sciences and other sectors not identified. (see figure 6)

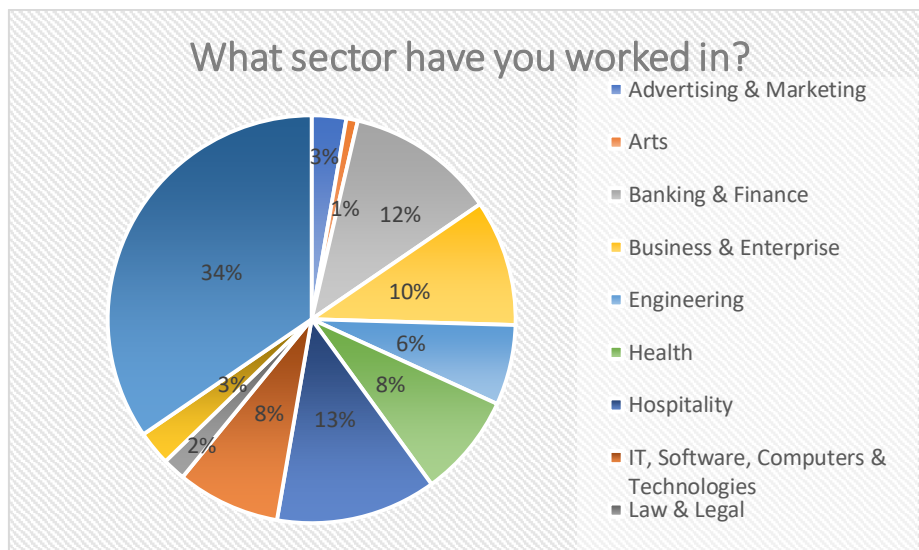


Figure 6. Sectors

The respondents were asked if they work for a small, large or medium business. The figure 7 illustrates that 52% of the respondents work for large organizations, 37% work for medium companies and 11% work for small companies.

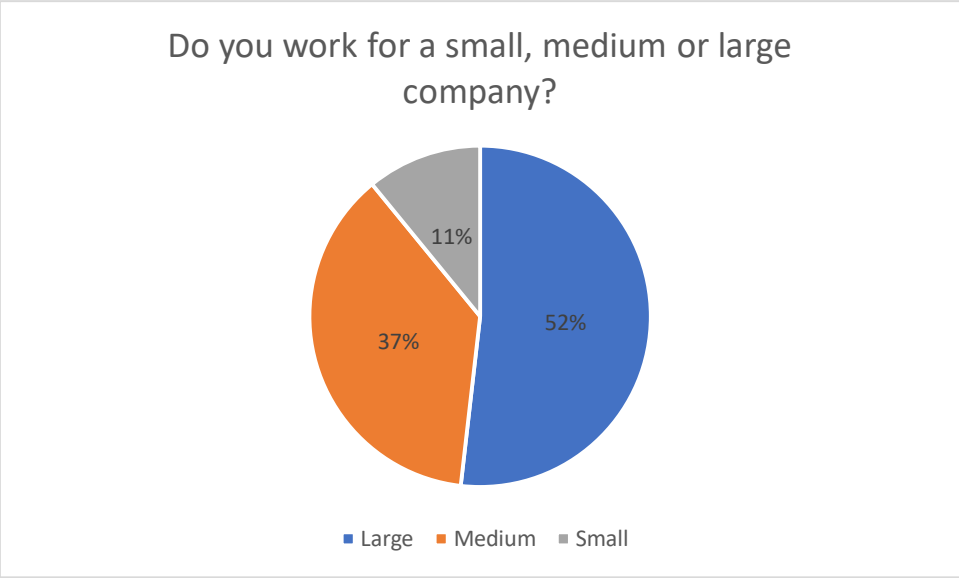


Figure 7. *Company Size*

As exposed in figure 8, the HR professionals were asked about the time that they are working for the current organization. In regard, 53% of respondents affirmed between 1 year to 4 years and 22% of participants answered less than one year. Thirteen percent of respondents answered that worked between 5 to 9 years and 12% of them affirmed worked for less than one year.

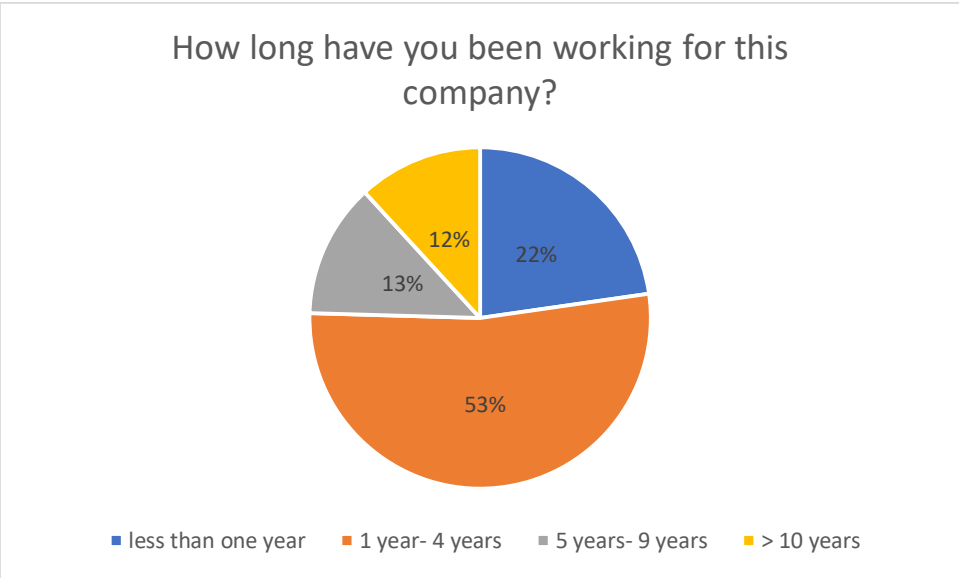


Figure 8. *Years Worked*

The participants were asked if they knew about the policies and procedures available in their workplace. In regard to that, 83 % of the respondents affirmed to know their employer policies and procedures, while 17% affirmed do not know it. (see figure 8)

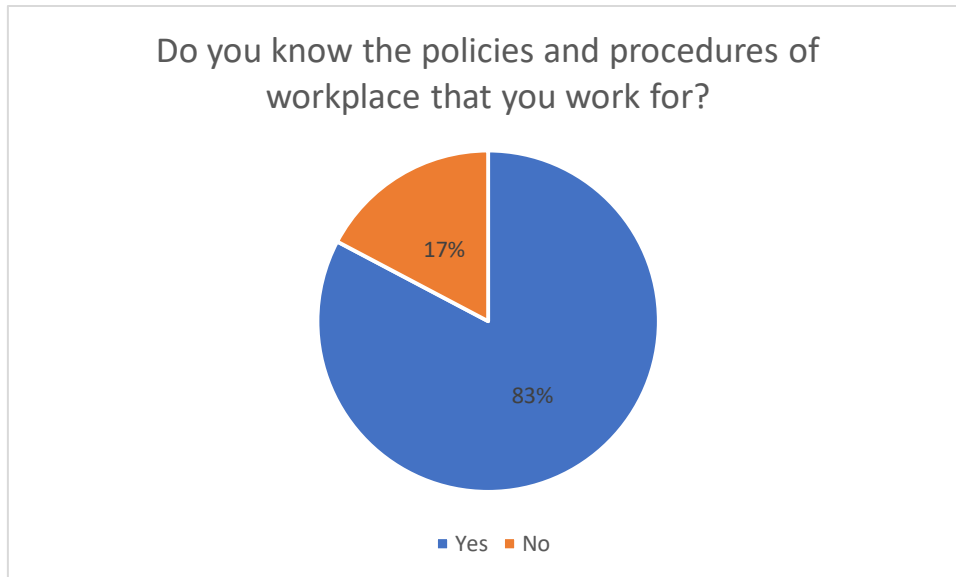


Figure 9. *Policies and Procedure of Workplace*

As demonstrate on figure 10 the respondents were asked if they consider that the policies and procedures available in their workplace emphasises their wellbeing. In regard to that 70% of respondents believe that the companies work to improve their well-being, while 30 % of the participants do not believe in that.

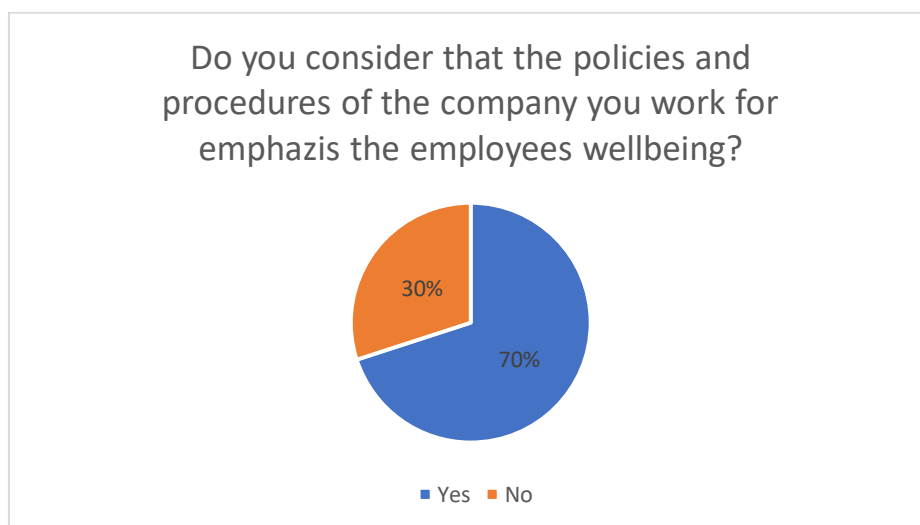


Figure 10. *Wellbeing Employees*

As observed in figure 11, the participants were asked about the causes of conflict in their workplace. In relation to that 33% believe that the main cause is misunderstanding of information, 28% believe that the main cause is to have different perspectives, 23% believe that the main cause is related to difference of opinions and 16 % of the collaborators affirmed to be pressure in achieving goals.

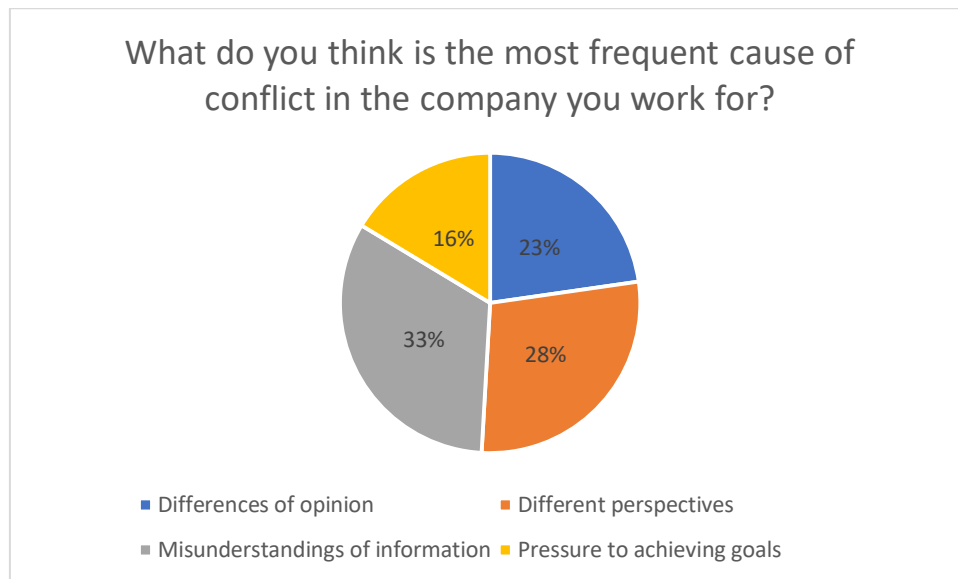


Figure 11. *Cause of Conflict*

The leadership were asked if they apply conflict management in their workplace. In relation to that, the figure 12 demonstrated 78% affirmed to have applied conflict management in their workplace before, while 22% affirmed to have not applied it.



Figure 12. *Conflict Management*

As observed on figure 13 the respondents were asked if they know about Alternative Dispute Resolution or Mediation. In regard to that 55% have affirmed to know about it while 45% affirmed do not know it.

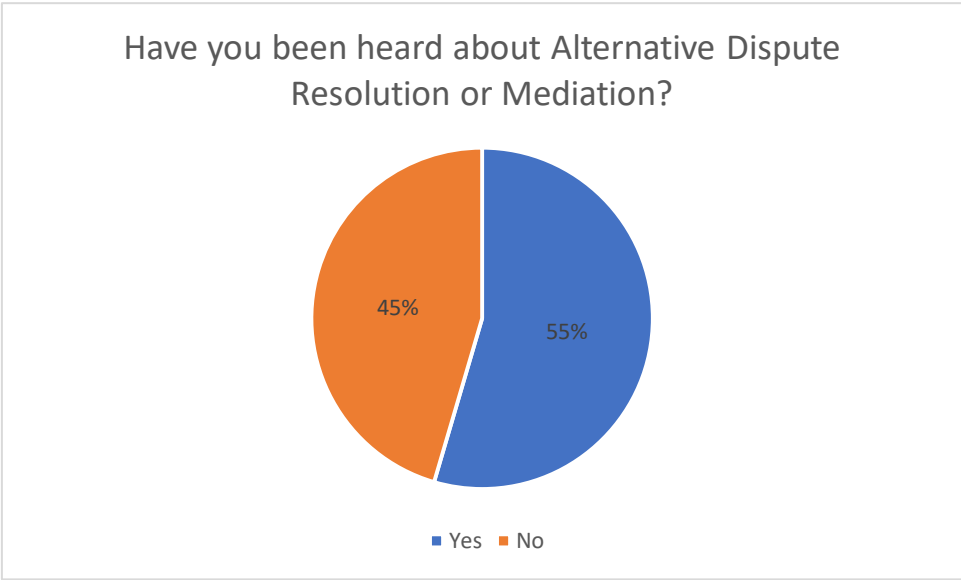


Figure 13. *Alternative Dispute Resolution or Mediation*

It was asked to the participants what method their employers use to deal with conflicts. According to the research 3% of the organizations use ADR, 16% use Mediation, 35% use conflict management and 46% use other methods (see figure 14).

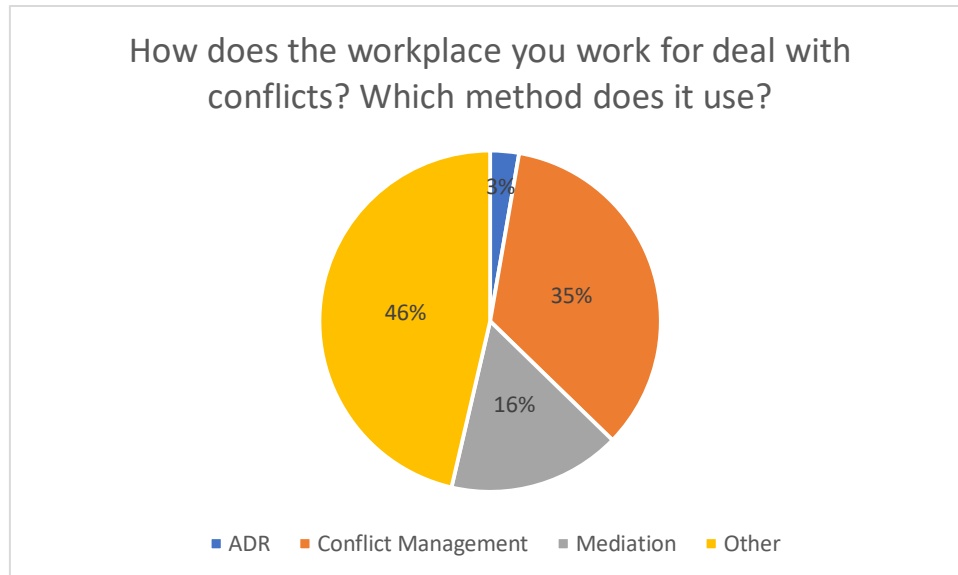


Figure 14. *Method Applied*

The participants were asked if they believe that mediation applied by Human Resources Management is effective to solve conflicts. In relation to that 94% of the respondents believe that Human Resources management is effective in applying mediation and resolving conflict and 6% believe that the Human Resources management is not effective (see figure 15).

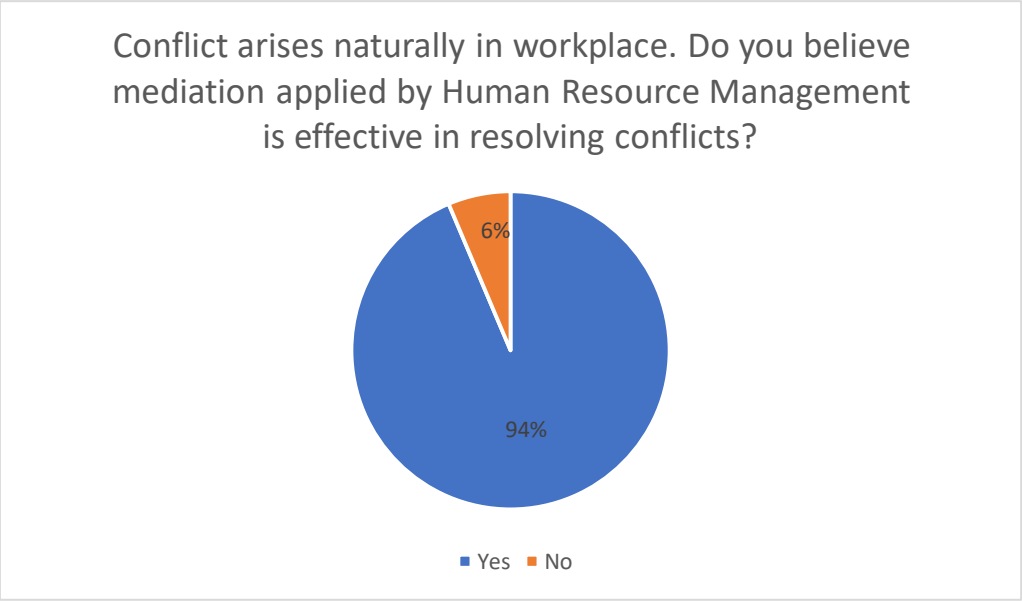


Figure 15. *Human Resources Important Role*

As illustrated on figure 16, the participants were asked if the Human Resources Manager could be a Mediator to achieve a better outcome. In relation to that 86% of participants affirmed that the human resources manager could be a mediator while 14% of the respondents do not agree with that.

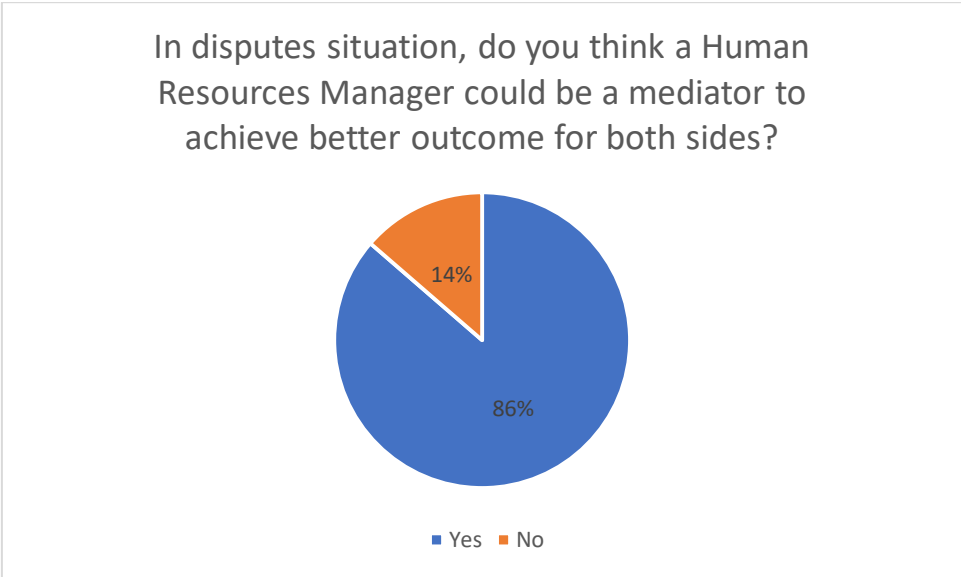


Figure 16. *Human Resources as a Mediator*

It was asked to the HR professionals what contributions the mediation brings to their workplace. In relation to that, 24% believe that mediation improve communication, 21% believe that mediation

improve employee engagement, 20% believe it improves synergy, 18% believe it reduces turnover and 17% believe it increase productivity (see figure 17).

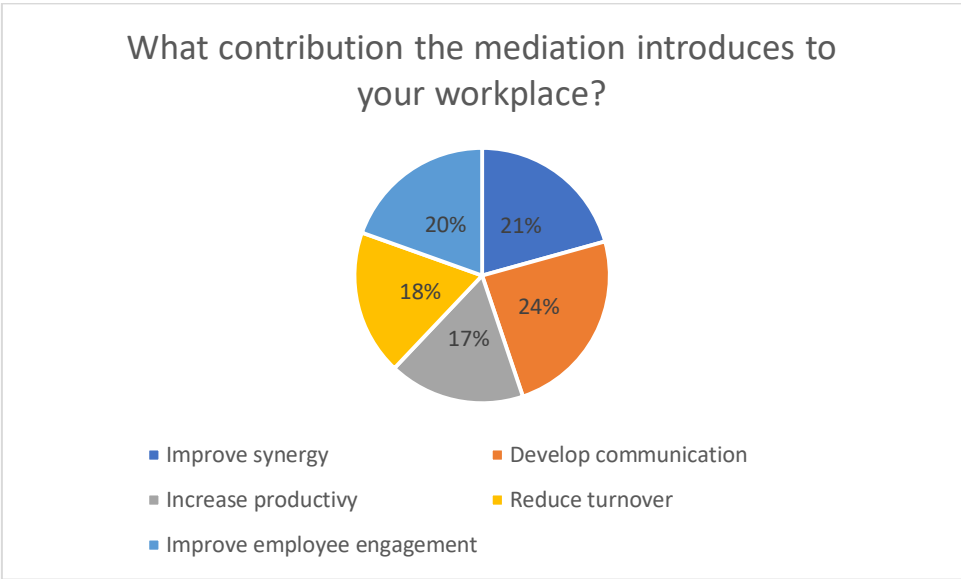


Figure 17. Advantages achieved

CHAPTER 4 – DATA ANALYSIS/FINDINGS

The analysis and interpretation of the data are directly related to the data collection itself. It is time for the researcher to define how he will describe and analyse the results he obtained through the study, linking it to another knowledge already obtained. Taking into account the problem, aims and the objectives of this research, knowing that it was pertinent to analyse the ideas and opinions of many employees and Human Resources Professionals of organizations in Ireland, the questionnaire was distributed to them (Saunders, *et al.*, 2019).

For Saunders, *et al.* (2019), the analysis and interpretation of the data are directly related to data collection and may even criticise its form. It is the researcher's moment to define how you will describe and analyse the results you obtained through the study, linking it to another knowledge already obtained.

4.1. Findings

Understanding the conflict is essential for the resolution to be productive and constructive. The Mediation process is fundamental to generate an adequate solution for workplace disputes. The Human Resources Professional requires some principles, among them: to have credibility, to be impartial, to present knowledge about the situation, to be loyal and flexible in their attitudes, to be clear in their language and to be faithful in the conflict mediation process (Torrington, *et al.*, 2014).

The conflict in the present times is inevitable and always evident. However, understanding conflicts, and knowing how to manage them, is fundamental to personal and professional success. With the growing globalization, people are interacting more and more with each other, and organizations are

undergoing an accelerated process of changes, which causes greater possibilities of friction and divergences, which is where the demand to manage conflict arises (Folger, et al., 2013).

The survey was answered by 110 people who have been working within Human Resources department. The study included 1 Director, 36 Managers, 13 Supervisors, 30 Analysts, 21 Assistants, 3 Consultant, 5 Internship, and 1 Apprenticeship working in public and private organizations in Ireland, constituting the population of this study. The data was collected through LinkedIn and Facebook.

Regarding the techniques, it was applied to descriptive data analysis. Questionnaire's Charts were used to evaluate the different variables involving the working process in the business environment, and the relationship between the Human Resources department and the remaining employees. The recruitment and selection process practiced within the organization and the arrangement of the complete process.

Through the research question "Identify what approaches are used by Irish organizations to manage internal conflicts", it was created the first hypothesis "Irish organizations are not aware of mediation as a type of conflict resolution". As demonstrated earlier by Figure 13 only 16,4% of organizations have applied Mediation in the workplace and 19,10% out of 100% used ADR. It is possible to conclude that most of the business environment does not employ and are not aware of the advantages that ADR and Mediation can provide to them. The average rate between sectors that have applied Mediation in the workplace disputes is 24% in IT, Computers & Technologies companies and 19% in Business & Enterprise, 14% in Health, 9% in Hospitality, 5% in Engineering, 5% in Law & Legal, 5% in Advertising & Marketing. (see figure 18)

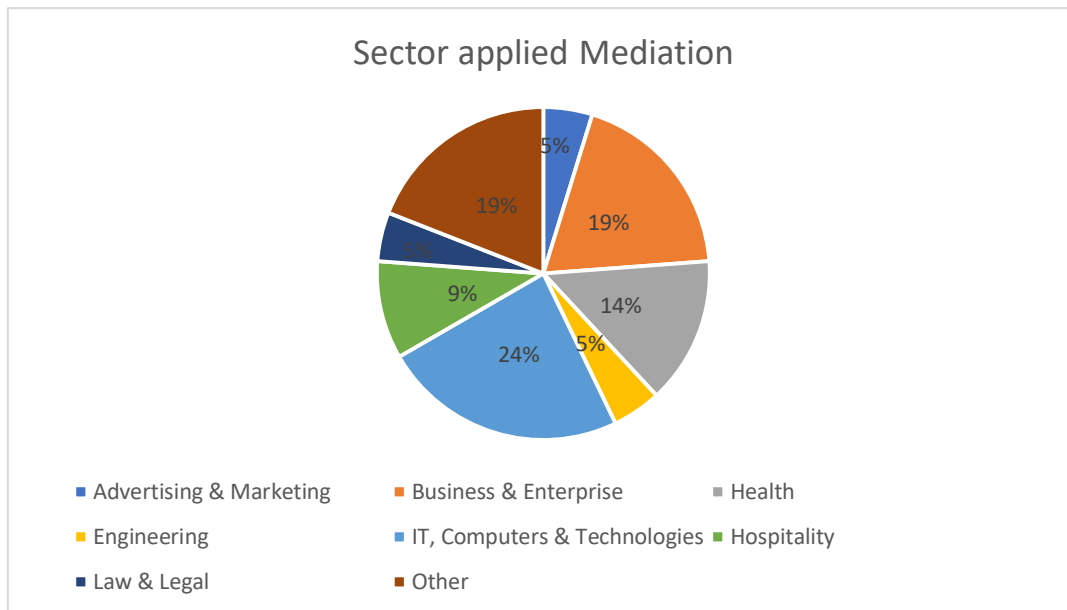


Figure 18. *Sector Mediation applied*

In order to answer the hypothesis 2 “Mediation is an integral aspect of an organization's culture” it was created a link to the research question “Investigate the contribution that mediation could bring to an organization’s culture”. These factors are proposed by the study to analyse the relation between mediation applied to the workplace and the benefits from this method to organizations. It was demonstrated before by Figure 9 that 70% of the participants hold knowledge by policies and procedures of their organization. The integration of Mediation within companies is related to policies and procedures. This arrangement process is made by the HR department in order to improve and develop their organization focusing on the employee’s wellbeing. Furthermore, this improvement results which are in better synergy to the company and could increase its profit in the market.

The main research question "Evaluate the effectiveness of Mediation in the workplace disputes is directly connected to hypothesis 3 “Professionals from Human Resources are capable to mediate conflicts through Mediation”. In figure 12 earlier demonstrates that 78 % of the HR managers applied conflict management in Irish workplace disputes and affirmed they are able to conduct the Mediation process. The average of HR professionals has applied Mediation added they were able to mediate it

was shown in figure 19 observed that the majority (90%) of them affirmed they were. In addition, they believe to be effective when applying meditation as they have an in-depth knowledge of the people working on the organization and also have skills to manage people and conflicts. Furthermore, the outcome of Mediation reflects directly the business productivity bringing advantages to the organization. In addition, they believe to be effective when applying meditation as they have an in-depth knowledge of the people working on the organization and also have skills to manage people and conflicts. Furthermore, the outcome of Mediation reflects directly the business productivity bringing advantages to the organization.

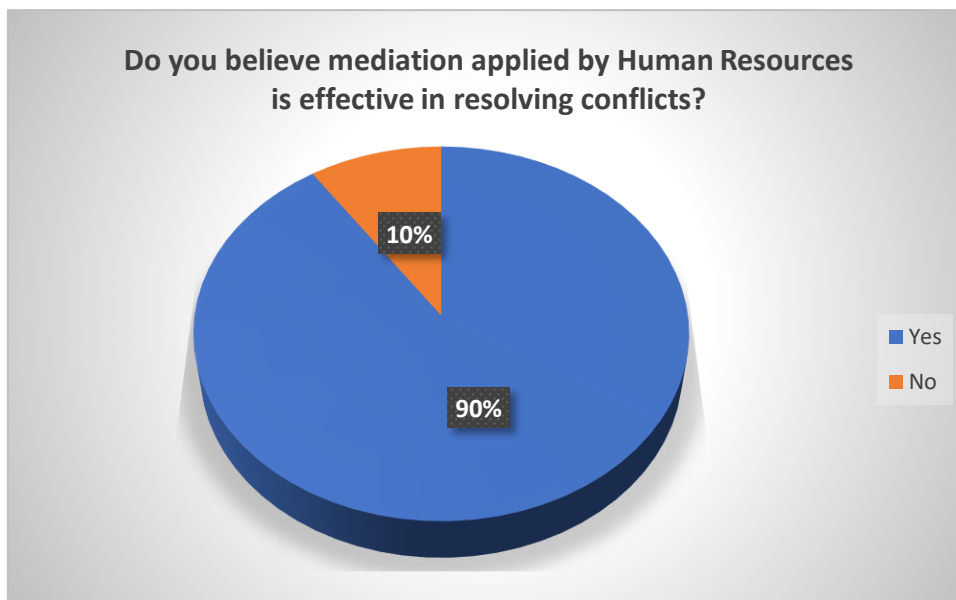


Figure 19. *HR Professionals Effective*

The hypothesis 4: “Mediation is effective in improving communication and engagement” is linked to the research question “demonstrate the advantages of applying Mediation for Irish workplace”. In this scenario it is observed the benefits that Mediation provides to Irish organizations. It was shown earlier in Figure 16 that the majority of the HR professionals agreed that mediation helps to improve communication, synergy, employee engagement, increase productivity and reduce turnover. These advantages are considered to be essential by the HR professionals. Besides that, the communication is also a fundamental feature of any relation, helping in the achievement of other goals.

It was observed earlier in figure 14 that only 16,4% of the sample have used Mediation in Irish organizations and the average of the professionals concluded that 81 % of the HR professionals participated in the company’s mediation process is a manager. Fourteen percent were a supervisor while 5% of them were an analyst (see figure 20).

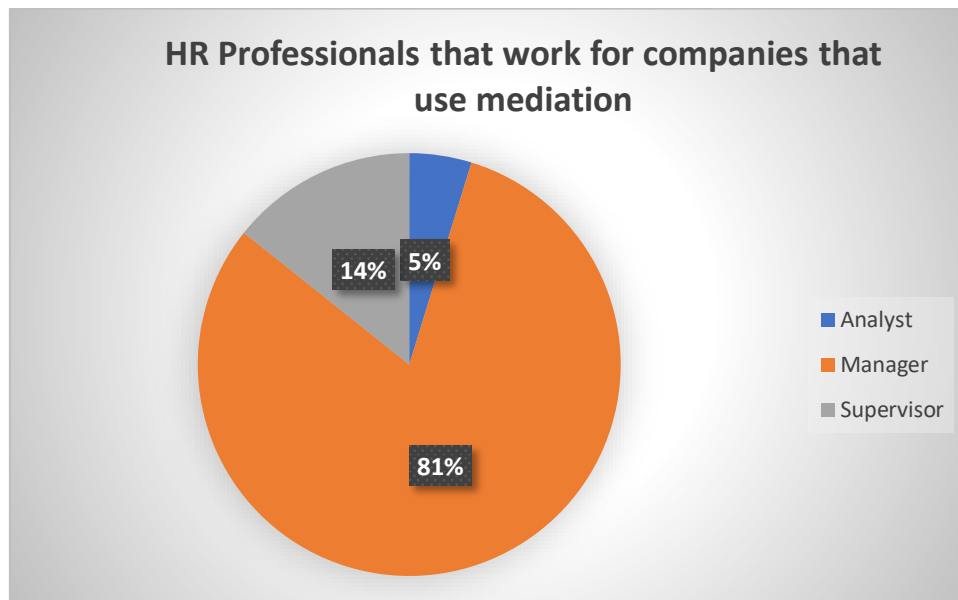


Figure 20. *HR Professionals/Mediation Applied*

It was identified the average of years worked and figure 21 demonstrated that 53% of managers, supervisors, and analysts that applied mediation are working for the same company between 1 to 4 years, while 19% of the leadership is working for the same company for more than 10 years and 14% of HR professionals are working for the same time between 5 and 9 years while 14% of them for less than a year. The mediation process is proved to be more effective when the mediator has a deeper knowledge about the company rules, procedures, and policies. However, it is also important to be ethical and get to know the employees for the process to be more effective.

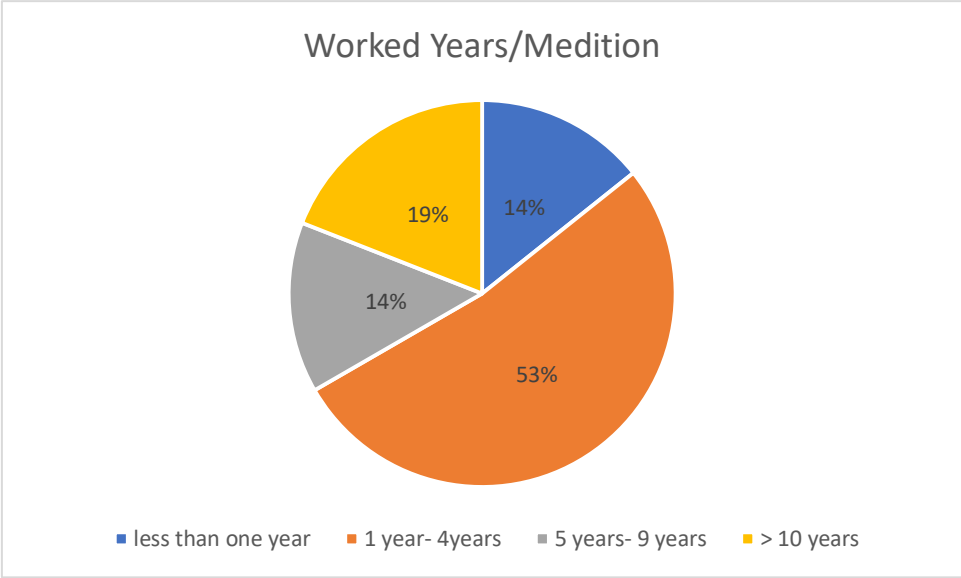


Figure 21. *Worked Years/Mediation*

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

The data was tabulated from the survey, and charts were generated from the results. There was also presentation of the findings and the link between the findings and the research hypothesis. The research helped to identify the sources that motivate conflicts in organisations, being essential for companies to seek the best strategy for conflict management. The theoretical framework demonstrated that it is important that organizations seek the satisfaction of the parties involved in conflicts, or, at least ensure that the process occur in a less traumatic form for both parties (Cahn & Abigail, 2014).

In this sense, the Human Resource Management assumes a strategic role in this process, since the positive or negative consequences of reducing the workforce will depend, in large part, on the way that the manager plans to conduct the process, and on the manager ability to implement actions that prevent conflict situations, minimise them or transform them into opportunities for the organisation (Kashyap & Chaudhary, 2019).

Regarding to conflicts generated within the company, it was observed that most are of the "task" type, originated from some planning failure, such as lack of funds to finance a program; poor choice of benefits and compensation value criteria; number of employees leaving more or less than intended; lack of competence and performance management; lack of a system for recording and disseminating knowledge; and lack of communication channels (Cahn & Abigail, 2014).

It is understood, then, that the HR manager, as a personnel manager, must be included in the strategic planning from the conception of the program, as he is the one who has the information about this company's capital, such as the cost of employees; those that the company should retain because, due

to the knowledge and skills it possessed, they would be difficult to be replaced; among others (Kashyap & Chaudhary, 2019).

Also, it can assist, preventively regarding the loss of knowledge, in the development of knowledge registration and dissemination programs, in the area of information management, as well as in knowledge dissemination programs with the return of former employees as consultants, or acting preventively with the implementation of a Substitute Preparation Program that aims to protect the company from the loss of essential skills and knowledge to carry out its activities, resulting, for example, from staff turnover. The role of the mediator is to facilitate the communication among the employees involved in conflicts. The communication helps to reduce the harmful effects caused by rumours and lack of information. This process contributes to the improvement of relationship between the staff and the company (Beardwell & Thompson, 2017).

On the literature review it was identified that conflicts can be divided in 3 types being "personal", "relationship" and "task type". On this study it was identified conflicts related to lack of communication, different opinions and perspectives that are related the employee's personality traits. The conflicts related to task would be the high pressure imposed to employees for the achievement of goals. Conflicts of personal type are usually generated by feelings like fear of losing a job, frustration due to professional stagnation, lack of personal identity, among others (Menkel-Meadow, et al., 2013).

To combat these conflicts, the human resources management can propose the creation of psychological assistance programs, including courses related to management and career development as cited by Torrington, et al. (2014). As for the "relationship" conflict for the remainder, they have

their origin in competitiveness, in changing the profile of employees with the arrival of outsourced workers, in disbelief in the promotions system.

For this type of conflict, HR manager assumes the role of mediator, in order to seek integration between the parties and make them feel part of the company. "Task" conflicts, on the other hand, occur mainly due to work overload, the relocation of functions, adaptation to new technologies, that are related to how and where activities are developed. To this end, HR uses competency management, as well as knowledge about positions and salaries, to find the right job for each employee within this restructuring environment (Torrington, et al., 2014).

Regarding the conflicts generated by the dismissal, the HR Management must act in the preparation of these people for reintegration in the job market, which can be put into practice through a Support Program for Dismissed Employees as cited in Torrington, et al. (2014). The program can include psychological support, funding for professional refresher courses, career guidance, interviewing techniques and personal marketing, among others, to reduce the social and economic impact of the change process, in other words, the company has the image of managing dismissals responsibly. With this study it was identified that the turnover reduces because of the mediation strategy.

The research demonstrated that the managers and supervisors from the human resources area are able to conduct the mediation process, once the company train them to mediate conflicts. Conflicts can occur in organizations due to different causes like lack of communication, misunderstandings, different opinions, interests, and perspectives. However, when the company invest in mediate conflicts internally, it can bring a lot of benefits to the organization, increasing productivity, synergy and building a cooperative atmosphere.

5.1 Limitations

The study aims to investigate the contribution that mediation can bring to an organizations culture, including the benefits to conflict management. The research will be carried out using the qualitative method because the mediation model is not very popular in Ireland and through the surveys, it will be possible to get a higher number of participants and analyse whether the benefits reached from mediation are the same among different business sectors.

The strength of this research relies on the chosen methodology which allows to recruit more participants due to the shortage of organizations that applies the mediation internally, giving training and support to its managers and HR employees to better solve conflicts. The weaknesses of the research are related to the fact that the qualitative study provides a good foundation for statistical analysis, but this methodology does not allow the researcher to get a deeper insight of how the mediation is applied within the HR area.

5.2 Future Research Suggestions

For professionals working within groups, it is suggested that their experiences are recorded and that they seek to build new knowledge. It is recommended that future studies to be carried out should involve a larger sample, as they may also cover other variables in terms of both conflict management and Human resources. It is also interesting to analyse whether employees with the same personality characteristics respond differently in the same organisational context.

The study is not finished, Mediation and the advantages of Human Resources Professional as a Mediator could bring to workplace must be further investigated, establishing a new analysis model with the factors identified in this investigation with more controlled studies and larger samples, including companies that allow us to understand better this reality of the main limitations identified in this investigation.

It is necessary to know about labour conflicts on the part of managers, as they arise, as well as factors of job satisfaction. It is also interesting to analyse the degree of intensity of the conflict, in the context of those who are forwarded with a view to its resolution and those who do not go through the scope of the company, who do not spread through the heads and are soon resolved or kept dormant for periods.

Considering that there is no complete scientific investigation and having the various limitations the author had in preparing this work, it is believed that there is still a lot to research around this object of study. For this reason, it is suggested to future researchers, to deepen this theme in ways that revolutionise the role of HR in organisations and the functionality of companies.

CONCLUSION

The present work had general objective to identify how the managers of organisations deal with conflicts in the work environment, their possible causes and effects in the organisational context. For this purpose, questions related to the study of interpersonal conflicts and organisational structure, as well as the methods used to resolve these conflicts. Furthermore, to conclude the theory and research regarding workplace conflict, it is necessary to highlight a fundamental issue: communication.

Communication is essential for understanding between people. However, communicating does not just mean making yourself understood by the parties involved. It also means understanding messages from other parties. Of course, being able to express yourself in this way is essential. But what about non-verbal communication? What is the importance of this form of sending messages, which does not pass through the interlocutor's conscience? In order to establish communication, there must be a set of elements consisting of; a sender or recipient, whose goal is to produce and send a certain message, addressed, in turn, to a sure recipient or receptor. However, for the communication to process effectively between these two elements, the message needs to be received and decoded by the receiver.

Therefore, it is required that both are inserted in the same context, knowing the situational references, as well as making use of the same code, that is, a structured set of signs, in addition to establishing effective contact through a communication channel. It should be noted that the meanings of certain gestures and behaviours tend to vary significantly from one culture to another. It should be noted that verbal communication is an entirely voluntary mechanism; nonverbal behaviour, in turn, has the possibility of being an involuntary reaction or a purposeful communicative act.

The HR managers which participated of the survey know that, in a situation of a dispute, the dominant attitude, in which each of the mediators, initially tends to stand out and that, in the dynamics of understanding facilitated by the mediator - when basic desires and impulses are sated and the common interests and needs - the collaborative attitude is being built. Negotiation, therefore, has to be studied and known diligently in its techniques and tools to be used by the mediator in all phases of negotiation; this is the great importance of negotiation in conflict negotiation. Every good negotiator will be an excellent mediator.

After analysis, it was found that conflicts usually produce solutions to problems, because if managers take advantage of group differences, they tend to produce better solutions, the more diverse the groups, the greater the possibility of new ideas arising, if managed correctly. Depending on the way that conflicts are managed, they can have positive results for the department; managers are used to thinking that conflicts are part of life and as leaders seek to solve the problems that arise in your department entirely. They seek to resolve conflicts so that both parties are satisfied, which generates satisfactory results for both the organisation and employees, which reduces the incidence of future conflicts. They also seek to maximise the positive effects and minimise the negative.

Recognising that people relate informally and influence formal decisions is essential. Workgroups experiencing the process of working as a team need and seek more autonomy. Delegating authority does not release managers and senior management from the responsibility of the process, they must commit themselves through monitoring, participation, study of the reports and information provided, guarantee the implementation of proposals and return to issuers.

People become critical and are no longer ordered, as they develop their awareness and recognition of their potential and their ability to contribute to the success of their personal, professional and

organisational lives. When managers have a good team with them, they do not waste their time solving operational problems; they assume responsibilities and together with the others, they also learn to manage the issues of their assignment. Therefore, the high dome is released to try to fulfil its role as well.

However, it is believed that both senior management, managers and employees must have a clear agreement on this choice to transform workgroups into teams and that everyone should not come empty but with a wealth of information and advice to accompany the development of this process. The number of managers must also be considered as well as their positions should be flexible, the length of stay in order to allow others to develop leadership and experience both sides of power.

Learning also takes place in practice and not just in theory. The reduction in the number of managers makes it possible for teams to provide support and advice to senior management. The process is slow but rich; people make up the richest in organisations, which is creative potential and the knowledge accumulated throughout their professional lives. Each knowledge must be socialised. Everyone is capable, but often they do not develop this capacity in isolation, but in the collective, they reveal themselves.

Mediation demonstrated to be a better option to manage workplace disputes even within organizations that do not use this option often. According to the data collected, it was possible to investigate the sectors that apply Mediation to solve conflicts. The sectors identified were IT, Computers & Technologies, and Business & Enterprise. These sectors were benefited by this approach improving and developing communication, increasing employee engagement and productivity, improving synergy and reducing turnover. This set of benefits enable companies to boost profit. Through the

literature review and the survey, it was possible to verify that HR professionals are capable to conduct Mediation meetings using their soft skills and knowledge about the company and its employees.

Applying the mediation is an excellent level reached, both for internal conflicts, as it shows the concern with resolving disputes quickly and economically, making the company's image before employees and society, in general, always be transparent. The attentiveness of entrepreneurs to adhere to this, in itself, demonstrates the modern, conscious and attractive look of several commercial partnerships. In this way, a significant investment is made.

REFLECTION

In the early beginning of the lecture of methodology and research methods, it occurred to the author the sense she wanted to develop in her dissertation. Having worked as a Human Resources Manager for 5 years. The author has gained exceptional experience in this field. She would consider connecting Mediation within the acquired experience to the workplace. The approach to this scientific work (dissertation title) tackled “Mediation in the workplace: the role of Human Resource in Internal Dispute”.

The development of this dissertation required a challenge to be faced by the author. She has been braved enough to take this worthy challenge. First of all, the author set the weak points which could be tackled. The major issue was the misinterpreting of ideas in her writing. To overcome this issue, she spent much time reading articles, books and the needed material. Her strength is that she is an organized person who schedules to work on and develop her writing.

The author went through a literature review that enabled her to boost her knowledge of the importance of Mediation in workplace conflict. The conducted survey has demonstrated that Mediation is the better option to manage internal disputes and improve communication in the workplace which is really lucrative and leads directly to increase the profit of the organization.

The author faced some difficulties to find the required information to assess the role of Human Resources as a mediator, for intense time limited. Another fact that could have valued her dissertation more would be the interviews with companies, to apply Mediation in the workplace, even though she may have been able to apply this survey to HR professionals as well. The Mediation outcome demonstrated that a process is a better tool to apply to the workplace dispute. The author realized that

Mediation has a wide range of scope of the advancement regarding the workplace in the Republic of Ireland.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 – Survey questions

Master's Dissertation questionnaire research: Commercial Mediation, a Workplace Conflict Management approach. My name is Milka Rocha and I am studying a Masters in Dispute Resolution at Independent Colleges Dublin. I am conducting research on Commercial Mediation and Conflict Management aiming to promote previous studies and applicability in both areas inside of workplace in order to ensuring a better environment. Before answering this questionnaire, I would like to clarify some concepts for you. Generally, conflicts are part of the life of every workplace and, in many cases, they are necessary, because the it brings innovation to the companies. When the conflicts is well managed, it conducts the organization towards positive changes. Otherwise, if conflicts are not properly and timely managed, they produce unfavourable consequences for everyone involved. Mediation is the most famous method in an alternative dispute resolution where a third party impartially assists the disputants to solve their differences. When arise these workplace conflicts the Commercial Mediation is applied.

1) Gender

- Female
- male
- prefer not say

2) Age

- 18 – 25
- 26 – 35

- 36 – 45
- 46 – 55
- + 56

3) Education

- High School
- College
- Bachelor Degree
- Postgraduate or Master Degree
- PhD

4) Job role

- Analyst
- Apprenticeship
- Assistant
- Consultant
- Director
- Internship
- Manager
- Supervisor

5) What is your current employment status?

- Employed
- Self employed

Unemployed

6) For what sector have you worked in?

Advertising & Marketing

Arts

Business & Enterprise

Banking & Finance

Engineering

Health

Hospitality

IT, Software, Computers & Technologies

Law & Legal

Life Sciences

Other

7) Do you work for a small, medium or large company?

Small

Medium

Large

8) How long have you been working for this company?

Less than one year

1 – 4

5 – 9

- 10
- 10 +

9) Do you know the policies and procedure of workplace that you work for?

- Yes
- No

10) Do you consider that the policies and procedures of the company you work for emphasises the employee's wellbeing?

- Yes
- No

11) What do you think is the most frequent cause of conflict in the company you work for?

- Differences of opinion
- Misunderstandings of information
- Different perspectives
- Pressure to achieving goals

12) Have you applied Conflict Management in workplace disputes?

- Yes
- No

13) Have you been heard about Alternative Dispute Resolution or Mediation?

- Yes

No

14) How does the workplace you work for deal with conflicts? Which method does it use?

ADR

Mediation

Conflict Management

Other

15) Conflict arises naturally in workplace. Do you believe Mediation applied by Human Resource Management is effective in resolving conflict?

Yes

No

16) In disputes situation, do you think a Human Resources Manager could be a mediator to achieve better outcome for both sides?

Yes

No

17) What contribution the mediation introduces to your workplace? (For the respondents who answered yes on the question 14)

Improve Synergy

Develop Communication

Increase Productive

- Reduce Turnover
- Improve Employee Engagement