SELF-AWARENESS IN THE MEDIATION PROCESS: A STUDENT'S PERCEPTIVE.

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# ABSTRACT

Self-awareness is a social skill in the mediation field, explored during the Master in Alternative Dispute Resolution content. The research question to ask is what is the Master in Alternative Dispute Resolution Students' perspective of self-awareness as a mediator skill and its importance in the mediation process?  This research is a challenge to facilitate an understanding of the students' perception of self-awareness on the meaning of the concept as a mediation skill, identify possible actions to enhance self-awareness, and identify the importance of self-awareness in the mediation process and the correlation with other concepts.  Data collection was addressed to the second semester of 2021 Master in Alternative Dispute Resolution Students at Independent College Dublin, facilitating a questionary survey and semi-structured interviews.  The results were presented using charts and tables to demonstrate the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data.  The findings concluded that self-awareness is a concern among the participants, and there is an appetite to develop the skill in order to guarantee to the parties a safe, supportive and impartial process to resolve the conflict.  Also, the study revealed that mediation is a complex field where assertiveness, empathy, neutrality and impartiality are a web of skills that support the mediator role.

Finally, the research may assist parties interested in further exploring skills required in the mediation process.

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# INTRODUCTION

Mediation in Ireland has a legal framework covered under the Mediation Act 2017. Several institutions and practitioners (Curran *et al*., 2018) have contributed to the development of mediation as an alternative dispute resolution and its integration into the Irish society gaining participation in business, commercial, workplace and family disputes.

A relevant aspect of the mediation is the mediator's commitment to developing an ethical and fair structure that guarantees the parties' safety and dignity. In that path, self-awareness performs an important role for the mediator.

According to the authors who have researched the field's subject, self-awareness is a relevant concept, and its understanding brings neutrality and impartiality to the process. It is a tool that supports the mediator to avoid bias and prejudgments and helps identify topics and issues that trigger emotions and feelings (Kelly & Kaminskiene, 2016). Cultivating self-awareness helps the mediator develop a mediation process with self-control and support the parties with a neutral dialogue and get focused on the problem when the emotions invade them (Senft, 2011).

This research is commenced to identify the Master in Alternative Dispute Resolution Students' self-awareness perspective. In this research, the Masters in Alternative Dispute Resolution Students will also be called mediator candidates. The study attempts to investigate:

- How the mediator candidates define the concept?

- Do they consider that self-awareness is correlated to other skills?

- How essential do they believe the concept is?

- Could the absence of self-awareness impact the mediation process negatively?

- How can mediator candidates cultivate self-awareness?

The research shows the opinions and ideas of mediator candidates who have been studying mediation for a year, getting familiar with the concept. The findings could be used in future research to compare the mediator candidates' perspectives to qualified mediators' perspectives. Moreover, the results would be an essential information source to the Independent College Dublin and other institutions in charge of delivering mediation training in order to know the students' insights about a relevant topic in the Master in Alternative Dispute Resolution program.

Previous research in Independent College Dublin has investigated emotional intelligence (O'Donoghue, 2014; Guerrero, 2019) and the role of the mediator (Meiller,2019); however, no research has focused its attention on self-awareness as the central concept in this proposal.

The scope of the research is limited to the second semester of 2021 Master in Alternative Dispute Resolution Students at Independent College Dublin. The scope does not include other academic years because the research period is limited to 12 weeks.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the Master in Alternative Dispute Resolution Students' perspective of self-awareness as a mediator skill and its importance in the mediation process?

OBJECTIVES

1. To establish students' perspectives on the meaning of self-awareness as a mediator skill.
2. To identify actions that enhance the level of self-awareness in a mediator candidate according to students' perspectives.
3. To identify the importance of self-awareness in the mediation process and its relationship with other concepts according to students' perspectives.

RATIONALE

This research will explore the perspective from the second semester of 2021 Master in Alternative Dispute Resolution Students at Independent College Dublin to interpret and recognise the concept of self-awareness as a mediator's ability and use it in the mediation process. It is finding the importance of implementing it. This topic was selected to investigate the thoughts and insights of the students who participate in the learning process. This proposal is related to personal interests. The researcher is part of the research population. With the concept of self-awareness, the researcher has analysed the value and importance of the mediation process. The term became associated with other concepts such as self-control, emotional intelligence, and self-management by introspection during the learning process. Self-awareness is seen as a tool that supports the intrapersonal and interpersonal convivence, allowing the individual to analyse conflicts, dialogues, relationships and response emotions in various situations. Self-awareness enables the mediator to get a more comprehensive panorama of the mediation process.

In addition, the findings will bring insights from mediator candidates to the parties interested in delivering mediation training to evaluate the concept in the content of future courses. The findings may be used as an opportunity to develop tools and resources for prospective mediator students.

ORGANISATION OF CHAPTERS

- Chapter one examines relevant literature to contribute to interpreting the essential concepts involved in the research questions, beginning with an understanding of self-awareness and the construction of perspective. In addition, the chapter develops the progress of the self-awareness concept and its importance in the mediation process. Then, the chapter includes some other key concepts relevant to the research aims.

- Chapter two gives an overview of the method used in this study. This chapter begins with and describes research methods and design before proceeding to strategy, choice, research population, data analysis and research limitations.

- Chapter three presents the data collection due to the methodology employed in this research. Quantitative data are presented through charts and qualitative data in a discursive way.

- Chapter four discusses the research findings outlined in chapter three in relationship with the literature review and the study's objectives.

- Chapter five concludes the research journey by seeking to answer the research question through the theoretical framework and the researcher's interpretation; the chapter involves discussion, conclusion and reflection.

# CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the review of the main concepts used in the study to support the accomplishment of the objectives, showing the development of the ideas and previous research that have contributed to the interpretation of mediation, self-awareness, and perception, among others.

Self-awareness was named in the phycological field by Duval and Wicklund in 1972. Its development has been integrated with different areas, becoming an essential skill in the mediation field, has been an object of discussion in classes, articles, books and research and is gaining recognition in leadership and management.

Different authors and their knowledge will lead this chapter and the theoretical framework of this journey seeking to understand the students' insight into self-awareness.

## 1.2 PERSPECTIVE OF SELF-AWARENESS AS A MEDIATOR SKILL

### 1.2.1 MEDIATION AND THE MEDIATION PROCESS

Mediation is a dispute resolution approach in which the parties agree to participate in "informal, private procedures that involve only the disputants or a process assistant (a mediator)" (Moore, 2014). In addition, it can be seen as an Alternative Dispute Resolution. The parties consent to attend to a confidential problem-solving session with full autonomy and self-determination to find a solution to the dispute (Dingle & Kelbie, 2013). It is "a time-tested choice in an ever-growing array

of conflict intervention methods – from formal and public litigation to peace-building projects, to quiet backstage coaching." (Beer & Packard, 2012, p.4), which means that mediation facilitates the parties the independence to obtain their solutions through communication.

Mediation is a voluntary, confidential, informal, flexible, private and usually a low-cost procedure, in Ireland the Mediation Act 2017 is the framework that explains and regulate the practice of mediation and the responsibilities for the mediator, the parties, the court, and lawyers. After the Mediation Act 2017 was introduced in the Irish society, the disputants are encouraged and invited by lawyers and the court to practice mediation, the information about the process, its benefits and its advantages have to be informed before the case escalates to the public legislation to be resolve in court.

The mediation process is a focused and structured conversation based on a safe environment (Boulle, 1998). The participants can communicate their emotions, interests, and needs with an impartial third person (Beer & Packard, 2012). The mediation process takes place to "assist those involved in the conflict to communicate effectively with one another and reach their own agreed and informed decisions concerning some, or all, of the issues in dispute" (Whatling, 2012).

 The procedure is advanced in numerous stages; it is a journey; the number of stages is different according to the author; according to Roberts, there are six stages similar to the negotiation process: "searching for an arena; defining the agenda; exploring the field; narrowing differences; bargaining and ritualizing the outcome" (2017), John Cooley (2006) considers the process through eight stages, those are initiation, preparation, introduction, problem statement, problem clarification, generation and evaluation of alternatives, selection of other options and agreement. In addition, Beer and Packard (2012) appoint step one is that the parties and the mediator must consent to mediate and

sign the agreement to mediate; defining the roles, mediator's scope, conditions, confidentiality and logistics as soon as that component is done, the mediation can occur.

According to Moore (2014), mediation involves a list of stages and activities, the bellow figure is a representation of the roadmap suggested by the author, the first three aspects are preliminary activities before the mediation:

| **Preparation stages and activities** | |
| --- | --- |
| Making contact with the parties | • Making initial contact with one or more parties.<br>• Creating a positive environment and rapport and developing mediator's credibility.<br>• Explaining the process and clarifying parties'expectations. |
| Collecting background information | • Determining questions and methods for collecting appropiate information.<br>• Collecting information about the conflict, people involve, parties' emotions and level of comunication. |
| Designing a preliminary medation plan | • Determining a general plan, considering the parties' potential to negotiate and their emotional condition.<br>• Determining the content and procedure to be used to opening statements. |

| **Mediation session stages activities** | |
| --- | --- |
| Beginning mediation | • Welcoming and introducing the parties.<br>• Confirming the voluntaireness and self-determination of the parties.<br>• Explaining the confidenciality and the mediator role. |
| Presenting parties'initial perspectives | • Preparing the parties about opening statements, inviting the parties to the conversation and listen the statements.<br>• Summarising all the issues, needs, interest mentioned by the parties.<br>• Framing broad topics, addressing the conversatiom in a impartial way, reframing and removing problematic judgments. |
| Educating about issues and framing problems | • Preparing the paties to make and effective in-depth presentation of their views, asking the parties to present a detailed explanationof the history of the conflict.<br>• Identifiying data missing or needed for desion making. Framing and refraing the issue to be address and resolve. |
| Generating options and problem solving | • Determining the best forum for option generation, encouraging the parties to develop multiple options that generate more unrderstandings and possible solutions.<br>• Implementing the selected option-generation procedureand using negociation skills. |
| Evaluating options for agreements | • Reviewing and evaluiting the range of options and encouraging bargaining. Evaluating the viability of options.<br>• Reviewing all parties'individuall and joint needs and interests .<br>• Supporting the parties to explore their Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement. |
| Reaching agreements and achieving closure | • Recognizing and confirming understandings and agreements,.<br>• Exploring components of potential agreements.<br>• Implementing procedures to memorialize onderstandings or agreements and encouraging voluntary compliance. |
| Monitoring agreements and developing mechanisms to resolve future disputes | • Discussing with parties the steps that each of them is commited to and will take to implement their agreements.<br>• Clarifying the time lime and any milestone for future actions.<br>• Identifiying standars and criteria that evaluate compliance. Discusing stepst to be taken by parties in any future dispute. |

*Figure 1. Mediation stages roadmap by Christopher Moore (2014, p.130-147)*

## 1.2.2 THE MEDIATOR ROLE

The mediator's role facilitates the parties in a safe environment to share their conflicting needs and interests. The role of the mediator is to help the parties to identify the conflict and clarify their views (Moore, 2014). Working in identifying mutual needs and benefits, finding commonalities, and addressing the communication to support the parties in the dialogue while finding joint solutions that they can implement for mutual benefit (Cahn & Abigail, 2007.)

The mediator's role is to facilitate guidance in the exchange of interest, using effective problem-solving and negotiation techniques to improve the parties' relationship and communication. However, the mediator does not have the authority to make any suggestion that might compromise the decision of the parties (Moore, 2014), which means that the mediator has an obligation to facilitate an impartial process.

The mediator is in charge of leading the conversation and generating questions for the parties that reveal the insights about the conflict (O'Sullivan, 2018), due to when the parties attend mediation, they usually have a position that blames the other party. It means that the mediator's role is to bring into the conversation the parties' perspectives and lead the questions so that the parties visualise the conflict, where they separate them from the problem and get focus on talking with cooperation looking for commonalities and interests that satisfy them (Cahn & Abigail, 2007).

## 1.2.3 THE MEDIATOR SKILLS

Defining skill as "the ability to do something well" (Whatling, 2012) in the mediation practice, skill is what "with suitable training and practice" (Whatling, 2012) is possible to develop and "what starts as a skill subsequently becomes a strategy" (Whatling, 2012).

The mediator is responsible for facilitating a competent and professional mediation process for the parties, and their "skills is an important part of ensuring the quality of mediation services" (Bronson, 2000); in addition, "The skill of the mediator must lie in facilitating the crucial exchanges of accurate and constructive information" (Roberts, 2017).

## 1.2.4  DEFINITION OF SELF-AWARENESS

The theory of self-awareness has been developed in the psychology field since 1972, when Shelley Duval and Robert Wicklund, in the book use A theory of objective self-awareness, defined the concept of "objective self-awareness" as the state when the individual analyse their self, comparing and evaluates their behaviour to the internal values and standards and in disparity when individuals focus the attention in the self "as the source of perception and action"  (Duval & Wicklund, 1972) defining this as "subjective self-awareness". Then, the theory of Daniele Goleman considers that self-awareness is a "vital foundation skill for three emotional competencies" (1998) as one of the five components of emotional intelligence and describes self-awareness as "Knowing what we are feeling in the moment, and using those preferences to guide our decision making; having a realistic assessment of our own abilities and a well-grounded sense of self-confidence" (Goleman, 1998), and then defines emotional awareness as "The recognition of how our emotions affect our performance, and the ability to use our values to guide a decision making" (1998).  The evolution of the concept adds the factor that the individual can recognise their abilities to guide a decision.

The theory of self-awareness has progressed, the subject has been researched in different groups (Jordan & Ashkanasy, 2006), and several articles have made contributions; in 2001, Silvia and Duval analysed the original formulations of the theory presented in 1972, considering the success and the

failure of some attributions and concluded the article appointing the standards and how the individual internalised them in a process named "the objective self-awareness".

Following the idea that the term self-awareness is a process in development that individuals execute along the time, it is essential to mention the academic contribution made by Philippe Rochat, defining self-awareness as "a dynamic process, not a static phenomenon" (2003), his investigation is based in how self-awareness is constructed throughout states that emerge in the early life of the person, and in adults, self-awareness is a fluctuating transition from different levels as a dynamic system that is related to the individual experience and is connected to the social dimension as a "co-construction" this means that is related to the interaction with the others.

Then, the term has evolved, and more aspects have been included in the definition; Tasha Eurich explains, "internal self-awareness, represents how clearly, we see our own values, passions, aspirations, fit with our environment, reactions (including thoughts, feelings, behaviours, strengths, and weaknesses), and impact on others." (2018). That means that self-awareness is a constant process of analysis, being conscious of how emotions and feelings are present and how to manage them through actions and behaviours that impact others and ourselves.

Nowadays, self-awareness is a concept mentioned in a diversity of fields such as mediation, business development, leadership excellence, education, negotiation, diplomacy, etc. example of that is the article of Lori Harris in the magazine Forbes explaining the impact of self-awareness in decision making, creativity, growth and self-control as a critical element in leadership.

In this research, self-awareness will be analysed in the mediation context; the following paragraphs will be focused on the development of the concept in the field and the studies and contributions from several practitioners.

## 1.2.5   SELF-AWARENESS IN THE MEDIATION

Researching self-awareness in the mediation process and the implementation of the term as a mediator skill, Slama classifies self-awareness in the mediation in two dimensions; the first dimension is the inner self-awareness, which means the mediator's ability to know themself, their bias and triggers, the issues or topics that might activate emotions related to memories or experiences in the past. The second dimension is about self-control, the mediator's ability to regulate reactions and behaviours, which is helpful "to handle the variety of emotional, situational, or ideological matters often presented during mediation" (2010).

Then, Kelly and Kaminskienė unify in a concept the two dimensions mentioned by Slama, defining self-awareness as "the ability to read one's own emotions and recognize the role that those feelings might play in decision-making." (2016), and the authors consider that accomplishing that step is a significant milestone on the mediator growth.

The link between self-awareness and managing reactions is essential in the impartibility and ethic of the mediation; Senft mentions, "Self-awareness allows us to be aware of the emotions that stimulate our impulses, enhancing our ability to decide appropriately what to do with such impulses… and ethical mediation practice calls for mediators in many ways to set aside there directive impulses" (p. 21, 2004)  this means that self-awareness engages the mediators to develop self-control about the feeling and emotions to support the parties with communication and quality, where the impulses do not impact the process.

Furthermore, Slama mentions that "the mediators should assess their own biases through self-awareness and work with their clients to bring self-awareness to them" (2010), which means that self-awareness helps the mediator to take away presumptions, judgments and stereotypes and face

the mediator to the process with control to guide the parties to a safe and equal structure to resolve the dispute.

Self-awareness allows the mediator to neutralise the dialogue and reframe the parties' views eliminating the negative connotation and performing a neutral process (Slama, 2010). Appointing about the importance of achieving a neutral dialogue means an assertive communication as "the ability to speak up for one's interests, concerns, or rights in a way that does not interfere with the interests or infringes on the rights of others." (Cahn & Abigail, 2007)

Self-awareness might be deemed in the mediation as a tool that adds value to the process to facilitate a neutral procedure without judgements (Slama, 2010).

The concept of self-awareness keeps contributing to mediation; recently, in Ireland, the Kennedy Institute Workplace Mediation Research Group, in its effort to develop workplace mediation, made a considerable contribution to the field in a document released in 2016 in which mentions "Mediators should have a high level of self-awareness – including in relation to personal emotions and biases. Emotional intelligence should be actively evaluated as part of any mediator assessment" (Barry *et al*., 2016).

The research will define self-awareness as the mediator's ability to be aware of their own emotions, analyse bias and prejudgments, and manage emotions and reactions properly to enhance assertive communication between the parties in the mediation process.

## 1.2.6   DEFINITION OF PERCEPTION

One of the early authors that mentioned the term perception is David Hume in the book A treatise of human nature in 1962. He said, "All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call Impressions and Ideas."

Then, Brewer analysing previous contributions to the concept, defines, "The relevant features of perceptual experiences are their vivacity, their passivity and lack of voluntary control on our part, the irresistibility of the beliefs to which they give rise, and their peculiarly direct connection with pleasure, pain, and immediate action… perception is a source of knowledge about existence and nature of the material world around us" (1999, p.7), what means that every person makes a perception of the situation or phenomenon according to the previous knowledge, values, beliefs and experiences.

Rookes & Willson, in a more recent investigation, define perception as "a process which involves the recognition and interpretation of stimuli which register on our sences" (2005), considering that perception is an involuntary response to the stimuli.

The research will define perception as students' ideas and interpretation of the concept of self-awareness and its contribution to the mediation process.

## 1.3 ACTIONS TO ENHANCE THE LEVEL OF SELF-AWARENESS

## 1.3.1   JOURNALING

Journaling is a known technique for self-awareness development; the concept has been named reflective writing and reflective journaling. The idea of journaling is considered a helpful method to

develop self-awareness in different fields; in the healthcare, context is considered "an effective teaching tool that can help students become more fully aware in clinical decision-making instances and ultimately promote reflective practice… Reflective journaling can also help students, as well as nurse practitioners, to sustain themselves emotionally in their work." (Williams *et al.*, 2009).

The concept of journaling in mediation Senft explains that journaling "can be an excellent way to observe your own thoughts, especially important is review of old journal entries to learn how you have grown and what areas continue to be personal struggles" (2011).

A similar approach is presented by Martin-Cuellar, naming self-reflective journaling; the author indicates, "Self-reflexivity lends itself to journaling specifically to express emotions and feelings, which can prompt the self-monitoring process. Journaling about emotions and feelings is a subjective process of identifying and documenting the experiences of one's affect related to others or experiences… Dialoguing with the self creates a distance from the self and thus allows one to be more objective about their subjective emotions and feelings" (2018).

## 1.3.2    OBSERVER

Observational learning is a psychological field focused on the social cognitive perspective of the learning process involving modelling in behavioural development (Fryling *et al.*, 2011). It is "the ability to acquire new responses as a result of observing the behavior of a model, constitutes important learning and teaching strategy. Learning through observation and imitation can account for the natural acquisition of behaviour and the planned acquisition of skills through directed observation" (Browder *et al.*, 1986).

In the mediation field, The Mediators' Institute of Ireland defines an observer as "A person who is learning to become a Mediator or one who wishes to practice in an area of mediation new to them. One of the ways of making Mediators or trainee Mediators more proficient is for them to be present at (but not necessarily taking part in) a mediation and, in particular, at a Mediation Session." (Ireland, 2021)

This research defines the observer as the mediator candidate who joins the mediation to apply observational learning from a qualified mediator that manages the mediation process.

## 1.4 IMPORTANCE OF SELF-AWARENESS AND THE CORRELATION TO OTHER CONCEPTS

### 1.4.1   SELF-REFLECTION

The term self-reflection, according to Gillespie, "can be defined as a temporary phenomenological experience in which self becomes an object to oneself" (2017). In the mediation context, adequate training and efficient procedures to guarantee the mediator's performance are essential, considering self-assessment methods to increase the reflective thinking, involving "the ability to define their skills through constant self-reflection" (Lieberman *et al.,* 2005).

This process involves "critical thought, self-direction, and problem solving coupled with personal knowledge and self-awareness" (Gün, 2011).

In a similar approach, Black, Sileo and Prater indicate, "Reflection enables individuals to reframe, reinterpret, and articulate their understandings and beliefs, on a continual basis, in light of new experiences and information. It is a process that encompasses all time designations -- past, present, and future -- simultaneously." (2000).

## 1.4.2   EMOTIONS

According to Damacio, emotion is defined as "an expression of basic mechanisms of life regulation developed in evolution and is indispensable for survival. It plays a critical role in virtually all aspects of learning, reasoning and creativity. Somewhat surprisingly, it may play a role in the construction of consciousness." (2004) what means is a basis in the process of cognitive human beings, a combination of cognition, adaptation, motivation and physical elements that interfere in the interaction and convivence and could be described as "bioregulatory reactions" (Damacio, 2004) and a "psychosocialbiological construct" (Lazarus, 1991).

Performing as a reaction, Damacio considers that emotions "are constituted by a patterned collection of chemical and neural responses that the brain produces when it detects the presence of an emotionally competent stimulus" (2004), similar to Lazarus. He mentions that emotions are "complex, patterned, organismic reactions to how we think we are doing in our lifelong efforts to survive and flourish and achieve what we wish for ourselves" (1991).

Stephan takes another approach, defining emotion "such as, for example, hate, love, jealousy, shame, guilt, or despair" (2012). Those are different to emotional episodes or moods; Stephan explains, "the particular emotional episodes may last from seconds to several minutes, the emotion may last for days, weeks, months, even years." (2012)

The mediation process is not exempt from emotions; according to Herrman, "mediators must undergo a profound shift in their thinking about emotion in mediation. Rather than seeing emotion as a side-effect of a conflict, mediators should appreciate emotion as a frame for the conflict reality" (2009).

### 1.4.3   SELF-CONTROL

Goleman defines self-control as "Managing disruptive emotions and impulses effectively" (1998); no further from that definition, the author considers the concept as "Handling our emotions so that they facilitate rather than interfere with the task at hand; being conscientious and delaying gratification to pursue goals; recovering well from emotional distress" (1998).

Self-control is the ability to execute control on processes and is "defined as the mental effort required to inhibit, control, or alter one's spontaneous and habitual thoughts, emotions, and response patterns to ensure the unimpaired exertion of planned, purposeful behaviour" (Diestel & Schmidt, 2009).  According to Stephan, emotion regulation or self-control "refers to processes by which we influence which emotions we have, when we have them, and how we experience and express them" (2012).

Considering the term as an ability, Kelly and Kaminskienė have a similar definition to Diestel and Schmidt. However, the authors added to the concept the aspect of adaptability. Appointing that self-control allows the self to control "emotions and impulses and to adapt to changing circumstances." (2016).

The authors mentioned explain the concept in the mediation context and Kelly and Kaminskienė appoint to the benefit of exerting self-control in a procedure. Kelly and Kaminskienė said, "the emotionally competent mediator or negotiator is able to choose proper responses instead of being led by emotion or suppressing it. With self-management, one can choose the proper response to outbursts of emotion from other parties" (2016)

## 1.4.4 BIAS AND PREJUDGEMENTS

Bias in mediation is a debated concept, and two different positions about the object have been reached; the first position is that bias may adversely impact mediation. According to Young (1962), the mediator's role as the impartial third party in the negotiation of conflict has to be impartial, and no bias in the performance of the procedure that impacts the outcome. The exact position is shared by Thompson *et al.*, (2000), in the analysis of bias and the considerations to overcome them.

According to Thompson *et al.,* there are several cognitive biases. They might appear "in many forms and shapes" (2000); for example, people can have stereotypes about other persons, situations, or even themselves. Associating the concept to conflict resolution, there are four main types; the first kind is simplifying the conflict situation, which means formulating judgments without gathering complete evidence, which leads the process of making assumptions and stereotypes.

The second kind of bias is opposing forces, which means that participants in a conflict have a tendency to assume that the level of opposition is higher, and they assume that just one party is able to win and default the other has to lose.

The third type of bias is false dichotomy, choosing between cooperation and competition; there is a misconception that in negotiations the participants have to choose between competing or working together, but there is a third option the "*strategic creativity*" (Thompson *et al.,* 2000) what means to apply both in the problem-solving, encouraging the parties to seek for common interests that help joint resolutions that benefit both parties.

The fourth type of bias is egocentric judgment, which means that people's judgments are led by self-interest and the idea of wanting what is fair, but fair is a subjective perception, thus is different from one person to the other.

The following figure summarize the four kinds of bias and their effects according to Thompson *et al.,* (2000):

| Core Biases and Their Effects | |
|---|---|
| **Core Bias** | **Effects** |
| Need to simplify conflict situations | Stereotyping<br>Ignoring inconsistent information<br>Confusing cause-and-effect relations |
| Perception of opposing forces | Fixed-pie perception<br>Lose-lose outcomes<br>Exaggeration of conflict<br>Reactive devaluation |
| False dichotomy between cooperation and competition | Overly tough (escalatory) strategies<br>Overly concessionary strategies<br>Suboptimal solutions |
| Egocentric judgment | Biased judgments of fairness<br>Invalid perceptions of control<br>Illusion of transparency<br>Higher likelihood of impasse |

*Table 1. Core Biases and their effects by Thompson, Nadler and Lount (2000, p.245)*

Retaking the discussion at the beginning of the concept, about how the concept of bias is considered in mediation, the second position about bias in mediation is the statement that bias might contribute to a successful mediation.

According to Savun, "A mediator is biased if its preferences are aligned with one party or the other. A biased mediator cares not only for ending the hostilities but also for resolving the dispute in a particular way that is commensurate with its interests. Unbiased mediators, on the other hand, do not care about how an issue is resolved as long as peace is established." (2008). Similar position is

agreed by Kressel and Pruitt (1985). They pointed out that a biased mediator can bring peace to the mediation and influence the agreement in order to protect the parties' interests.

This research will be led under the first position in the debate, considering that bias in mediation might generate an adverse impact that could influence the parties' decision and interfere with the impartial outcome.


1.4.5    IMPARTIALITY AND NEUTRALITY

Impartiality and neutrality are mentioned concepts in mediation books, articles, and guides for practitioners. Some authors synonymise the terms, while others distinguish impartiality from neutrality (Bailey, 2014).

Defining neutrality, Moore mentions, "Neutrality refers to the relationship or behavior between the intermediary and disputants" (2014). The mediator must perform as an independent facilitator and disclose any previous relationship with the parties involved that might reflect any conflict of interest.

 While impartiality "refers to the absence of bias or preference in favour of one or more negotiators, their interests, or the specific solutions that they are advocating" (Moore, 2014).  In addition, impartiality guides the mediator to "be committed to serve all parties equally with respect to the process of mediation." (European Code of Conduct for Mediators, 2004, cited in Dingle & Kelbie, 2013)

This research indicates that what is essential to recognise is "what impartiality and neutrality do require and demand is that the mediator separate his or her personal opinion about the outcome of the dispute or relationships that have developed during the mediation process from the performance of their duties and focus on ways to help the parties make their own decisions without

unduly favoring one of them." (Moore, 2014), and there is no hesitation that neutrality benefits to the successful mediation (Welton & Pruitt, 1987).

This research will categorise the concept of impartiality and neutrality to guarantee a satisfactory process for the parties, giving them the same attention and fair treatment without any conflict of interest from the mediator or any interference in the outcome chosen by the parties.

### 1.4.6   EMPATHY

According to Kelly and Kaminskienė (2016), empathy is an emotional aspect of mediation where the mediator needs to build trust and empathy in order to support the parties and address the process; Goleman defines empathy as "Sensing what people are feeling, being able to take their perspective, and cultivating rapport and attunement with a broad diversity of people" (1998).

The relationship between empathy and self-awareness is underlined by Goleman, indicating that "The prerequisite for empathy is self-awareness" (1998). That empathy is focused on "understanding the issues or concerns that lie behind another's feelings" (Goleman, 1998); a similar definition is used by Klimecki (2019), who analyses the role that empathy plays in conflict resolution and the interpersonal relations.

The correlation between mediation and empathy is demonstrated by an experimental study investigating the effect of peer mediation and conflict resolution training on the empathy level of the participants; the research confirmed that empathic skills increased significantly when the participants concluded the mediation training (Şahin *et al*., 2011).

## 1.4.7   ASSERTIVENESS

It is the ability to communicate yourself with confidence; it requires self-awareness; knowing and understanding the self enables the individual to express and respond to the needs of the other individuals without compromising their interests.

Assertiveness involves listening and responding to the others with a "Tone of voice, intonation, volume, facial expression, gesture and body language" (Bishop, 2013) and correct words that facilitate effective communication and appropriate behaviour.

Assertiveness is a social skill applicable in any context or situation at work, at home, or in social life helps the individual to "eliminate the fear and stress which still today are present in many of our life, and work relationship" (Garner, 2012) helps the individual to have control and act with good behaviour.

Managing conflict requires assertiveness; Garner suggests, "the assertive principles of standing up for oneself while acknowledging the rights of others mean that both tactically and strategically the assertive person always has a win-win solution to conflict in their mind." (2012). That means that assertiveness helps to build a positive and constructive process.

# CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The research was designed in the Irish context. The data was obtained from primary sources; a survey and five semi-structured interviews were employed. The survey and interviews were addressed to Masters in Alternative Dispute Resolution Students who attended the course in the second semester of 2021 in the Independent College Dublin. The survey was delivered to the students by an online platform named Survey Monkey, while the interviews were individual, and the data was captured in an online meeting in the forum called Zoom.

The qualitative analysis was acquired from the questionnaire survey responses, and the semi-structured survey focused on the aims of the investigation.

The strategy allowed to prepare the conclusions and reflect on this research based on the information proportionated from the primary data.

## 2.2 PHILOSOPHY

The research was based on subjectivism as the ontological philosophy in order to identify the Masters in Alternative Dispute Resolution students' perceptions of self-awareness. Subjectivism was selected as philosophy because "The subjectivist view is that social phenomena are created from social actors' perceptions and consequent actions" (Saunders *et al.,* p.108, 2009).

Furthermore, with the epistemological approach, the research was led through interpretivism. Interpretivism explores how an individual tries to understand the world in which he or she lives

through the meaning of their experience; is "the philosophical position to which this refers is the way we as humans attempt to make sense of the world around us." (Saunders *et al.,* p.108, 2009). The interpretative paradigm considers that the interpretation and understanding of the phenomena of reality must be emphasised on the meaning of events. That reality is constructed by persons in groups (Patel, 2015), getting involve the circumstances, culture and social factors.

The survey and the four semi-structured interviews characterised the strategy to gather reliable data from the opinions and ideas of the participants.

## 2.3 APPROACH

The research was led by an inductive approach supporting the strategy to obtain the study's findings across abstractions of concepts and theories (Punch, 2005). The inductive approach was suitable for the research because it permitted an analysis of the information and identification patterns and variables through the perceptions and opinions collected in an exploratory study (Gray, 2014); in this scenario, with the inductive approach, the data collected brought the theory and helped to understand the problem in the context where is taking place (Saunders *et al*., p.108, 2009).

The qualitative data was gathered and based on the participants' opinions expressed in the semi-structured interviews and opening questions on the survey. Furthermore, the research deemed appropriated the qualitative approach to interpret the meaning of self-awareness from the perspective of mediator candidates in an exploratory study. Additionally, the quantitative data was analysed from the responses obtained from the survey, and the charts represent the opinion of Masters in Alternative Dispute Resolution Students of 2021.

## 2.4 STRATEGY

This research applied four semi-structured interviews and a survey as a strategy in a qualitative and quantitative approach. This strategy was chosen as primary data collection, a process of informed consent was implied, and general information about the research and aims was presented to the participants before they answered the survey and semi-structured interviews.

The survey was the first method of data collection released in the research. This strategy allowed to quantify data through a questionnaire, which is "The most common method for collecting data… the questionnaire comprises a set of standardised questions… The standardised questions make it possible to easily compare responses across different locations or time frames." (Saunders & Lewis, p.121, 2017) the questionnaire was used to rank actions that enhance self-awareness and identify the importance of self-awareness in the mediation process.

Then the semi-structured interview was chosen as a data collection method because it allows the researcher to gather more complex and comprehensive information from the personal experiences and opinions of the participants and enables exploration of beliefs, concerns and reflection on the process (Coombes *et al.*, 2009); in the semi-structured interviews "the researcher will have a list of themes and questions to be covered" (Saunders *et al.*, p.312, 2009) in addition, according to Hall and Hall interviews "provide data, which give fuller expression to the informant's views" (1996, p. 157).; it was possible to gather the perceptions of Masters in Alternative Dispute Resolution Students of 2021 in a guided list of questions that include the insight of self-awareness, cultivating self-awareness and its importance in the mediation process. The students expressed their ideas and opinions based on their experiences living. The interviews allowed the participants the time and space to share their insights through a good conversation.

Due to time and limited resources, the semi-structured interviews were limited to an amount of four semi-structured interviews; of the four participants interviewed, two were male, and two were female; all of them were students enrolled in the second semester of 2021, with the same course content, classes and lectures in the learning process about self-awareness.

## 2.5 CHOICE

A mixed-method led the research; the quantitative data from the questionary survey was the first approach to the participants. A second approach was complemented with the qualitative information from the semi-structured interviews with volunteer participants, which delivered more in-depth knowledge. The data were analysed in the same period. Mixed-method occurs when "both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis procedures are both used in a research design." (Saunders *et al.*, p.602, 2009).

## 2.6 TIME HORIZON

The research was developed in twelve weeks, the time that Independent College Dublin assigns for the Dissertation process.

The first phase was developed in March, presenting the proposal to the supervisor and obtaining approval.

Then, the second phase was the cross-sectional research due to the data was collected through questionaries and semi-structured interviews during April and May 2022 "over a short time period" (Saunders & Lewis, p.130, 2017); otherwise, a longitudinal study has the capacity of study the development or change of the phenomenon over time (Saunders & Lewis, 2017).

In May, the third and final phase concluded with the data analysis, presenting the results and discussing the findings.

## 2.7 RESEARCH POPULATION

The scope of this exploratory research is limited to the 57 Master in Alternative Dispute Resolution Students enrolled at Independent College Dublin in the second semester of 2021.

The participants in this research have been selected because they have been familiar with the concept of self-awareness for a year. Surveys were made using Survey Monkey, sending the invitation to participate online to all the Master in Alternative Dispute Resolution Students enrolled at Independent College Dublin in the second semester of 2021. The obtained responses were 40 surveys, representing 70% of the population.

Additionally, this research counts on four semi-structured interviews to obtain qualitative data; the semi-structured interviews facilitated flexibility and maximised the participant's freedom to share any idea or theory rather than answer the question. The participants were invited to participate. Before the interviews, the consent form was signed by the participants, the interviews were executed online, and the transcription was uploaded to Independent College Dublin via Turnitin.

## 2.8 DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative data collected from the survey was presented in the research through bar and pie charts that the software Survey Monkey employed to represent the Master in Alternative Dispute Resolution Student's opinions about self-awareness in the mediation process.

The qualitative data obtained from the interviews and opening questions from the survey identified patterns that were interpreted and analysed about the academic theory displayed in the literature review to reach the objectives defined in the study. The qualitative data visualisation was presented through extracts that summarised the participants' insights and categorised them into concepts. To conserve the anonymity of the participants, a coding system was applied, and a number was allocated to each participant besides the participant's name. The same with the opening questions from the survey, a letter S and a number were assigned to each response.

The interview questions and survey are included in the appendices (see Appendix B & C); the data were collected during April and May 2022.

## 2.9 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The research wanted to show the students' perspective on the meaning of self-awareness and its importance in the mediation process. The data collected through the survey reached 70% of the population registered in the second semester of 2021 in the Masters in Alternative Dispute Resolution at Independent College Dublin. However, the findings cannot be generalised to mediator candidates in other institutions or another period in the same institution.

Furthermore, the research has implications using subjectivism as philosophy because the researcher interpreted the qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews. This is relevant to this study as the researcher is a Masters in Alternative Dispute Resolution Student at Independent College Dublin in the second semester of 2021.

# CHAPTER 3: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section presents the quantitative and qualitative data collected during April and May 2022. Represents the students' perspective of self-awareness through concepts and definitions and analyse in percentage aspects such as, the students appetite for enhancing the level of self-awareness and the importance of the concept in the mediation process.

The quantitative data is presented through a graphical presentation as an appropriate technique for examining the collected responses from the survey; a total of ten figures will lead the presentation. The qualitative information will be displayed through tables that exhibit the categorisation of concepts, seeking patterns and similarities in the interview transcripts, and pointing out the research objectives.

### 3.2 QUANTITATIVE DATA

Of the 57 participants, 40 participants answered back; the data presented is based on the 40 students' responses, which represents a 70% of the total of the population invited.

**Self-awareness as a mediator skill**
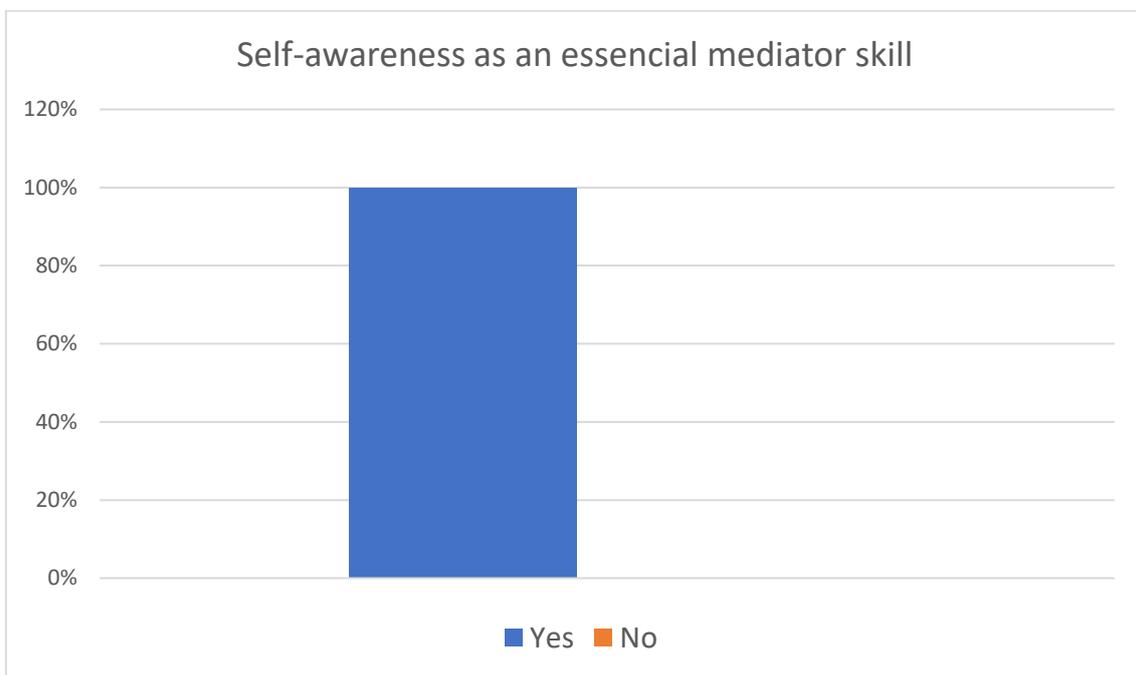


*Figure 2. Self-awareness as a necessary mediator skill.*

As shown in Figure 1, participants were asked to indicate if self-awareness might be considered a mediator skill in the mediation process, and 100% agreed that self-awareness is essential. The question helps to represent the students' perspective and the importance that the concept has in the mediation field. No negative answer was obtained to this question.

**The students desire to enhance their level of self-awareness.**
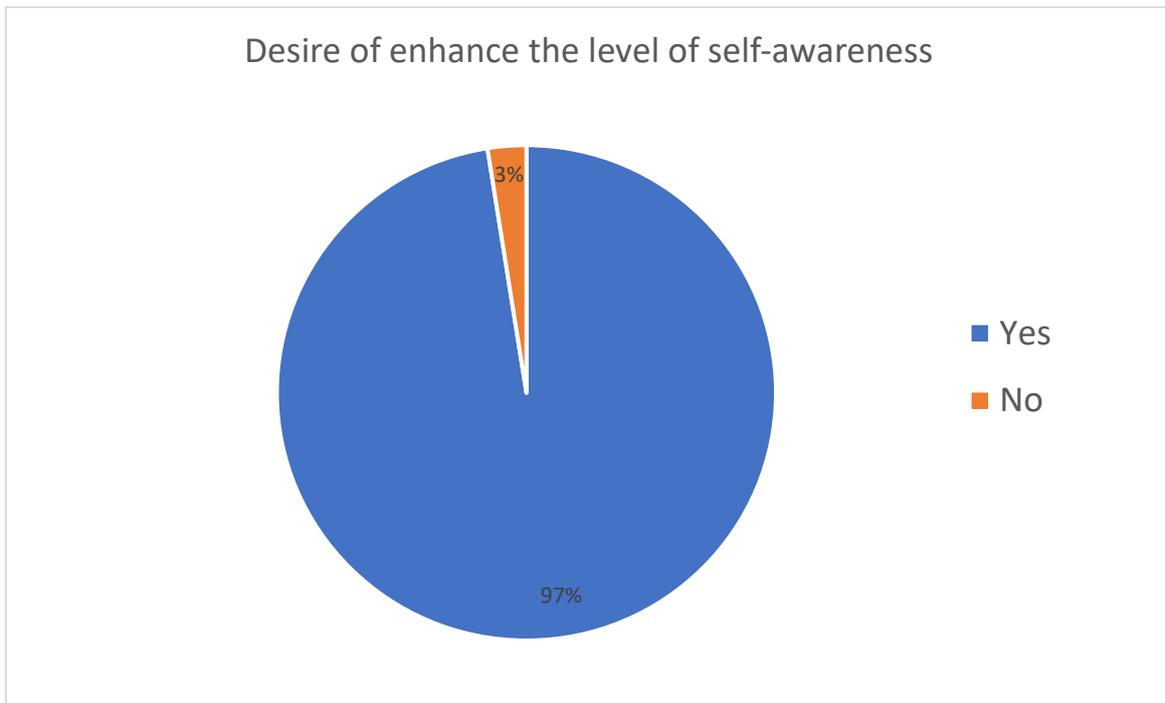


*Figure 3. The desire to enhance self-awareness*

The participants were asked to indicate if they were interested in improving self-awareness, as Figure 2 demonstrates that 97% of the mediator candidates pointed to a positive answer. While 3% of the participants deny an interest in developing self-awareness. The question helps to identify the students' appetite to build self-awareness.

**Journaling in the enhancement of self-awareness**
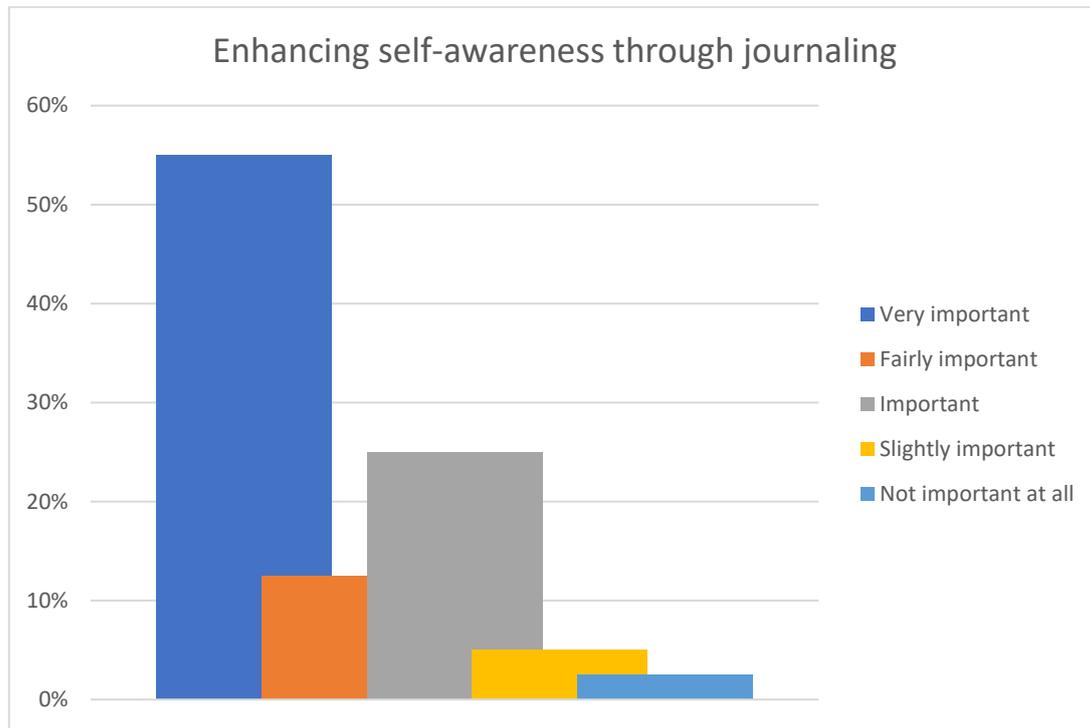


Figure 4. Enhancing self-awareness through journaling

As shown in Figure 3, the majority of respondents, 92.5% consider that Journaling is important in enhancing self-awareness. That percentage represents the answers located from the option important to very important. This result helps to understand the students' perception of journaling as a technique for the enhancement of self-awareness.

**Reading and listening to experts in the enhancement of self-awareness.**
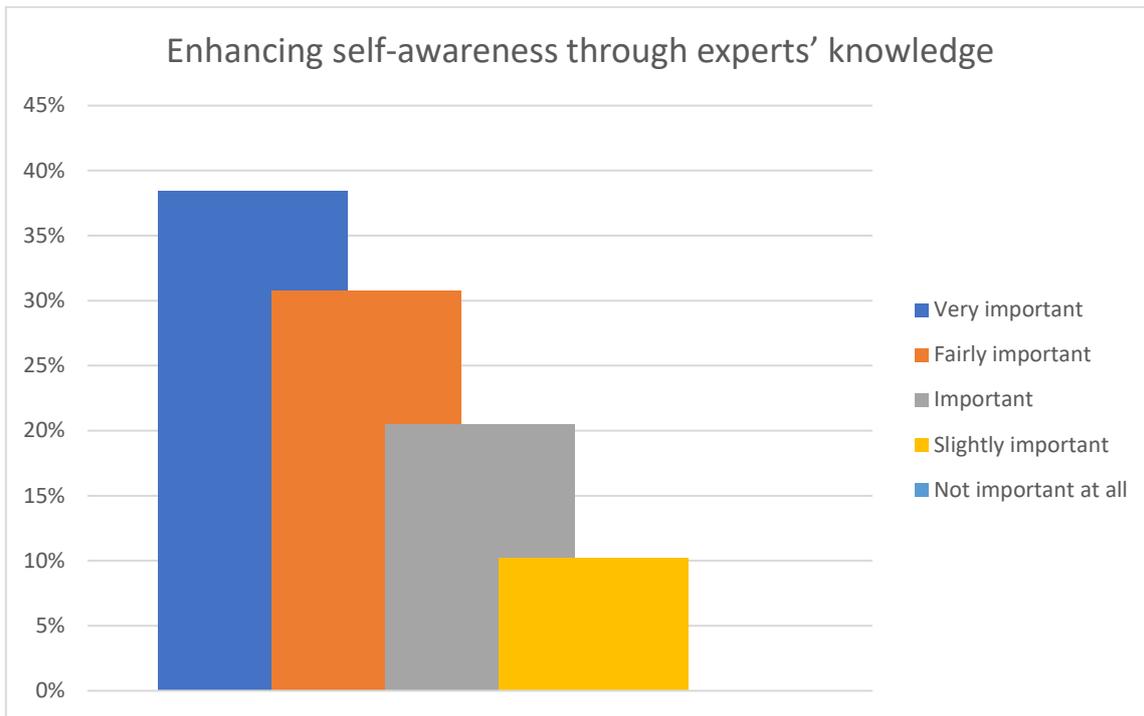


*Figure 5. Enhancing self-awareness through experts' knowledge*

As shown in Figure 4, the majority of respondents, 89.7% consider that reading and listening to experts is essential in enhancing self-awareness; that percentage represents the answers located from the option important to very important. At the same time, 10.3% of the participants think that reading and listening to experts and qualified mediators is slightly important. This result helps to understand the students' perception of obtaining knowledge from specialists as a technique in the enhancement of self-awareness.

**Participating in mediation sessions as an observer in the enhancement of self-awareness**
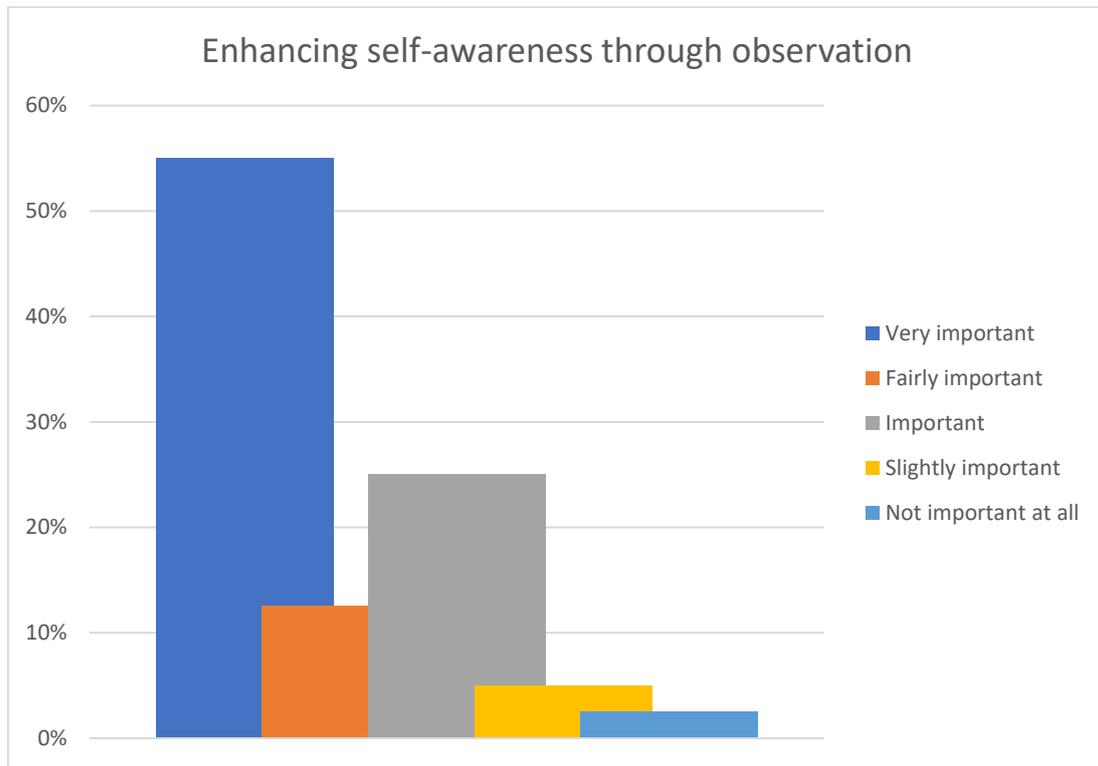


*Figure 6. Enhancing self-awareness through observation.*

As shown in Figure 5, most respondents, 82.5% consider that participating as an observer in a mediation session is important in enhancing self-awareness. That percentage represents the answers located from the option important to very important. On the other hand, 5% of the participants believe that being and observer in mediation is slightly important to improve the level of self-awareness. And 2.5% of the participants think that attending as an observer to mediation has no contribution to the self-awareness development.

**Ranking actions that might enhance the self-awareness level**
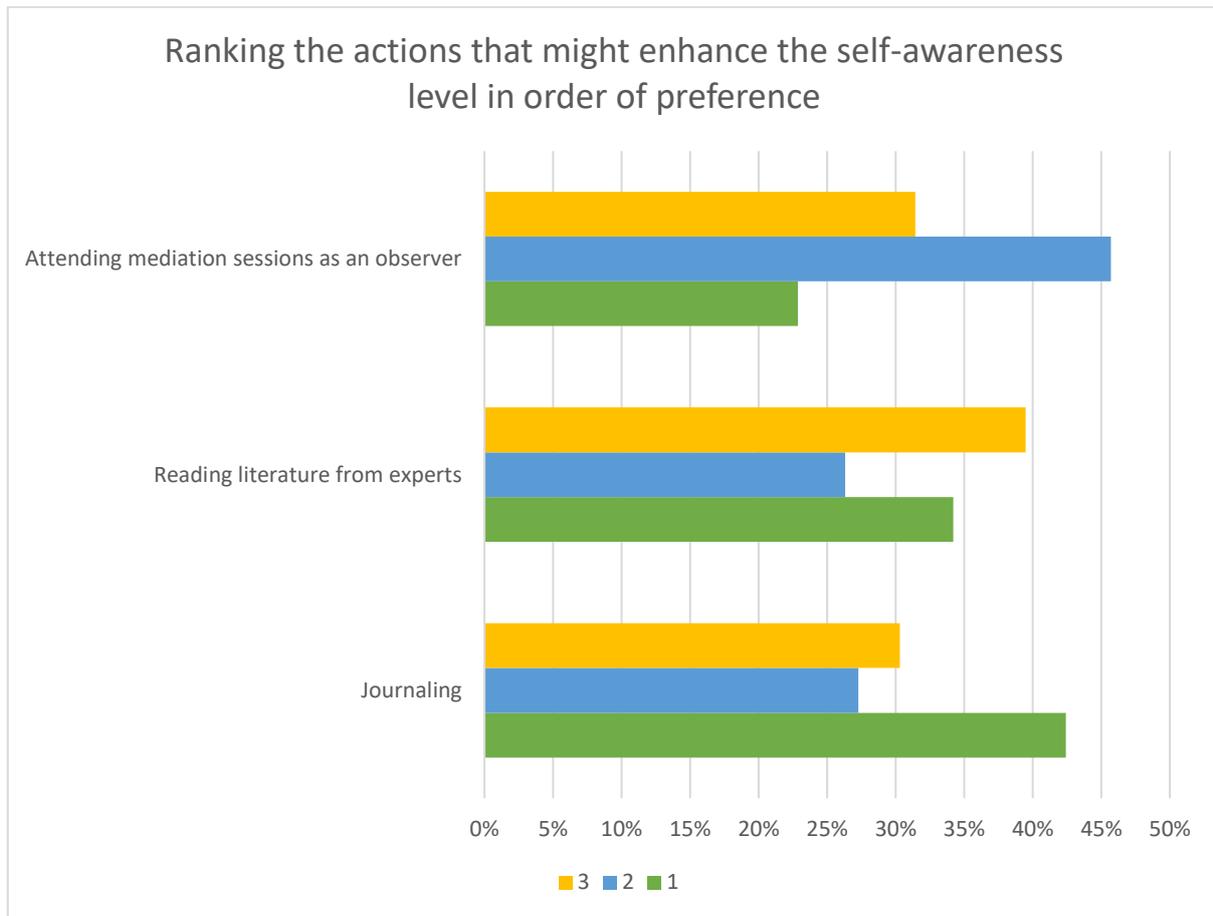


*Figure 7. Ranking actions that might enhance the self-awareness level*

The participants were asked to rank in order of preference the actions that might enhance the self-awareness level, where one was the most effective option and three the less effective technique to develop the skill. The activities include journaling, reading and listening to experts and attending mediation sessions as an observer. Figure 6 demonstrates that 42.4% of the mediator candidates ranked journaling as the preferred technique to improve self-awareness; in comparison, 45.7% of the participants rated attending mediation as an observer as the second option in order of preference. What leaves reading and listening to experts ranked as the third option in order of preference.

**The importance of self-awareness in the mediation process**
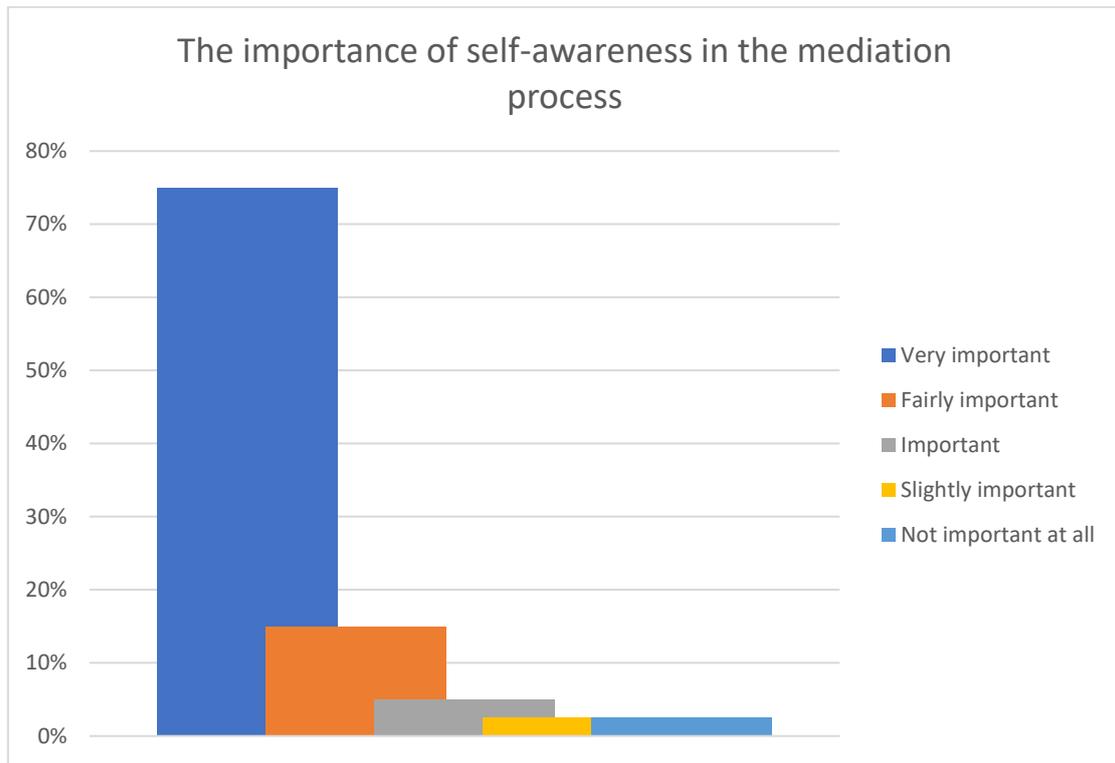


*Figure 8. The importance of self-awareness in the mediation process*

Figure 7 represents that most respondents, 95% consider that self-awareness is essential in the mediation process. That percentage represents the answers located from the option important to very important. On the other hand, 2.5% of the respondents consider that self-awareness is slightly important and other 2.5% of the applicants believe that self-awareness is not important at all in the mediation process.

**Adverse impact in the mediation process by the absence of self-awareness**
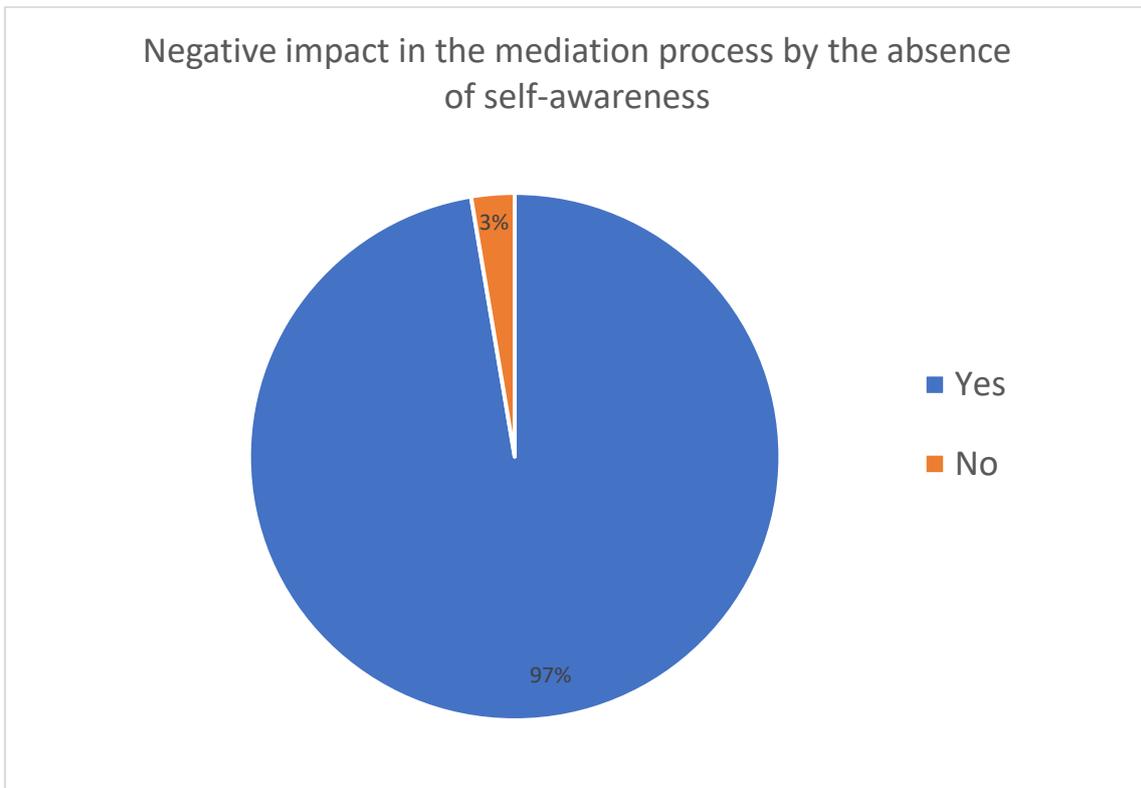


Figure 9. Negative impact on the mediation process by the absence of self-awareness

The participants were asked if the absence of self-awareness could negatively impact the mediation process and 97% of the participants consider that the lack of self-awareness could have an adverse impact in the mediation process. While 3% of the respondents think that the absence of self-awareness would not have any impact on in the mediation process.

**Impact on the mediation process by the absence of self-awareness**
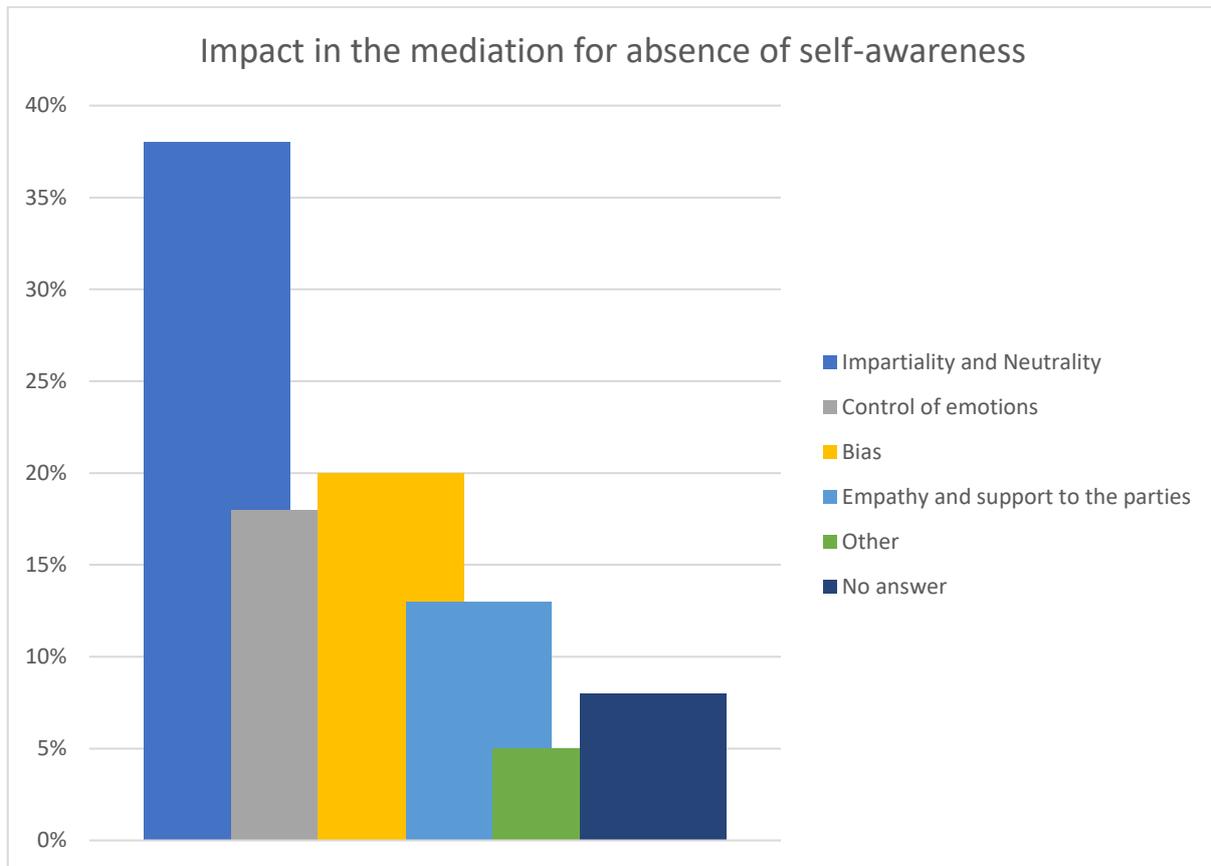


*Figure 10. Impact in the mediation for the absence of self-awareness*

The survey respondents were asked to indicate the possible impacts that a mediation process could suffer if self-awareness were absent; figure 9 shows that 38% considered that the absence of self-awareness might impact the impartiality and neutrality, permitting the mediator to be biased or by accident influence the outcome; 18% believed that the lack of self-awareness could affect the control of emotions allowing the mediator to get emotionally involved in the conflict; 20% indicated that the absence of self-awareness could let to the mediator to lead the process being biased and judgemental; and 13% deemed that the lack of self-awareness may impact the empathy of the mediator, restricting the practitioner from bringing support to the parties through the process.

**Self-awareness and the relationship to other concepts**
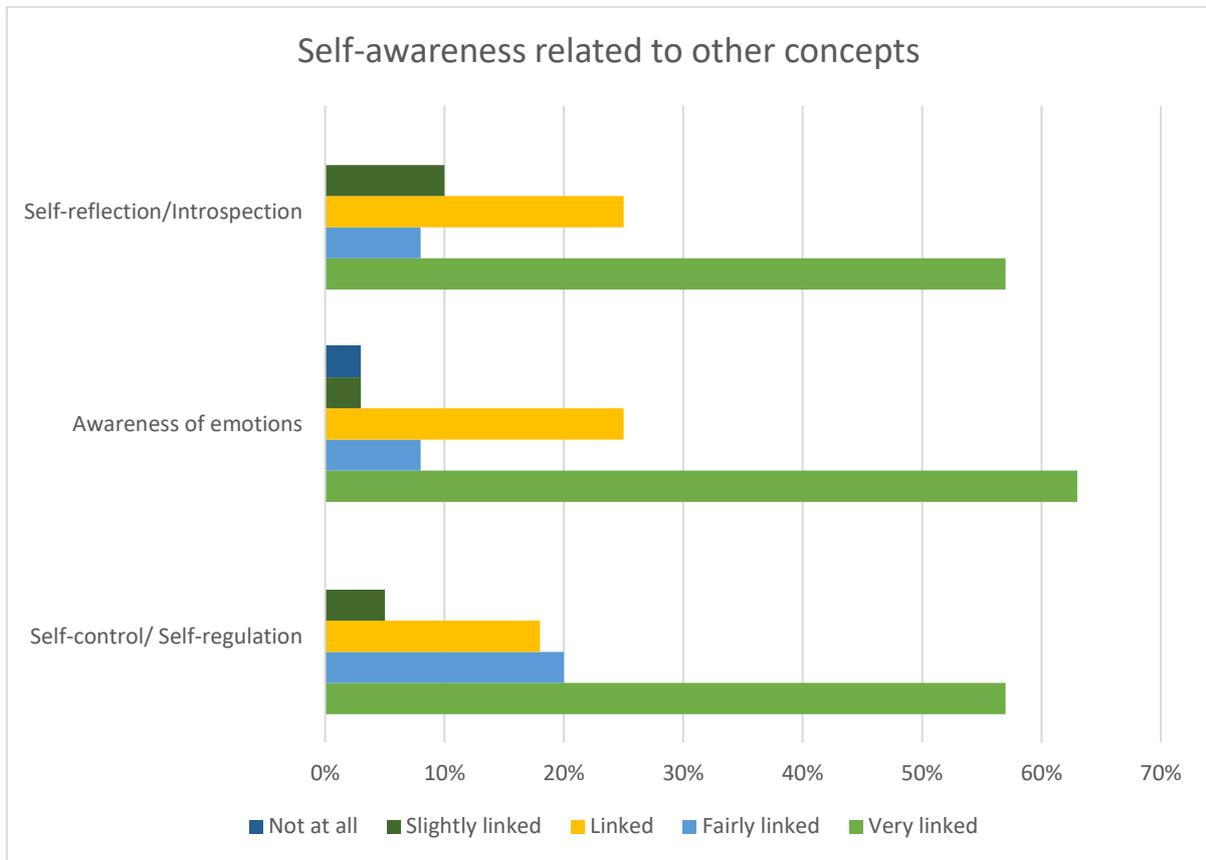


*Figure 11. The correlation between self-awareness and other concepts*

The survey respondents were asked to classify how related is the concept of self-awareness to other concepts such as self-reflection, awareness of emotions and self-control. Figure 10 demonstrates that 57.5% of the participants consider that self-awareness is significantly correlated to self-reflection. In addition, 62.5% of the participants deem that self-awareness is very linked to the awareness of emotions. And 57.5% of the mediator candidates consider that self-control is a concept very related to self-awareness.

## 3.3 QUALITATIVE DATA

The qualitative data was collected through forty surveys and four interviews. The following data is based on the students' responses, and their answers are categorised into groups of concepts and the four semi-structured interviews and their quotations.

**Perspective of self-awareness**

| Concepts associated to self-awareness | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Mentioned concepts** | **Number of answers** |
| Self-reflection (The Self) | Strengths and weakness<br>Self-understanding<br>Triggers<br>Know about yourself<br>Knowledge<br>Reflection<br>Introspection | 17 |
| Emotions and Self-control | Emotions well managed<br>Self-control | 2 |
| Emotional Intelligence | Emotional Intelligence | 3 |
| Respect | Respect | 2 |
| Other concepts | Therapy<br>Fair<br>Progress<br>Hermeneutics<br>Identity<br>Pride<br>Empathy<br>Responsibility<br>Focus<br>Achievement<br>Discernment<br>Perception<br>Reality<br>Love | 16 |
| Total answers | | 40 |

*Table 2. Concepts associated to self-awareness*

Participants were asked to mention a word that comes to mind when the concept of self-awareness is mentioned. As shown in Table 1, most of the respondents associate the idea of self-reflection with the ability to analyse and understand the self.

On a broader approach, the participants were asked in the survey to define the term self-awareness in their own words; most of the answers were categorised in four key areas; the following are some of the responses obtained:

| Perception of self-awareness |
|---|
| **Skill, tool, ability for mediation, life and convivence in the society** <br><br> **Self-reflection:** <br> "The ability to recognise **our** strengths and weaknesses based on **our** feelings and emotions" (S1) <br> "Being in tune with **own** emotions, values and biases and to recognise triggers to balance and adjust reactions" (S2) <br> "A complete understanding of **oneself, one's** meaning, **one's** role in life and society" (S20) <br> "Reflections about **my** capability of being empathetic and impartial" (S13) <br> "The ability to balance reason and emotion in the face of life situations having a critical view of **oneself** and the whole" (S23) <br> "Self-awareness makes us confident about our decisions, future, what **I** want and who **I** am in front of society" (S9) <br> "Being aware about how **my** emotions could impact **my** performance" (S27) <br> "I would define it as being aware of your emotions and what triggers or upsets you" (S37) <br><br> **Self-control:** <br> "The ability to balance reason and emotion in the face of life situations having a critical view of oneself and the whole" (S23) <br> "Be aware of what you are doing" (S4) <br> "We are responsible for our actions and attitudes" (S5) <br> "The way that can control my impulses. Because I'm aware about how I am" (S10) <br> "Self-awareness is an effective tool to succeed in life. As it allows us to control ourselves through managing our emotions, motivations, and basically everything that the limbic system is responsible for" (S16) |

*Table 3. Perception of self-awareness*

The research obtained four semi-structured interviews and the participants were asked to define self-awareness, the following quotes describe the perception that students have about the concept:

| Perception of self-awareness | |
|---|---|
| Student 1 | "Must in the mediation"<br>"A process of introspection of ourselves"<br>"Allow us to find our impulses and criteria in any decision making"<br>"Assertiveness and important ways of speak" |
| Student 2 | "Be aware of your actions and you will focus on the solutions more that the problems"<br>"Helps you to see the problem impartial like don't having any prejudges" |
| Student 3 | "The ability to connect with our feelings, thoughts and actions knowing ourselves"<br>"Mediator need be neutral, if we can have control and self-awareness, we can also have a better result in the mediation." |
| Student 4 | "Self-awareness is when we are able to recognize the strengths and weaknesses"<br>"Self-awareness is like a sense of knowing all the points, and still having different points of view remaining neutral in the process." |

*Table 4. Students' opinion*

**Actions to enhance self-awareness**

The participants were asked in the interview to appoint the most effective option to enhance the self-awareness level as mediator candidates; the following quotes describe the insights of the students:

| Actions to enhance self-awareness | |
| --- | --- |
| Student 1 | "even though, attending mediation sessions would be the best way to see how it actually gets into practice… **journaling**… is more about yourself trying to understand what it's for you the most important values that you have and be able to make peace with them able to be able to have a good mediation… when you're having yourself in thoughts and trying to get perspective on something it also kind of help to be able to go back to your notes and to see in understanding previous lines of thinking on your own self until to compare them in the way that you have changed your views through time." |
| Student 2 | "Journaling helps to listen to yourself, but I think at a certain point you need a professional that can help you as a guide I mean it's important to listen to us but, as well is important to see someone professional than have this impartiality and have this knowledge about how we can resolve any situation in the mediation… I think that journaling is the first step to getting self-awareness but as well is important to get help and guidance from a mediator… it is important to get the opinion of someone professional, for me it would be **attending mediation**." |
| Student 3 | "**Listening to the experts** because the experts have been running mediations and seeing all the conflict, they have the knowledge and listening to them can help us to create a better personal self-awareness… when we listen to experts we can practice more, and we can learn about other techniques because I think the most important thing is to open up to ourselves and apply those techniques to ourselves." |
| Student 4 | "**Listening to experts** because they can give me another sense of knowledge then maybe I can put it into practice more than just writing my journal… going to the sessions helps to know how to react but in the end that is not helping me develop my self-awareness,  about journaling I think that it's deeper about my weaknesses and my strengths but also if I don't know the concept or I don't know different ways to perform it's not going to help me." |

*Table 5. Actions to enhance self-awareness*

**Impact in the mediation process for the absence of self-awareness**

Participants were asked in the interview to indicate if the absence of self-awareness might have an impact in the mediation process, the following quotes describe the understandings of the students:

| | Impact in the mediation process for the absence of self-awareness |
|---|---|
| Student 1 | "Not having a good skill of self-awareness would be to be able to interrupt constantly mediation and to be able to **influence the parties** in a bad way meaning that you I guess will be coming up into them maybe getting the outcome that you might desire but not the one that they intend to for them". |
| Student 2 | "If the mediator does not have enough or properly self-awareness, sometimes they could **put themselves in one side** and that involving then the mediation is not impartial" <br> "**The objectivity**, if there is a lack of self-awareness, I mean the mediator cannot be objective and can take sides of the situation." |
| Student 3 | "Low level of self-awareness could be bad because **the mediator could take sides**… if the mediator knows how to control the emotions, the process will be neutral and that could be good for the parties because they choose the outcome, and they define an agreement that they want." |
| Student 4 | "If we don't develop self-awareness, we will be more defensive towards the conflict, we are **not going to be able to be empathic with the clients** and that will impact of course we will not show trust and the parties will not trust us as a mediator they can see us as an arrogant person more than an empathic person." |

*Table 6. Impact in the mediation process for the absence of self-awareness*

**Associativity to other concepts**

Participants were asked in the interview to indicate other concepts that might be associated to self-awareness, the following quotes describe the ideas of the students"

| Associativity to other concepts | |
|---|---|
| Student 1 | "A skill like assertiveness" |
| Student 2 | "For me is empathy"<br>"The objectivity" |
| Student 3 | "Impartiality and neutrality" |
| Student 4 | "Be impartial or neutral" |

*Table 7. Correlation between self-awareness and other concepts*

Impartiality, neutrality, empathy, assertiveness and its variables were identified along the data collection, the following figure shows the times that the specific words were mentioned in the semi-structured interviews and opening questions in the survey.

| Correlation between self-awarenes and other concepts | |
|---|---|
| Concepts | Times |
| Impartiality and neutrality | **26** |
| Empathy | **7** |
| Assertiveness | **4** |

*Table 8. Correlation between self-awareness and other concepts*

# CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explored the concept of self-awareness from the Master in Alternative Dispute Resolution Students' perspective enrolled in the second semester of 2021. The finding presented draw on the insights of forty students. The qualitative and quantitative data analysis found several ideas that build the perception of the concepts and their importance in the mediation process.

The findings presented in this chapter include the perception of self-awareness, the actions to cultivate it and the importance of the concept in the mediation process and its associativity with another term.

## 4.2 SELF-AWARENESS DEFINITION FROM STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

Findings found that participants considered that self-awareness should be a mediator skill; out of 40 participants from the survey, 40 respondents appointed yes, representing a 100% rate. The perception of the concept of self-awareness was held in three main areas the self and the impulses. However, one additional area embraces the meaning of self-awareness as an ability for human development in society.

The first area focused on self-reflection, the ability to introspect and analyse the self, and recognise emotions, triggers, and biases.

> *"The ability to connect with our feelings, thoughts and actions knowing ourselves"* *(Student 3)*

*"The ability to recognise our strengths and weaknesses based on our feelings and emotions"*

*(S1)*

*"A complete understanding of oneself, one's meaning, one's role in life and society" (S20)*

*"The understanding of ourselves which can give us the opportunity to be kinder to ourselves"*

*(S28)*

The second area was based on self-control, managing emotions and impulses in front of a specific situation.

*"The way that can control my impulses" (S10)*

*"We are responsible for our actions and attitudes" (S5)*

*"It's how we control our behaviour and deal with emotions" (S26)*

*"It is how we manage the feelings, emotions and how we decide to act or confront a problem or situation" (S31)*

The third area was centred on combining the two previous aspects of self-reflection and self-control, defining the cycle when the individual recognises his/her own emotions, feelings, bias, and triggers and manages the impulses and reactions over the situation.

*"Being in tune with own emotions, values and biases and to recognise triggers to balance and adjust reactions." (S2)*

*"To be aware of your emotions to know how to handle your reaction to different situations" (S3)*

*"Being aware about how my emotions could impact my performance" (S27)*

Furthermore, the three areas were located under a broader idea that defines self-awareness as a helpful ability or skill for mediation, life, and convivence in society.

According to the research literature review, the findings found that the students' perception of the meaning of self-awareness represents a deep knowledge of the subject. The respondents defined the concept in a variety of aspects; however, most of the responses appointed the concept as an ability to recognise emotions and feelings and control them to face the situation with confidence at any circumstance in life and the development as a human being, the following quotes represent some of the understandings obtained:

*"Is the ability to know our emotions and allow to lead the conversation between the parties"* (S7)

*"The ability to balance reason and emotion in the face of life situations having a critical view"* (S23)

*"Self-awareness is an effective tool to succeed in life. As it allows us to control ourselves through managing our emotions, motivations, and basically everything that the limbic system is responsible for"* (S16)

*"The ability to recognise our strengths and weaknesses based on our feelings and emotions."* (S1)

*"Self-awareness makes us confident about our decisions, future, what I want and who I am in front of society"* (S9)

The findings found that 100% of the responses were relevant and associated with the definition of self-awareness in the literature review. The perspective of the students responded to the purpose contributed by the authors.

## 4.3 ACTIONS TO CULTIVATE SELF-AWARENESS

The findings demonstrate that 97.5% of the participants were interested in enhancing their level of self-awareness.

The research defined three key actions to enhance the level of self-awareness of participants; the first action was journaling; findings identified that 42.93% of the participants believed that journaling is the most effective technique to develop self-awareness.

> *"journaling because at the end of the day it's not about how the other mediators handle their self-awareness in the mediation, is more about yourself trying to understand what it's for you the most important values that you have and be able to make peace with them able to be able to have a good mediation… because when you're having yourself in thoughts and trying to get perspective on something it also kind of help to be able to go back to your notes and to see in understanding previous lines of thinking on your own self until to compare them in the way that you have changed your views through time" (Student 1)*

The second action was reading articles and listening to experts and qualified practitioners; findings identified that 34.21% of the participants considered this action is the most effective practice to develop self-awareness.

*"Listening to the experts because the experts have been running mediations and seeing all the conflict, they have the knowledge and listening to them can help us to create a better personal self-awareness… when we listen to experts we can practice more, and we can learn about other techniques because I think the most important thing is to open up to ourselves and apply those techniques to ourselves." (Student 3)*

*"Listening to experts because they can give me another sense of knowledge then maybe I can put it into practice more than just writing my journal… going to the sessions helps to know how to react but in the end that is not helping me develop my self-awareness, about journaling I think that it's deeper about my weaknesses and my strengths but also if I don't know the concept or I don't know different ways to perform it's not going to help me." (Student 4)*

The third action was attending mediation sessions as an observer; findings revealed that 22.86% of the participants considered that this action is the most effective practice for developing self-awareness. This action is the less voted by participants.

*"Journaling helps to listen to yourself, but I think at a certain point you need a professional that can help you as a guide I mean it's important to listen to us but, as well is important to see someone professional than have this impartiality and have this knowledge about how we can resolve any situation in the mediation… I think that journaling is the first step to getting self-awareness but as well is important to get help and guidance from a mediator… it is important to get the opinion of someone professional, for me it would be attending mediation." (Student 2)*

Findings noticed that participants expressed strong positions about the possible actions and justified their choice with substantial knowledge of the subject.

## 4.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-AWARENESS IN THE MEDIATION PROCESS

The findings identified that around 95% of the participants considered that self-awareness is essential in the mediation process, and 92.5% of the participants felt that the absence of self-awareness in the mediation might impact various factors in the mediation process. Participants were asked about possible impacts in the mediation if there were an absence of self-awareness, and the answers obtained were appointed to four main categories.

The first category was impartiality and neutrality. 38% of the participants considered that if self-awareness is not present in the process, the mediator would involuntarily take a side in the mediation or accidentally influence the outcome.

*"The lack of self-awareness, I mean the mediator cannot be objective and can take sides of the situation" (Student 2)*

*"a low level of self-awareness could be bad because the mediator could take sides." (Student 3)*

*"If the mediator doesn't have enough or properly self-awareness, sometimes they could put themselves in one side and that involving then the mediation is not impartial" (Student 2)*

*"Not having a good skill of self-awareness would be able to interrupt constantly mediation and be able to influence the parties … maybe getting the outcome that you might desire but not the one that they intend to for them" (Student 1)*

*"The mediator could influence in the parties' agreement unintentionally" (S11)*

The second category was control of emotions; participants referred that the mediator could get emotionally involved or not help the parties to handle the feeling in the process if the mediator has not developed a confident level of self-awareness.

*"Emotions are getting out of control, and people are doing things that they regret later" (S16)*

*"Get involved emotionally in a situation which is not my issue" (S27)*

*"Mediators that are not prepared to understand and deal with their own emotions are likely to have difficulty helping others in a conflict situation, where their emotions can impact their mental capacity to help solve the conflict" (S34)*

The third category was bias; participants suggested that the mediator could present preconceptions and triggers that may impact the process and the parties not deliberately.

*"Because you can be confused about your issues, problems, feelings with the participants, this can be negative for the process." (S32)*

*"It can favour a wrong perception of oneself and the participants in the process, which can result in a bad result in the mediation process." (S22)*

*"Without understanding ourselves, we cannot understand other people and different situations. Meditation is a very complex process based on the construction of competent questions. As a result of mediation process: the parties' understanding of the situation must*

*be shifted. If a mediator cannot understand people and situations, he (she) will not be able to ask right questions. There will be no positive outcome." (S19)*

The fourth was empathy and support; respondents indicated that the absence of self-awareness could generate a lack of empathy, trust, and support for the parties.

*"If there is an absence of self-awareness, we can't not be emphatic with the mediation" (S30)*

*"I think if you don't have self-awareness definitely your client will feel uncomfortable and alone" (S24)*

*"If we don't develop self-awareness, we will be more defensive towards the conflict we are not going to be able to be empathic with the clients and that will impact of course we will not show trust and the parties will not trust us as a mediator they can see us as an arrogant person more than an empathic person" (Student 4)*

Participants highlighted the importance of self-awareness in the mediator role and the possibility to influence the outcome; participants expressed strong views on the importance of the concept and the invaluable part of the mediator in accomplishing a supportive and neutral process for the parties.

## 4.5 SELF-AWARENESS AND CORRELATION TO OTHER CONCEPTS

The research specified three main concepts that considered was associated with self-awareness first, self-reflection; 90% of the participants felt that self-reflection goes from linked to significantly linked to the idea; second, emotions 95% of the participants believe that the concept of emotions goes from related to very related to the concept of self-awareness; third, the concept of self-

control  95% of the participants believe that the concept self-control goes from linked to significantly linked to the concept of self-awareness.

Additionally, not surprisingly, the concept of self-awareness was correlated to various terms such as impartiality, neutrality, empathy, objectivity, and assertiveness.

*"Impartiality and neutrality because for me it would be prudent as a mediator not to get personally involved in the case. If we as mediators get involved in the problem or the decisions of the parties, it may cause us to fail to reach an agreement" (Student 3)*

*"Assertiveness … especially as a mediator we have to really understand what you want to express yourself at all times…we are there to make the conversation easier for the parties" (Student 1)*

*"The most important for me is empathy; the mediator has to be assertive" (Student 2)*

Findings revealed that the students' self-awareness perspective is positively reflective, considering the mediation process as a unit that involves different aspects and concepts to guarantee a neutral, supportive and safe space for the parties to resolve a conflict.

# CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research generated an important discussion that shows the data collected from 40 surveys and four interviews, producing valuable transcripts and charts. This chapter discusses the research findings and describes conclusions based on those findings in light of the fundamental literature contemplated in the preceding chapters. The results suggest that the skill of self-awareness has considerable potential to enhance the field of mediation.

Comparing the theoretical framework to the findings, brings an exciting discussion about the complexity of mediation and the role played by the self-awareness and other skills, what indicates that the mediation process depends on the mediator skills.

## 5.2 PERSPECTIVE OF SELF-AWARENESS

Important findings:

- 100% of the participants agreed that self-awareness is a skill in the mediation process

- 95% of the participants believe that self-awareness is essential in the mediation process

- 97% of the participants consider that the absence of self-awareness in mediation might negatively impact the procedure

Comparing the students' perception to the theory analysed by Slama (2010), Kelly and Kaminskienė (2016) and Senft (2004) is possible to notice that the concept of self-awareness is similarly defined as an essential ability in the mediation process. A skill that allows the mediator to recognise emotion,

bias and prejudgements, also being a tool for the mediator to handle mediator' emotions and impulses and the parties' emotions facing the conflict.

The concept of self-awareness was perceived by the participants in four areas:

- Knowing the self, emotions, strengths, weaknesses, triggers, bias, abilities, etc.

- Managing impulses, emotions and reactions and having control of the situation.

- Mixing the two previews statements as one unit.

- Perceiving self-awareness as an ability for living in society and succeed in different scenarios.

Firstly, self-awareness was perceived by 47% of the participants as the ability to understand the self, be aware of emotions, recognise biases, and work on them to break prejudgements. That perception is defined by Slama (2010) in mediation as the first dimension of self-awareness, where the individual knows their own abilities, skills, and limitations.

Secondly, self-awareness was perceived by 18% of the respondents as the ability to be in control of emotions and impulses. A skill that helps the mediator to manage reactions and deal with the external factors, what Slama calls the behavioural dimension of exercising self-control (2010).

Thirdly, merging the two aspects previously mentioned, 11% of the contestants perceived self-awareness as one unit when the mediator can recognize emotions, feelings, and limitations and is capable of commanding those emotions and reactions to behave appropriately to the situation and lead the process for a successful outcome. Similarly approach to Kelly and Kaminskienė (2016) and Senft (2004) defining self-awareness as the ability to read emotions and feelings and make decisions controlling impulses.

Finally, the four-area pointed out for a significant number of respondents was the perception of self-awareness as an important ability to balance reason and emotions in life events outside mediation

context. 24% of the participants consider self-awareness as an ability to face life situations and make decisions in different scenarios where the individual has a critical view of the self, and the external factors. This students' perception points out self-awareness as an ability where the individual has the capacity of being empathic and confident, what Goleman mentions as one of the "five basic emotional and social competencies" (1998). Goleman theory indicates that self-awareness is to recognise the feeling in the instant and utilise it to make a decision with self-confidence based on the acknowledgment of the abilities existing.

The survey revealed that the participants mainly perceived self-awareness as an ability that allows the individual to be aware of emotions and feelings when a situation arises and is the ability to manage the impulses and reactions with control. This ability might be applied in the daily development of human beings in different fields.

Previous research has demonstrated that there is a positive relationship between self-awareness and leadership and management success in business and the achievement of professional goals (Rubens *et al*., 2018); additionally, considering leadership and psychological empowerment in the workplace, a theory named leader self-awareness suggests that self-awareness support the managers to recognised their bias to be effective in the environment work, helping to identify emotions, values, talents and capabilities in the team to improve effectiveness (Wernsing, 2018).

Similar research focused on self-awareness and healthcare relationship, as a need to develop peer support and skills in practitioners facing medical situations; one study was executed to improve the leadership confidence, leadership self-awareness and strategic-operational leadership in the Faculty of Pediatrics (Hackworth *et al*., 2018), another study developed by Jack and Smith (2007) focused on nurses and the importance of enhancing self-awareness in order to create a reflective practice through portfolio development as a tool to record the professional growth.

The concept of self-awareness and its contribution has been analysed in other fields such as mechanical engineering (Bayless, 2013), appointing the need to develop self-awareness and leadership communication in an area focused on problem-solving and innovation, leaving a gap in the improvement of soft skills. Another field is legal; research has demonstrated the importance of self-awareness as an ability for lawyers to recognise their capabilities and limitations regarding emotional competency in order to evaluate their performance and quality to react to unanticipated events (Kiser, 2017).

## 5.3 CULTIVATING SELF-AWARENESS

Cultivating self-awareness is an encouraging subject in the mediation field, development of self-awareness was mentioned by 97.5% of the participants, and the students' perception was focused on the statement that the mediator should cultivate the skill. Slama (2010) denotes that self-awareness impacts the mediation's success and efficiency, specifying that mediators should develop self-awareness throughout self-reflection. Similarly, Senft (2011) indicates that the mediator might apply mindfulness training, journaling and self-awareness workshops as methods to acquire self-awareness in order to improve the ability and give a better service to the parties involved in the conflict.

Therefore, this study found that 42.93% of the participants considered journaling the most effective technique to practice self-reflection in order to enhance their self-awareness level. One participant during an interview mentioned that "when you're having yourself in thoughts and trying to get perspective on something it also kind of help to be able to go back to your notes and to see in understanding previous lines of thinking on your own self until to compare them in the way that you have changed your views through time." (Student 1). Acting as tool that allow to register events,

emotions, feelings, and reactions and challenge what should have been done differently and learn for future events in the mediation context.

Senft (2011) specifies that journaling might measure the progress when is implemented continuously because the mediator can review the old notes and identify the growth or the limitations. Journaling is a known technique in other fields such as nursing, nutrition and lifestyle practice (Jack & Smith, 2007; Wagoner *et al.*, 2004).

On the other hand, reading and listing to experts and attending mediation as an observer were secondary options selected by the participants, but no less important to enhance their self-awareness level. Another student, during the interview, pointed out that it "is important to get the opinion of someone professional" (Student 2), which Eurich mentions as "seeking out feedback from loving critics" (2018) a technique that requests an honest review of their emotions and behaviour, this is why the final interview considers the importance of being led by an expert "because they can give me another sense of knowledge then maybe I can put it into practice more than just writing my journal" (Student 4). Considering feedback as a genuine practice to develop self-awareness (Wernsing, 2018).

## 5.4 IMPORTANCE OF SELF-AWARENESS AND THE CORRELATION TO OTHER CONCEPTS

Participants highlighted the importance of self-awareness in the mediation process; 95% of the respondents agreed that the ability is essential to give the parties a safe space to resolve a conflict with a fair outcome selected by the parties.

The importance of self-awareness in the mediation process is connected to the idea that mediation is a complex field where the mediator needs to be a formidable player, involving a variety of skills

that are correlated to self-awareness and which makes it impossible to achieve a productive mediation process without the participation of other skills.

The participants perceived a vital relationship between self-awareness and self-reflection, self-control and emotions according to the survey; notwithstanding the opening questions, responses demonstrated that concepts such as empathy, assertiveness, impartiality and neutrality were predominant in the study.

IMPARTIALITY AND NEUTRALITY

The participants mentioned the terms impartiality and neutrality a high number of times, accurately the term was mentioned 26 times in the interview and opening questions on the survey.  The concept was mentioned raising concerns about the impact on the mediation outcome and mentioning the possibility of compromising the mediation process due to the absence of self-awareness.  What Moore (2014) mentions about the role of the mediator and the responsibility to respect the parties' advocacy without influencing the outcome.

Impartiality and neutrality were mentioned by the parties with the concern that bias and prejudgments might interfere in the parties' decisions and in the negotiation of possible solutions, in the same traditional position mentioned by Moore (2014) and Thompson *et al,.(*2000), but, in a totally contradictory position to Suvan (2008), who considers that a biased mediator would get a better outcome, also indicates that a biased mediator should be preferred to lead a mediation that one unbiased mediator because the biased mediator has the ability to get concessions from the favoured party.

No participant considered that bias could support the mediation process and no student considered that a biased mediator has a better performance in order to achieve an impartial procedure where the parties have autonomy and independence to resolve and select the resolutions.

EMPATHY

The term empathy often came in the interviews and the survey; some of the students perceived that self-awareness is a skill that facilitates the mediator to be empathic with the parties, bringing confidence and understanding. The students' concern of being empathic in mediation was focused on giving the parties the comfort, that make them to feel included and that their conflict is being discussed with properly attention.  In a similar position, Kelly and Kaminskienė (2016) mention building rapport and trust with the other and understanding what the other individuals are feeling.

The position of Kelly and Kaminskienė (2016), about building rapport and trust, was mentioned by the participants as a need in the mediation process, defining that if the mediator has a lack of self-awareness that does not allow the mediator to control emotions and feelings in the debate, the disputant might feel alone and without guide to resolving the dispute.

Similarly, students' perception and Goleman (1998) agree with the idea of considering self-awareness as a requirement for developing empathy, beginning with the fact that being aware demands understanding the own needs and interests and it is the first step to understanding the other' concerns.

The participants concern about empathy went further to the idea that the mediator has to be empathic, the participants were reflective about the need that the mediator has to practice self-

awareness in order to bring the parties the support needed to resolve the conflict in an environment where the trust, transparency and cooperation are key elements.

ASSERTIVENESS

Assertiveness frequently was mentioned in the data collection, the correlation between the terms perceived by the participants belongs to the idea that the mediator has the responsibility of addressing the parties through communication and has to be assertive in the process. The mediator's role is to support the parties to express their needs and interests in order to gather as much information as possible that help the parties to resolve the conflict, but always being aware of their own emotion and parties' emotions in that information exchange. As Bishop (2013) and Garner (2012) mention assertiveness is a social skill that helps to eliminate the tension and support expressing the ideas with wisdom in behaviour that attempts to get a win-win solution.

Assertiveness represents a group of actions, choosing the right words, the correct body language and a friendly tone of voice, helps the mediator to facilitate the dialogue between the parties, paraphrasing and reframing are also techniques to neutralize the communication in order to reduce the blame and increase the trust, what encourage the disputants to share the information and re-establish the interaction.

The correlation between assertiveness and self-awareness was perceived for the students as inseparable skills, being self-awareness the beginning of the path for a mediator that needs to be assertive, participants indicated that when the mediator is aware of their own emotions and the parties' emotions, the mediator is capable to guide the parties in an assertive dialogue.

# CONCLUSION

This study was effective, achieving 70% of participation of the total population invited to participate.

This study found that that improving self-awareness has a positive impact in the mediation process and its absence may generate and adverse impact on the parties and the mediation' reputation as an alternative dispute resolution that supports the society need of resolving conflict away from court. Also, the self-awareness concept has an extensive potential of contribution to the mediation process, according to the participants opinions.

The students perception concluded that that self-awareness is the key to develop other skills such as self-control, self-reflection, assertiveness and empathy as consequences of recognize that self-awareness is the root and the beginning of an individual process that guarantees neutrality, impartiality and support to the parties resolving a conflict in mediation.

The research was focused on interpretate the self-awareness skill from the mediator candidates' perspective and the research confirmed that 100% of the participants perceive self-awareness as an essential skill that helps the mediator to facilitate the communication between the parties.

Consequently, developing self-awareness is a common concern among the participants, reaching 97.5% of the participants considered the intentionality and appetite for developing the skill. In the process of enhancing self-awareness, the journaling technique was considered by mediator candidates as the first step to developing self-reflection; however, being followed with feedback from experts or attending mediation as an observer might burst the skill growth.

Journaling technique has potential to contribute to self-awareness in the mediation field, but, also, has the capacity to empower the mediator to develop self-control, empathy and other skills valuable in this alternative dispute resolution.

The importance of self-awareness was clearly defined by 95% of the participants, perceiving self-awareness as one of the mediation pillars; nevertheless, self-awareness was perceived as a domino effect that triggered the involvement of other concepts. The complexity of mediation requires the correlation with different skills to accomplish a thriving and supportive process.

The students perception of self-awareness is complex and wide, participants consider that the responsibility and the mediator role with the parties to develop a safe space for solving conflicts has to go further that self-awareness correlating empathy, assertiveness, neutrality and impartiality in the same scenario.

# REFLECTION

This research has successfully completed the established objectives, the collection of data was satisfactory, and adequate participation was achieved.

The selected subject initially was challenging to define. However, literature research helped clarify and support the concept and the construction of the student's perspective.

As a personal quotation, the concept of self-awareness is in growth and its development in mediation is essential to guarantee a safe and supportive process for the parties, the contribution of self-awareness to mediation helps position the practice as an Alternative Dispute Resolution reliable and neutral in the society.

Additionally, in regard to the mediation growth in the Irish context, it would be recommended that the Independent College Dublin analyse the insights of the students in this research as a possibility to expand the content in the course, linking the concept of self-awareness with the other concepts mentioned in the study, taking in consideration the students desire of enhancing the level of self-awareness.

Otherwise, considering that self-awareness as a concept applicable to different areas, personal, familiar, business, there is a potential field to explore in future research in different populations diverse age groups and scenarios.

As a personal observation, after the findings were obtained despite the objectives being accomplished, the study had the potential to go deeper in journaling and assertiveness as sources in the mediation process and that areas were not considered in the objectives, which defined a limitation in the discussion of the topic.

Accordingly, this research supported my desire to acquire knowledge concerning a master's degree and personal abilities in communication, empathy and assertiveness questioning with a broader approach to intrapersonal and interpersonal problem-solving. A surprise event occurred when researching biases it was discovered that there is a theoretical position that debates that a biased mediator might contribute positively to the mediation outcome. What generated a lot of questions related to the knowledge about the topic and the traditional positions about the subject.

Additionally, this research brought the opportunity of personal analysis applicable to resolve conflicts in future situations in a comprehensive perspective.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. An examination of the perspective of the lecturers who have taught the subject of self-awareness at Independent College Dublin of what they consider supports improved the perception of the concept.

2. An analysis of the perspective of expert mediators on what they believe is relevant to self-awareness in the mediation process.

3. An analysis of the perspective of expert mediators on what they consider proper actions to enhance self-awareness in mediator candidates.

4. An analysis of the benefits of encouraging self-awareness in different fields.

5. An analysis of journaling and the potential to contribute to the mental health of mediator practitioners.

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# APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A: APLICATION FOR ETHICAL APROVAL (FORM A)**

## Form A: Application for Ethical Approval
### Undergraduate/Taught Postgraduate Research

This form should be submitted to the module leader for the relevant initial proposal and/or the relevant supervisor is the proposal has already been accepted.
Please save this file as *STUDENT NUMBER_AEA_FormA.docx*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Title of Project** | Self-awareness in the Mediation Process: A Student's Perceptive. |
| **Name of Learner** | Deysi del Carmen Loria Jimenez |
| **Student Number** | 51712644 |
| **Name of Supervisor/Tutor** | Nadia Bhatti |

Check the relevant boxes. All questions must be answered before submitting to the relevant lecturer / supervisor. Note: only one box per row should be selected.

| Item | Question | Yes | No | NA |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect? | ☒ | ☐ | ■ |
| 2 | Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary? | ☒ | ☐ | |
| 3 | Will you obtain written consent for participation (through a signed or 'ticked' consent form)? | ☒ | ☐ | |
| 4 | If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed. | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| 5 | Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason? | ☒ | ☐ | ■ |
| 6 | Will you give participants the option of not answering any question they do not want to answer? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7 | Will you ensure that participant data will be treated with full confidentiality and anonymity and, if published, will not be identifiable as any individual or group? | ☒ | ☐ | ■ |
| 8 | Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e., give them a brief explanation of the study)? | ☒ | ☐ | ■ |
| 9 | If your study involves people between 16 and 18 years, will you ensure that passive consent is obtained from parents/guardians, with active consent obtained from both the child and their school/organisation? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| 10 | If your study involves people less than 16 years, will you ensure that active consent is obtained from parents/guardians and that a parent/guardian or their nominee (such as a teacher) will be present throughout the data collection period? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| 11 | If your study requires evaluation by an ethics committee/board at an external agency, will you wait until you have approval from both the Independent College Dublin and the external ethics committee before starting data collection. | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| Item | Question | Yes | No | NA |
|------|----------|-----|-----|-----|
| 12 | If you are in a position of authority over your participants (for example, if you are their instructor/tutor/manager/examiner etc.) will you inform participants in writing that their grades and/or evaluation will be in no way affected by their participation (or lack thereof) in your research? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| 13 | If you are in a position of authority over your participants (for example, if you are their instructor/tutor/manager/examiner etc.), does your study involve asking participants about their academic or professional achievements, motivations, abilities or philosophies? (please note that this does not apply to QA1 or QA3 forms, or questionnaires limited to market research, that do not require ethical approval from the IREC) | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| 14 | Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants in any way? | ☐ | ☒ | |
| 15 | Is there any realistic risk of any participants experiencing either physical or psychological distress or discomfort? | ☐ | ☒ | |
| 16 | Does your project involve work with animals? | ☐ | ☒ | |
| 17 | Do you plan to give individual feedback to participants regarding their scores on any task or scale? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| 18 | Does your study examine any sensitive topics (such as, but not limited to, religion, sexuality, alcohol, crime, drugs, mental health, physical health, etc.) | ☐ | ☒ | |
| 19 | Is your study designed to change the mental state of participants in any negative way (such as inducing aggression, frustration, etc?) | ☐ | ☒ | |
| 20 | Does your study involve an external agency (e.g. for recruitment)? | ☐ | ☒ | |
| 21 | Do your participants fall into any of the following special groups? (except where one or more individuals with such characteristics may naturally occur within a general population, such as a sample of students) | | ☐ | ☒ |
| | | | ☐ | ☒ |
| | | | ☐ | ☒ |
| | | | ☐ | ☒ |
| | | | ☐ | ☒ |

If you have ticked any of the shaded boxes above, you should consult with your module leader / supervisor immediately. **You will need to fill in Form B Ethical Approval** and submit it to the Research & Ethics Committee **instead** of this form.

There is an obligation on the researcher to bring to the attention of the Research & Ethics Committee any issues with ethical implications not clearly covered by the above checklist.

| I consider that this project has **no** significant ethical implications to be brought before the relevant Research & Ethics Committee. I have read and understood the specific guidelines for completion of Ethics Application Forms. I am familiar with the codes of professional ethics relevant to my discipline (and have discussed them with my supervisor). | ☒ |
|---|---|
| Name of Learner | Deysi del Carmen Loria Jimenez |
| Student Number | 51712644 |
| Date | 16/03/2022 |
| I have discussed this project with the learner in question, and I agree that it has no significant ethical implications to be brought before the Research & Ethics Committee. | ☒ |
| Name of Supervisor/Lecturer | Nadia Bhatti |
| Date | 27/03/2022 |

**APPENDIX B: INFORMATION FORM & CONSENT SHEET**

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

PROJECT TITLE

Self-awareness in the Mediation Process: A Student's Perceptive.

I am Deysi Loria, a postgraduate student studying a Masters in Alternative Dispute Resolution (MADR) in the Independent College Dublin.

You are being asked to participate in a research study as a mediator candidate who has been studying mediation for a year, becoming familiar with the concept of self-awareness.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN

In this study, you will be asked about your ideas and perspective regarding self-awareness, possible options to enhance your level of self-awareness, and its importance in the mediation process. The procedure will be a confidential semi-structured interview with a list of questions where you are entitled to answer the questions in a manner that you consider proper.

The interview will be recorded in order to do properly transcriptions and the transcriptions will be uploaded to the Independent College of Dublin as proof of the research with no identification.

The participant identity will remain confidential in the research document when published.

THE QUESTIONS

1. Louise Senft defines self-awareness in the following way "Self-awareness allows us to be aware of the emotions that stimulate our impulses, enhancing our ability to decide appropriately what to do with such impulses." In your view, how would you define self-awareness?

2. Do you consider that a mediator candidate should develop self-awareness as a skill?

   If the answer is yes, could you please tell me why is important to develop self-awareness?

3. When you think about self-awareness, are there other abilities related?

   If the answer is yes, could you please tell me what other abilities do you consider are related?

4. Considering actions to enhance your level of self-awareness we can mention three options: journaling, listening to experts and attending mediation sessions as an apprentice, what do you consider could be the most effective option to develop self-awareness?

   5.1 Why that option is the most effective in your opinion?

   5.2 How do you consider that option might enhance a mediator's level of self-awareness?

5. How do you consider that the mediator's self-awareness may impact the mediation process?

6. How could a mediation process be affected if the mediator has a low development of self-awareness?

TIME COMMITMENT

The interview will take 30 minutes approximately in one online meeting by Zoom.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS

You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without the explanation required from you. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn/destroyed.

You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you.

You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered (unless answering these questions would interfere with the study's outcome. A full de-briefing will be given after the study).

If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should ask the researcher before the study begins.

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

The data I collect does not contain any personal information about you and your identity will remain anonymous and the data use will be limited to this dissertation. Some extracts of the interview will be used in the document.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

I and/or Nadia Bhatti will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time.

You may contact my supervisor at nadia.bhatti@independentcolleges.ie.

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

**PROJECT TITLE:** Self-awareness in the Mediation Process: A Student's Perceptive.

**PROJECT SUMMARY:**

The project aim is to identify the students' perspective of self-awareness and its importance in the mediation process.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:

(1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet,

(2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily,

(3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and

(4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

_____

Participant's Name (PRINTED)

_____

Participant's signature

_____

Learner Name (PRINTED)

_____

Learner signature

_____

Date

**APPENDIX C: SURVEY**

Self-awareness in the Mediation Process: A Student's Perceptive.

Dear participant,

My name is Deysi Loria, and I am a MADR student in the Independent College of Dublin completing my Dissertation. You are invited to participate in the research as a mediator student. The research aims to identify the importance of self-awareness as a mediator skill.

The following questionnaire intends to collect your opinion, please feel free to express your insights.

The answers will remain confidential and anonymous and only will be used in this research, also no personal information will be asked.

This survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Your support is greatly appreciated.

1. 1. Consent: Do you agree to participate in this research?

    a. Yes

2. What is the first word that comes to your mind when you listen to the word **self-awareness**?

_____

3. Louise Senft defines self-awareness in the following way "Self-awareness allows us to be aware of the emotions that stimulate our impulses, enhancing our ability to decide appropriately what to do with such impulses."

In your view, how would you define self-awareness?

_____

_____

4. Do you consider self-awareness a necessary mediator skill?
    a) Yes
    b) No

5. Do you believe that self-awareness is linked to the following mediation concepts?

|  | Not at all | Sightly linked | Linked | Fairly linked | Very linked |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Self-reflection/ introspection of bias and conflict of interest | | | | | |
| b. Awareness of emotions | | | | | |
| c. Self-control/ self-regulation | | | | | |

6. Would you like to enhance your level of self-awareness?
   a) Yes
   b) No

7. Journaling is a technique to cultivate self-awareness, Senft (2011) explains journaling "can be an excellent way to observe your own thoughts, especially important is review of old journal entries to learn how you have grown and what areas continue to be personal struggles" in your opinion, how important is journaling in the enhancement of your self-awareness:

   a. Not important at all
   b. Sightly important
   c. Important
   d. Fairly important
   e. Very important

8. Reading literature from experts and qualified mediators helps to cultivate self-awareness, in your opinion, how important is this statement in the enhancement of your self-awareness:

   a. Not important at all
   b. Sightly important
   c. Important
   d. Fairly important
   e. Very important

9. Attending mediation sessions as an observer is a technique to cultivate self-awareness, in your opinion, how important is this statement in the enhancement of your self-awareness:

   a. Not important at all
   b. Sightly important

c. Important
d. Fairly important
e. Very important

10. The following options are actions that might help to enhance your level of self-awareness. Please rank the options in order of preference (1 being your favourite and 3 being your less favourite to practice)

|  | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. Journaling |  |  |  |
| b. Reading literature from experts and qualified mediators |  |  |  |
| c. Attending mediation sessions as an observer |  |  |  |

11. In your opinion, how important is self-awareness in the mediation process?

a. Not important at all
b. Sightly important
c. Important
d. Fairly important
e. Very important

12. In your view, would the absence of self-awareness in the mediation process impact the mediation outcome negatively?
a. Yes
b. No

13. How does the absence of self-awareness in the mediation process negatively impact the mediation outcome?

_____

_____

Thank you for your time.