

# Dissertation Submission Form

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Notes:

## **Internal Mediation in the Irish Workplace:**

**Are mediation skills helpful for a managerial position in the hospitality sector in Dublin?**

**"Internal Mediation in the Irish Workplace:  
Are mediation skills helpful for a managerial  
position in the hospitality sector in Dublin?"**

by

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## INDEX

<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>	8
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	9
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	10
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	11
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	11
<b>CHAPTER I</b>	16
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	16
<b>1.1 Concepts and phenomenon of conflict</b>	16
<b>1.1 Types of conflict</b>	17
<b>1.2.1- Moore's Circle of Conflict</b>	17
<b>1.2 Stages of conflict</b>	19
<b>1.3 Conflict in the workplace</b>	21
<b>1.3.1 Conflict Management in the workplace (Workplace management)</b>	23
<b>1.4.2 Conflict management skills</b>	26
<b>1.4 Mediation</b>	29
<b>1.4.1 Mediation Act 2017</b>	32
<b>1.4.2 Mediation in the workplace</b>	33
<b>1.6 Hospitality Sector (in Ireland)</b>	35
<b>CHAPTER II</b>	38
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS</b>	38
<b>2.1 Introduction to the methodology</b>	38
<b>2.2 Research Philosophy</b>	38
<b>2.3 Research approach</b>	40
<b>2.4 Research Choice</b>	40
<b>2.5 Research Strategy</b>	41
<b>2.6 Research population and sampling</b>	41
<b>2.7 Time Horizons</b>	42
<b>2.8 Justification</b>	42
<b>Ethical Considerations</b>	43
<b>CHAPTER III</b>	44
<b>PRESENTATION OF THE DATA</b>	44
<b>3.1 The Data Collection</b>	44

<b>3.2 The Questionnaire</b>	46
<b>CHAPTER IV</b>	66
<b>DATA ANALYSIS (FINDINGS)</b>	66
<b>4.1 Mixed Method</b>	66
<b>4.2 General information</b>	67
4.2.1 Age	67
4.2.2 Nationality	67
<b>4.3 Hospitality Sector</b>	68
4.3.1 Duration of work in the hospitality sector	69
4.3.2 Participant’s workplace	69
4.3.3 Type of work in the workplace	70
<b>4.4 Mediation</b>	71
4.4.1 Knowledge about mediation	71
4.4.2 Mediation Protocol	71
<b>4.5 Conflict</b>	72
4.5.1 Dealing with conflict	72
4.5.2 How often a conflict arises	73
4.5.3 Dispute situation from the participants	73
4.5.4 Importance of the conflict	74
4.5.5 Conflict Resolution	75
4.5.6 Duration of the conflict	75
4.5.7 A constant dispute situation	76
<b>4.6 Managerial skills</b>	76
4.6.1 Managers skills	76
4.6.2 Conflict management	76
4.6.3 Other methods of conflict resolution	77
4.6.4 Factors to consider when facing conflict	77
4.6.5 Communication improvement	78
<b>4.7 Findings</b>	79
<b>CHAPTER V</b>	81
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	81
<b>5.1 Discussion in relation to mediation skills in managerial positions</b>	81
<b>5.2 Discussion in relation to Mediation</b>	83

<b>CONCLUSION</b>	86
<b>LIMITATIONS</b>	90
<b>REFLECTIONS</b>	91
<b>REFERENCES</b>	92

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## **ABSTRACT**

This investigation aims and presents how mediation skills could help solve conflict within the hospitality sector in Dublin. Also, by analysing if mediation as an Alternative Dispute Resolution is helpful to solve conflicts within the sector, the study aims a course of action proposal of how managers could acquire or improve those skills that help them deal with conflict.

Within the paper, the author proposes the use of an inductive methodology that suits the investigation better. As the researcher used a questionnaire with open and close questions, a mix-method was used to analyse the data collected. The last helped to understand the implications in the surveyed responses.

The scope of the investigation is connected to people who only work within the hospitality sector in Dublin. For this reason, it was focused on restaurants, hotels, and bars. The last statement to avoid a fake mix of information that despite those other businesses suffer conflict within the workplace, it is not the sector that was intended to analyse. Moreover, mediation in this sort of business might not be the best approach to solve the problem. The survey showed a high intention that the manager could handle disputes if they improve their skills. In addition, it was found that communication and active listening were the most relevant aspects to focus on.

In conclusion, mediation is an approach that helps solve a conflict in the workplace but not in the hospitality sector in Dublin. However, in this research, despite people knowing about mediation; they focused their intention to solve conflict with other skills that need to be improved before going to mediation. Also, that improvement could lead to a better environment and communication.

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Percentage of Age .....	46
Figure 2 Nationalities of the surveyed .....	47
Figure 3 Duration of working in Hospitality Sector.....	48
Figure 4 Place of work.....	49
Figure 5 Surveyed' Type of Work.....	50
Figure 6 Percentage of knowing about mediation .....	51
Figure 7 Protocol of Mediation .....	52
Figure 8 Percentage of dealing with conflict .....	53
Figure 9 Percentage of conflict' arising periodicity .....	54
Figure 10 Percentage of impact within the workplace .....	56
Figure 11 Reasons of why the conflict had an impact .....	56
Figure 12 Solution after the conflict .....	57
Figure 13 Duration of the conflict.....	58
Figure 14 Percentage of the conflict consistency (repetition).....	59
Figure 15 Skills identified when dealing with conflict.....	60
Figure 16 Percentage of managing conflict by managers.....	61
Figure 17 Different methos identified .....	62
Figure 18 Other factors to consider facing conflict .....	63
Figure 19 Recommendation to improve communication.....	65

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 What the protocol is.....	52
Table 2 Most common conflict for the surveyed.....	55
Table 3 No. of participants by mentioning other factors.....	63
Table 4 No of the reason why those factors are important .....	64
Table 5 Number of participants by nationality. ....	68
Table 6 Number of participants by type of work.....	70

## INTRODUCTION

*"If you are leading people, it helps to have a sense of who they are – the circumstances in which they were raised, the actions that will draw out the best in them, and the remarks that will cause them to be spooked. The only way to figure this out is by two underrated activities: **listening and watching.**"*

Sir Alex Ferguson

The Alternative Dispute Resolution in Ireland is attracting an increasing interest due to the expanding Irish private and public sectors. It is noticed that conflict arises unexpectedly and with a particular element that it could be helpful to change a relationship after a dispute.

It can be said that conflict is not either bad or good, but necessary. In today's world, it is less likely to see any organization or workplace free of conflict. However, that could lead to growth either for the organization's staff or for the organization itself. Therefore, organizations have also sought to manage conflict in different ways to face this little line between how to develop approaches to human capital management and other aspects that could lead to conflict.

Some authors explore that conflict management is necessary over any size or type of organization. Also, how some sectors work within or under the facilities of conflict management will reach objectives that the workplace setting. From this point of view, conflict is seen as an opportunity to apply and improve some individual aspects. From a workplace perspective, every decision is potentially practical facing conflict when a manager has to decide on one (conflict).

Facing conflict is unavoidable; therefore, it is evident that managers must recognize the source of a dispute, and thus, know how to react, manage, or apply any dispute resolution method. Besides that, having good conflict management could improve staff within the workplaces in the hospitality

sector.

Moreover, experts discuss that not resolving conflict could represent a huge loss for the companies or people when having a dispute. Therefore, it is a measure that has to be considered one of the most important aspects of a workplace. Hence, the researcher finds that managers must be capable of resolving positively. Let do not forget that conflict could either be destructive or constructive, for that reason, managers must be highly and adequately qualified when facing any conflict. Nevertheless, that could be by the help of more improvement in the worker's productivity or motivation from the superiors to their employee.

In such a way, it was identified while working in the last three years in the hospitality sector that managers deal with conflict at every moment. However, after having the opportunity to study for a master's degree in Dispute Resolution, an idea came across in the researcher's mind. How could mediation be used within a hospitality workplace without the necessity of mediation as an Alternative Dispute Resolution?

Despite that, this paper outlines how mediation as an ADR would help solve conflict within a workplace. The previous idea will also go hand in hand with these research objectives: demonstrate how mediation skills could help in managerial positions.

This research aims to answer the question: can mediation skills be helpful in managerial positions to solve conflicts within a workplace in the hospitality sector in Dublin?

Also, one of the purposes of this research will be to demonstrate how mediation will be helpful in the workplace. As previously mentioned, this study will focus on the hospitality sector in Ireland. Thus, it is explained how important this sector is for the country and how managers deal with conflict within a conflict. Finally, after analysing the data, the literature review checked, and the discussion of this study, a proposal of action course will be mentioned of how managers could get

mediation skills if needed. That will also be handed in hand with the analysis of the surveys.

Within the paper, the scope and limitation will be discussed and briefly explained how both had an impact on the study.

This paper is organized as follows to make it easier for the reader in a traditional dissertation format. The first chapter gives a deep overview of what conflict is as a literature review. That section gives more context over more subjects necessary to answer this study's research question. This part of the dissertation is based on eleven subsections that are considered valuable for the research. Such topics mentioned in this chapter are *concepts and phenomenon of conflict, types of conflict, Moore's circle of conflict, stages of a conflict, conflict in the workplace, conflict management skills, mediation, The Mediation Act 2017, mediation in the workplace, hospitality sector in Ireland, and conflict in the hospitality sector.*

The second chapter explains and discusses the research methodology and methods that were chosen to collect and analyse data. Briefly, some concepts were explained to justify why some methods, approaches, or so were chosen instead of others. Also, it was explained why a mixed methodology was chosen for this research despite only online surveys being applied. The justification of why qualitative and quantitative data were used is also explained in this chapter. Ethical considerations are discussed in this section either.

By using graphics and charts, the data is shown in chapter number three. Each point is explained in the same order as the participants got the question in the questionnaire. Moreover, the reader could see each question and its justification, thus with the purpose to understand the aim of each of them deeply and to see the link that the questionnaire had in relation to the objectives set for this research.

The following chapter analyses the data collected by using the approaches established in the

methodology and methods chapter. The analysis is co-related with the questions and connect with some findings that opened a discussion regarding the answers obtained. In this stage, the analysis was done objectively in order not to alter any result. The findings are] mentioned in this chapter as part of the analysis needed for this dissertation.

The fifth chapter discusses the data collected from the surveys and critically analyses with the literature review. By integrating any critics, insights that by using the chosen methodologies this research got. A critical judgment was applied in this structure throughout approaches that were applied in the literature review. Moreover, this helps for the understanding of the current study.

Finally, a conclusion is mentioned to give an overview of the research. Thus, it can be shown if the last mentioned, and the discussion part are connected and if the research achieved its objective.

All are presented from the researcher's insight.

# CHAPTER I

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1.1 Concepts and phenomenon of conflict

Conflict refers to a situation in which individuals or groups have incompatible goals, cognitions, or even emotions that might lead to opposition. Conflict is defined by Cambridge Dictionary (Cambridge,2021) as an "active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles". Three types of conflict would recognize the definition:

- Goal conflict: this type arises when desired outcomes, cognitive or affective conflicts are incompatible between groups.
- Cognitive conflict: there are the result when the ideas are not compatible between the parties involved.
- Affective conflict: when this conflict arises, as the same as above, is when emotions are not compatible among the parties.

Also, when values, opinions, thoughts, beliefs, perspectives, or opinions are different and have not been agreed upon, a conflict might arise. Historically, the conflict has been defined as something negative; however, it could have a positive and negative effect on an organization. For that reason, there is a need for an effective conflict management strategy. (Garrido,2016)

Henri Barki and Jon Hartwick (2001) also define conflict as a consistent phenomenon that permeates a set of organizational processes and outcomes. Moreover, the importance of conflict management has been acknowledged in diverse fields, including hospitality, communication, psychology, and others, to solve conflict within those fields.

Also, David Liddle (2017) defines conflict as the process when one of the parties perceives from another party the opposition or the effect in a negative way his/her interest.



Hence, it can be mentioned that conflict can be readily understood as part of a dynamic process where a few elements arise a situation between two or more individuals or groups. Therefore, following the previous idea, a conflicted relationship can be analysed as a sequence of conflict episodes. Primarily, these episodes arise within organizations or fields where conflict is more often to appear.

A specific conflict potential characterizes these episodes as conditional of the conflict. Some factors will go alongside the episodes and potential of the conflict, such as the behaviour that might show some variations of traits. Each encounter will leave aftermath that might affect the course of any possible successful outcome.

Conflict will not necessarily go through all stages, episodes, conditions, or others because each conflict is different. However, there is a possibility that the conflict might not be detected or perceived by the parties involved. However, in case that it is detected, those issues could be resolved before the escalation of the conflict. In this manner, both Coleman (1957) and Aubert (1963) clearly emphasize those points and how important conflict management is in any type of organization. The authors also mention how an organization could succeed through a great extent of abilities to deal with a variety of conflict phenomena.

## **1.1 Types of conflict**

It is not common that some concepts have a huge number of processes or definitions within the same. Conflict can be tagged as one of them. There is a criterion that allows conflict has a diversity of what the main word is. The effects, scope, nature, and even the level where conflict could arise are relevant for the study.

### **1.2.1- Moore's Circle of Conflict**

This circle has been modified and adapted by including a new source of conflict, such as language.

The previous wheel had only five sources based on the type of conflict that is currently happening. These sources are relationship, data, values, structural, and interest conflicts. (Mayer,2000)  
(Pillsbury,2015)

- Relationship conflict: when this type of conflict arises, it usually happens when strong negative emotions or projections exist. Also, when there are habitual misperceptions and defensive or aggressive reactions.
- Data conflicts: these conflicts arise from a lack of information, misinformation, or how the parties interpreted the data. Moreover, how the procedures are assessed and how the ideas of relevancy are shown.
- Values conflicts: these conflicts arise due to the personal identity of the individual, habits of mind and heart of the party, world view, beliefs, principles and how the challenges have been adapted.
- Structural conflicts: This type of conflict generally includes how a situation is being set up, alongside the formal role definitions. Inequality of power and authority within the organization and inequality control of resources.
- Interest conflicts: basically, are substantive and procedural conflicts where exist issues among resources, money, psychologist perception such as lack of confidence.
- Language conflict: This exists when there is a cross-talking between the parties. The definitions or even words that might have a different meaning in other countries or cultures affect the parties' communication. Also, the communication preferences, when one of the parties rather listen what it is of its benefit.

## 1.2 Stages of conflict

Pondy (1967) identified five stages of a conflict, which will describe how conflict occurs in each stage and why. In addition, these stages are mainly focused on managerial fields or organization sources where it would be able to see the availability of those resources that create conflict among the parties.

Thus, the first stage is latent conflict. Role conflict is part of this stage. It focuses on how the roles are set and on the individual and their role in the operation area. This stage focuses on the receiver, who might be merely passive within the conflict rather than the active participant in that relationship. It defines a meaningful analysis from the relationship and how the role is set based on three forms of latent conflict.

- Competition for scarce resources
- Drives for autonomy
- Divergence of subunit goals

The second stage, perceived conflict, is mainly defined as the result where the parties misunderstand each other's positions. Such conflict is argued that can be sorted out through communication between the parties. This model also has a wide variety of managerial techniques to aim and improve international relationships within the organization. To give more time availability and capacities, organizations only focus on a few conflicts that they are mostly characteristically facing more than can be dealt with within the organization.

Felt conflict is the third stage that mainly, Pondy (1967) makes a difference in how conflict has to be distinct between perceiving and feeling. When this problem arises, there are some inconsistencies in the demands of being an efficient organization and demanding individual growth, which creates anxiety within the party involved. Anxiety also creates an identity crisis or

some extra personal or organizational pressure. Therefore, individuals must vent these anxieties from their bodies to get and maintain an internal balance.

As part of the fourth stage, Dalton (1962) has documented some covert attempts to sabotage an adversary's plans through defensive or aggressive interactions. Also, the author describes some conflict tactics used by individuals in a low position to resist mistreatment by the upper levels of the organization. By manifesting this conflict, means that it comes with some varieties of conflictful behaviour that comes alongside some aggressiveness, despite that there might be some organizational norms about physical and verbal violence. (Pondy,1967)

Last but not least, there is a sequence about how each episode or stage works that will build a relationship among the organizational participants. For example, a cooperative relationship might exist if satisfaction exists within the conflict resolution between the parties. However, to drive for a more ordered relationship, the parties might focus on one of the previous stages. On the other hand, likely, the conflict will not be resolved and merely suppressed. Therefore, the conditions must be explored more seriously until the situation is sorted out. This conflict episode is called conflict aftermath.

Understanding conflict is as basic as its resolution; it is relevant to understand its nature by seeking to end a conflict. That is why successful peacemakers or conflict resolvers do not have to be just based on how individuals use the processes, tactics, or methodology. It will be more helpful an interpersonal skills, concentration, values, or even a way of thinking. As follows, mediators, lawyers, managers, or other conflict resolvers do not act or operate primarily based on theory. Also, they do not rely on specific procedures. Instead of all the previously mentioned, the use of practical concepts, personal skills, and the experience or knowledge that they have gained will be helpful in the resolution of the conflict.

### **1.3 Conflict in the workplace**

Workplace conflict is defined as "differences of view and conflict amongst individual employees and their employer; amongst individuals; and between groups of employees whether unionized or not, and their employer. It is recognised that the resolution of workplace conflict can have beneficial effects for employers, employees and other stakeholders in the business" (Teague, 2015)

People tend to associate "conflict" as something negative with experiences in their present or past working life. Undoubtedly, people may also be able to recall any situations where the communication was positively reached between the parties in conflict and how they felt and understood when resolving conflicts at work. (Buon,2014)

It has been discussed that the definition of conflict varies so much due to people's experiences and how those people have dealt with conflict in the workplace. Hocker and Wilmont (1985) conducted a survey where the authors could identify people's responses towards conflict and how it is associated by hearing "conflict". Some responses were: destruction, anxiety, tension, threat, disagreement, among more.

Some scientists have portrayed the conflict as a no desirable process that must be avoided despite all (Ahamefula,2014). Therefore, a list of some negative assumptions about the conflict was offered by Hocker and Wilmont (1985):

- Conflict is pathological
- Harmony is normal and conflict abnormal
- Conflict and disagreement are the same phenomena
- Emotions are different from a real conflict
- Conflict must be reduced or avoided, but never escalated.

Nevertheless, some researchers discussed that even conflict could be seen as something positive.

Ramsay (2001) introduced the following three assumptions, which indicate how positive conflict could be to people, especially at the workplace.

- Most conflicts are based on real differences
- Conflict is natural
- Conflict is good and necessary

There is no doubt that one of the most dramatic and relevant trends involved in the workplace occurs in a collective conflict involving trade unions and how they arise of conflict surrounding the injustice of the individual employee at work. (Teague, 2015)

Following the mention of the above, conflict in the workplace might be seen as something to deal with. Therefore, it is necessary so that employees can reach or achieve their rights and goals. In contrast, the modern Human Resources Area, which is predominant in any organization, sees the conflict of any sort as negatively as something that does not help the organization that looks forward to achieving high performance at any level. (Donald,2016)

Conflict in the workplace can result in (Buon,2014):

- Poor morale and disengagement
- Absenteeism, turnover
- Low productivity
- Poor decision making
- Communication problems
- Workers' compensation claims
- Complaints and grievances
- Violence
- Litigation and expensive lawsuits

- Stress-related medical conditions

According to Jaffee (2001), there are two areas that must catch our attention: sources of workplace conflict. The first area, to start with, is from the individual tensions that might occur between the parties. This is a natural tension in any workplace relationship, and those conflicts arise when the goals and objectives individually from the employee clash with a single goal of the organization. The second area that Jaffee observes happens due to workers are assigned to be in specific departments; however, the duties are not clear enough. Those approaches tend to undermine unity between staff.

By facing conflicts, it is suggested that to have an adequate response against it; it is needed to reframe the definition of conflict. As mentioned above, that could not be considered either negative or positive but neutral. It is important to see conflict in the workplace as the result of diversity, and the difference is the natural process of communication. It is worth mentioning that a typical manager tends to spend an average of 30% of their time dealing with a situation, which means between a day or two in a week. (Buon,2014)

Besides, according to Osad and Osas (2013), conflict in the workplace is unique because it creates and provides opportunities for workers and organizations to grow and reconcile for improvement.

### **1.3.1 Conflict Management in the workplace (Workplace management)**

Management indeed plays a huge role when resolving these situations within a workplace. In the organizational context, conflict is not simply inevitable. In case that a proper way of management exists, this could lead to and have an impact on how the employees will perform and how their satisfaction could be. Some research indicates that disputes have been taking much more time during the last decade than it has to by the executives, managers, supervisor, or other upper levels. (Olang,2017)

Also, using conflict management helps control, solve, and avoid conflict through some measures that managers might find useful. Moreover, some strategies may be needed to solve some internal problems. Thus, according to Awan (2015), having a bad work environment that does not offer any dispute resolution method can lead to a bad performance from the employees.

By having bad management or an unclear idea about what management is about, managers could lose the way to see things. As previously mentioned, this could negatively impact employees' satisfaction or performance and impact the customer service given. Perfect time management has the capacity to improve all the above. Therefore, management shall resolve disputes, or even better, prevent any situation which might affect the organizational performance. (Olang,2017)

Although managers at some stage deal with conflict with the main factor of differences in personalities and styles of working. Additionally, employees may argue that their managers have carried out some inappropriate behaviour that might interfere with the performance of the workplace. Last, it could even focus on how the management has driven the situation with customers and complaints. (Gifford 2015) (Teague, 2015)

Thus, some approaches could help to manage conflict. It focuses on the fact that it may no longer be resolved but can be avoided or managed using collaboration, compromise, loyalty, and confrontation. In this manner, strategies play an important role in the manager's posture since they are ideal for achieving long-term achievements, either for the company or the parties in dispute. These managerial strategies could include negotiation, communication, mediation, and bargaining, to mention a few. (Olang, 2017)

Moreover, some resources could help in the resolution of a conflict and how to respond to it. In the following, there is a brief overview of some elements that may be used to respond to a conflict.

- Self-awareness



- Resilience
- Active listening
- Interpersonal skills
- Emotional intelligence
- Communication processes
- Policies and Procedures
- Management interventions
- Training and coaching
- Negotiation
- Third party intervention including Internal and External Mediation
- Arbitration

A recent view of the literature on this topic found that employers must provide a workplace environment free of conflict as a legal obligation. Richards (n.d.), in his article "*How to manage disputes between staff*" argues that it can take many resources if the conflict is not dealt with effectively. Also, the author emphasizes the fact that the employees must have a leader or superior whom they can trust and talk about their problems. Thus, Richards remarks that three types of managers exist within the organization. The first one is when a manager manages effectively, the second is having a little idea about what is going on among their employees, and the last is when they know but rather not take part in the solution.

Other observations indicate that this explanation lacks a fourth stage, where could explain that the manager does not have the skills to deal with conflict or even clarify that the manager does not know how to react to those circumstances. Despite the previously mentioned, the author agrees that organizations must have current and effective procedures to deal with disputes within the

workplace.

In addition, Molinsky and co-workers (2012) highlighted that the world has changed in the past few years. The structures of any organization at any size have been developing and adapting due to the world's necessities. For the authors, a manager's skill has to work well with foreigners' colleagues and leave aside a false and incompetent attitude towards their subordinates. Rather, the same way as a good mediator, a good manager shall both be impartial and consider no judgment for either their parties or subordinates while a dispute exists.

Moreover, following the idea of the previous authors mentioned it is important to embrace a manager's brain susceptibility instead of battling a distraction. The last assumption is related to what Richards mentioned in his magazine article, so some of the skills that managers shall have, adopt or improve can be discussed.

#### **1.4.2 Conflict management skills**

The previous studies, concepts, definitions have led to which managerial skills managers might find helpful when resolving conflicts. Therefore, understanding how managers have used skills could help the researcher understand how to solve disputes or avoid them.

It is relevant that by acquiring skills in conflict management strategies, measures, dispute resolution, or structures of conflict models and the approach how it is dealt with to assess the appropriate action to be taken in a dispute. Also, it is considered that within those strategies, negotiation and mediation are part of it. Moreover, negotiation can be said to be one of the most common and popular tools used in any situation of solving disputes. It is a successful strategy when parties are having conflict or have different ideas. It is a process where the parties can reach an agreement or outcome by avoiding any high confrontation or dispute. (Olang,2017)

On the other hand, another strategy mentioned can be using a third-party intervention to help the

manager solve a dispute or conflict within the workplace. Following the previous idea, it could be by hiring an external party or having an internal third-party intervention protocol. Briefly, a third party can be defined as that actor that helps the parties in dispute that have not reached an agreement by themselves but through the help of this third party can regulate or resolve the conflict without giving advice or telling what the parties shall do. Further in this paper, the concept of mediation is mentioned due to is related to the ideas above will be mentioned and also, what skill the mediator shall have to make this point clearer.

Shelton and Darling (2004) explore the idea that managers use the "mediator" strategy when they do not see more opportunities to solve the conflict or use other strategies that have failed. Also, the authors mention that managers are responsible for the performance of the workplace. For that reason, they involve a mediator before the conflict escalates until a point they cannot manage.

Nevertheless, it is important to understand that one of the most effective ways of preventing an incident or escalation of a conflict will be by relying on the employees. They could sort their conflict out by developing a problem-solving process for the managerial position and his/her interpersonal process skills. (Buon,2014)

Above all, a manager has to be proactive and by knowing how to spot conflicts. As part of one of the managerial skills, proactiveness has to be one. Resolve conflict before they worsen; heading off a dispute before happening will be way easier to resolve the conflict. Mostly if managers or supervisors do not see a situation that could arise a conflict. As a result, they will be failing by addressing the problem and how managers can deal with those situations. Following the previous idea, the manager will sign to their subordinates who do not care about what is happening to solve or prevent disputes effectively. (Lattice Team,2021)

In their book "Getting to Yes" Fisher and Ury (1991) affirm that over any situation where a

negotiation applies or even a conflict may arise, the "what" and "why" must be separated. The authors explain that the position that any of the parties take has been decided before trying to solve the dispute. Also, the interests involved are what caused the parties to decide that posture. In this manner, it is an important distinction to make when handling conflict and skills that managers shall improve.

In addition, to a manager being in a good position to deal with conflicts, it is necessary to be open to any situation. By listening and asking the right questions would be helpful to his or her position. Thus, it goes hand in hand with giving the employees the chance to share their opinions, perspectives, and concerns without making them feel they do not have anything to say. In the same way, being objective and impartial would be beneficial to managers due to conflict can bring up some emotions and might lead to sides within the situation. Within the communication that arises while the conflict occurs, active listening might be effective for resolving the dispute. By hearing the subordinates, the manager could know what is happening and analyse how to help the parties in dispute. (Lattice Team,2021)

Thus, it can be said that managers play a vital role in resolving and preventing conflicts within the workplace. Also, engaging with the team and improving their performance is what explains The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) on its "Guide to dealing with conflict at work: Guidance for line managers" (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development,2021). Moreover, the CIPD research shows that some areas support managers in line which are:

- Being open, fair and consistent
- Handling conflict and management solving issues
- Providing knowledge, clarity and guidance
- Building relationships

- Supporting development

Furthermore, skills that have been mentioned can be related to the ones that mediators must have whereby could help the parties to reach their outcomes. In this manner, worth mentioning that there are some skills that managers could adopt from mediators and use them in conflict management. Hence, it is important to clarify how mediation works, what skills mediators have, and how mediation could work in the workplace.

In the past years, Jones (2005) identified three skills that mediators could use to recognize and deal with emotions in mediation. These skills would be (1) identifying the emotions from the disputant, (2) helping the disputant to identify those emotions, and finally, (3) facilitating the disputant's reprehension of the emotions that might interfere with an emotional experience from the ability developed at work towards an agreement.

Thus, the next subject will focus on mediation and how this method works in the workplace. Also, how it connects with the managerial skills mentioned previously might help solve conflict and the perception of managers or mediators and its link with one another.

## **1.4 Mediation**

Mediation is an independent, neutral, voluntary process to assist two or more parties having or dealing with a dispute by a third party (mediator) who has no authority to impose an outcome where will be in a consensual and collaborative manner by the parties. (MII,2021) (Wall,2001)

Besides, as an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), it is also a way to resolve disputes through the parties' empowerment, neutrality, respect, collaboration, and transformative process. Moreover, this process invites the parties to open their minds and makes them feel more comfortable for a constant consultative, emphasizing that nothing will be without the parties' input. It is worth clarifying that mediation is not a substitute for legal advice such as lawyers or so, nor a

manner of receiving counselling.

The mediator's primary role is to assist the parties by being impartial, neutral, and facilitative towards a conciliation, negotiation, or agreement. Thus, it is worth mentioning that a skilled mediator must use a variety of communication skills that will be helpful to improve the dialogue, confidence, empathy, and understanding between the parties. In addition, the mediator must provide a safe, confidential, and comfortable environment to the parties with the objective that the mediator will help the parties to communicate to have a high chance of resolving the dispute. (MII,2021)

Following the previous idea, some researchers agree with that statement. For example, Vertin (2018) explains that an able and experienced mediator seems a starting point as something obvious within a dispute. Thus, the author remarks that the mediator's preparedness must combine the individual knowledge and skills as a mediator and go alongside a team of specialists or support of the mediating entity.

Regarding one of the objectives, it is important to mention a mediator's skills to be more helpful to managerial positions in the hospitality sector in Dublin. Hence, the Mediator's Institution of Ireland (2021) declares that a mediator is a highly trained, skilled professional subject that follows the MII code of ethics and its standards rigorously. Moreover, the mediator has to be a neutral facilitator who helps the parties think out of the box and encourage them simultaneously. Likewise, he or she has to be a good communicator, non-judgemental and non-directive. What it will do is that the mediator will not give opinions on the parties' position. Also, it has to be an inspiration for the parties in dispute when some issue arises. Finally, the facilitator must be trained with various conflict resolution techniques and, therefore, an expert on de-escalating a conflict to reach an agreement.

In this manner, the evaluation of third-party assistance in a dispute might enable the parties to keep control over the process on their behalf. Often some disputants compare their outcomes with those of alternative; those might simply keep the dispute, which some negotiations have failed previously. That happens due to the mediator's lack of experience or skills that guide the parties adequately. (Wall,2001)

Concerning how managers or mediators have to be skilled to solve or deal with conflict, it is important to clarify some other points about what mediation is to put the ideas together. The previous to know if a manager shall have more mediation skills that might help them in the workplace and how mediation would help to solve conflict within the workplace.

Thus, LaMothe (1993) explains how mediation can help the parties solve and clarify a dispute and make the parties work together towards a solution for themselves. Also, one of the main points of mediation is the final agreement reached by the parties, which has to be signed by the parties involved. In contrast, and according to Judith Meyer (1997), as mediation is voluntary and no involvement from the third party through decisions, it makes mediation not as effective in some situations such as criminal cases, involving issues of Law, or even in cases with a high issue of harassment.

Despite that mediation has its own advantages, some considerations still make it a bit out track compared to other Alternatives Disputes Resolution. However, Ireland has been growing in the past few years as a dispute resolution method.

Much work on the potential of mediation has been carried out by Shapiro and Brett (1993) that suggests the role's importance of a third party. The authors discuss that the ability to express people's opinions regarding the dispute and the belief that the third party would listen to their opinions and thus may help both to solve the dispute and dissipate emotions in it.

In the same way, Bodtker and Katz (2009) argue that mediators shall explore parties' emotions to obtain a big outlook on how the parties frame the conflict to reach an agreement. The last can be analyse as to how managerial positions could use these skills to understand more the individual and thus help them when a conflict arises within the workplace.

The research has shown that either mediators or managers are in a good position to help parties, workers, collaborators, or others to underline their emotions when having a dispute. Although, managers in their current practice or somehow to do the things, might not directly train mediators to do so.

There is a considerable amount of literature that explains how these skills are important. Thomson and Kim (2000) remark that adopting special skills is supported by at least one study that suggests identifying emotions might impact the third party to assess parties' intentions or interests accurately. However, Poitra's study (2007) found that the parties would be more likely to agree in workplace mediation if the mediator helps them identify their responsibility. The last due to might lead to a better reconciliation with the counterpart for the future and not only after the dispute.

#### **1.4.1 Mediation Act 2017**

In October 2017, as a consequence of the growth of mediation' importance, the Government had the idea to implement a Mediation Act that could help modify the idea of what mediation is and make it a strong alternative way to face disputes. The Mediation Act aims to consider mediation as an alternative to other dispute resolution methods.

This document is defined as *"An Act to facilitate the settlement of disputes by mediation, to specify the principles applicable to mediation, to specify arrangements for mediation as an alternative to the institution of civil proceedings or to the continuation of civil proceedings that have been instituted; to provide for codes of practice to which mediators may subscribe..."*



Within the Act, it is mentioned the role of the mediator and what requirements it shall have. The mediator has to be trained and qualified, fair, impartial, unbiased. Also, as previously mentioned, the mediator shall not advise any of the parties. (Mediation Act,2017)

Thus, mediation has become a vital and remarkable instrument of alternative dispute resolution that undoubtedly will be used more often in the future. By recommending the use of mediation within workplaces or other fields where could be helpful, this research focuses on how mediation impacts the workplace in Ireland, focusing on the hospitality sector of this country and the impact that it has had in the workplace.

#### **1.4.2 Mediation in the workplace**

Recent development in the private and public sectors have been maligned for being corruptive and inflexible. However, some aspects of the public sector organizations allow them to see the growing potential of their incomes and staff improvement in a workplace environment. In that paradigm enables the chance for different ideas that can be adopted to make the workplace better. One of those ideas is mediation. As previously mentioned, mediation has been demonstrated within the communities and social services to be one of the best tools to solve conflicts. Companies are adopting workplace mediation due to its cost-effective way and the productiveness and effectiveness of this Alternative Dispute Resolution method; that helps in the communication between the parties. (Liebmann,2000)

Workplace mediation has received much attention in the last few years because it can also help make an empowering environment where the employees can solve their own problems and resolutions. Moreover, it can strengthen the energy and time invested by the employees in their jobs. Furthermore, it is not a myth about conflict arising from any small discomfort; thus, this method is proactive and helps prevent future disagreement. For instance, mutual satisfaction from

the parties within the workplace is less likely to have a negative or dramatic result in the future. In contrast, the old-fashioned disputes resolution method could be seen as disciplinary or mandatory even though the intention is not to perceive that process as a threat. (Weinstein, 2001)

In this manner, it is considered an appropriate strategy. If the employer is willing to adopt mediation within his or her processes or conflict solving, this will impact the organization mostly positively. Following the previous idea, it could work hand in hand with other processes that are set already. Despite that it is an alternative tool, it shall not be used as a substitution. A mediation program shall be independent of other complaint processes due to being implemented to workers, suppliers, customers, and employers.

In addition to such strategies and procedures, and how nature has been changed in Ireland in the past decades in relation to conflict and how disputes have been solved, there is now an increasing number of facilitators who can help with mediation training and are willing to offer help for this service. (Liebmann, 2000)

Some schemes have differences depending on the type of organization that will be applied. Mostly about how they are taught in Ireland. It has been suggested that in workplace disputes, it is better to bring the parties together. The efficiency of that act will reach an outcome more beneficial for both parties. Besides, the use of mediation can be quite new for a workplace due to the fact that organizations use this method to be introduced by enterprising development staff, also, in organizations where the culture of mediation exists already by dealing with customer's complaints. Managers shall bear in mind that different mediation models emerge and will impact the employment life and how it is going to change that.

Managers usually pose a threat because it shifts the balance of power between staff and those with upper-level organizational authority in the company, even though mediation is seen as the

appropriate approach to solving disputes. Hence, mediation must require a bit of perception from managers for the reason that either a successful mediator or manager has to learn to be impartial and neutral about the outcome of the mediation process or the dispute in the organization.

Despite mediators intending to show that they attend to emotions or care for the parties, a research made by Schreier (2002) on emotional intelligence and mediation training showed that the field of mediation lacks attention in the aspects previously mentioned. Also, she found out that it is not sufficient to have mediation training to address some of the parties' reactions and behaviour. Thus, it could be related to managerial positions that have not acquired mediation skills but are recommended to help in workplace disputes.

As previously mentioned, however, any organization could adopt for workplace mediation. Weinstein (2001) believes that there should be a program for hiring external professional mediators rather than using peer mediators. Regardless of the size of any organization, may consider peer mediator for those little day-to-day conflicts. Nevertheless, managers shall opt to professional mediators for those issues or concerns beyond their control by their lack of conflict solving capabilities.

Regarding one of the objectives of this research, mediation is an excellent tool to use in the workplace for conflict solving. It is also an opportunity to adapt some mediation skills by the managers to show their commitment to their co-workers and work environment while increasing their productivity.

### **1.6 Hospitality Sector (in Ireland)**

One of the most important sectors that Ireland has is hospitality. It is one of the largest sectors that contributes to its economy, specifically to Irish tourism. In a big scenario, tourism is seen as the total of business that provides goods, services and contributes to help businesses to create activities

away from the home environment. However, while the hospitality sector is the pillar of the tourism industry, it is not the only one contributing to the country. The industry is worth over €6 billion annually and employs around 180,000 people. Also, around 20 thousand businesses operate within this industrial space. (Curran,2021)

Likewise, its tourism industry englobes accommodation, food and beverage, travel, and transportation in Ireland. However, this is just a part that covers many sub-sections from tourism, such as Hospitality Sector. The last results focus on hotels, restaurants, bars, pubs, catering operators, and canteens. In this research, pubs, bars, hotels, and restaurants will be the ones that the researcher will be focusing on in Chapter IV to analyse the data from surveys focused on people who work in that area.

The Interim Report (2017) explains some skills that are needed in this sector in the future. Also, it identifies five priority areas to progress within the sector.

- Promotion of careers within hospitality industry
- Facilitate related courses in further higher education
- Programmes to developing apprenticeships and traineeship
- Set of skill for the sector
- New initiatives to connect people with employment.

Thus, the report underlines the need to adopt interest and start careers in hospitality in Ireland as part of its medium or long-term development for the industry.

However, there is still considerable disagreement with regard to not focusing on managerial positions and HR, but only focusing on positions that are needed but not developing the ones that exist.

As one of the biggest sectors in Ireland, hospitality can reach a big part of the country. Meanwhile,

other sectors have experienced an increase in e-commerce due to COVID-19. However, some hospitality establishments have significantly increased their economy due to food providers through the Internet or apps. It is clear that as a significant contributor to the employment either a proportion seasonal or not. More recent evidence highlights that in early 2020, Ireland estimated around thirty percent of the workforce was non-national staff, resulting in more staff being needed for the sector's growth. Thus, this sector demands skills to grow more hospitality products and services, the number of overseas people, changing customer demand, staff environment, and value competitiveness. (EGFSN, 2015)

It is important to highlight that in terms of higher education provision, and according to Curran (2021) the Hospitality Skills Oversight Group has indicated that there will be around 90 management, restaurant, and catering courses. The last acknowledge that Irish educators must work better with the sector to achieve more coherent and coordinated results with the Irish Education System. Other observations would suggest that this explanation or intention to capacitate or prepare better the future workforce in the sector seems inefficient in relation to the managerial positions. The flaws of this method have been recognized as not giving it the importance of what skills managers in that sector shall have.

That sector seems to be compromised by the fact that most of those establishments are small; often, the owners manage their own business due to the passion for food/service they feel. However, they might not be necessarily trained to manage people.

Hospitality establishments are characterized to have a hierarchical structure with a lot of pressure activity, making them competitive and a high-risk sector. The previous because low-paid exists, low-skilled managers and staff, migrant's workforce that makes language a factor that makes it harder to communicate efficiently.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

#### **2.1 Introduction to the methodology**

This section will highlight the main aspects of the methodology that were used for this dissertation. Then, likewise, will illustrate the research design alongside the approach, philosophy, and research strategy that will be demonstrated.

It will be used the methodology based on the Research Onion Framework. Thus, the philosophy that was selected for the purpose of this research will be explained.

In consideration, five aspects were pointed out on grading criteria for this study:

- I. Review of the Literature
- II. Research Methodology and Methods
- III. Presentation of the data
- IV. Data analysis
- V. Discussion

#### **2.2 Research Philosophy**

In order to explain the matter of research of any scientific basis for future investigations, firstly, it is relevant to highlight the techniques of the research. Saunders and collaborators (2019), hand-by-hand with Nweke and Orji (2009), discuss that a classical research methodology is based on a specific philosophical theory that establish strategies and techniques of the research matter.

Positivism and interpretivism are highlighted from the historical aspect, Saunders (2016) explains.

Thus, it can be explained that positivism in research matters is when it reflects the philosophical stance of a natural scientist, which means that it is based on objectivist assumptions that individuals are observed. Also, through observation and empirical data, social actors, specific events, might

be considered credible. With the help of observation, knowledge will be acquired and will help to find some irregularities within the research. On the other hand, interpretivism is considered an approach based on existential assumptions that individuals might discourse. Hence, through social constructions such as consciousness and language, reality could be researched. (Myers, 2008)

However, Saunders and collaborators (2019) also observe that choosing between the philosophies above might be unrealistic to the research. Hence, other two postures in philosophies are proposed:

- Pragmatism
- Realism

The first of the above is basically based on assumptions that within the research the possibility of adding them on either positivism or interpretivism. However, it must be adapted in whichever works better for the research question. The second one, based on two assumptions 1) Real entities are what the world is based on, 2) people have the perception of sensations in "real" entities, and not the entities themselves.

According to and following the above, the positivism philosophy was chosen for the current research because it includes aspects of assumptions, and beliefs about the perception from authors about the world and topic, plus some texts related to the subject. In addition, when the researcher has limitations when the data collection will be required, this philosophy was the most accurate for the research. Also, following the interpretivism approach to qualitative research by exploring the meaning of the answers obtained in the questionnaire means that the conclusions might be subjective.

Thus, interpretivism emphasizes the relevance of the interpretation by humans. Hence, it is directly connected to understanding an event from an individual's perspective. Moreover, regarding what will be helpful for this stage, it is necessary to describe what qualitative data is. Qualitative data

refers to the amplitude of information on how the words or images are observed or created. Interviews, case studies, documents, grounded theory, and other research methods are mostly related to interviews. There are other ways qualitative data can be collected. Through open-ended questions that are part of survey questionnaires that could be written or online- the written words by the surveyed will be considered qualitative data. (Denscombe, 2010)

### **2.3 Research approach**

Following Saunders' idea on his onion research framework, it will be discussed the approach that will be used for this research. According to the same author, it highlights two different approaches: inductive and deductive approaches.

The deductive approach explores existing theories and the study of them. Moreover, it suggests that in relation to the coherence and the analysis of previous literature, this approach could find that the deductive conclusions will result from the literature review; this also does mean that quantitative data is linked to this method.

On the other hand, different authors distinguish between these approaches, which makes the inductive approach completely opposite to the previous one. It is based on the researcher's observation which could lead to the creation of a new theory. Also, qualitative data is linked to this approach. Thus, preliminary work in this field focused primarily on the pattern of observation within the research, which lead to the development of theories through patterns within a hypothesis. (Bernanrd,2011)

The inductive approach seems the most accurate choice for the current study due to what it was defined above.

### **2.4 Research Choice**

The research choice applies based on and its relation to the approach chosen. Hence, the current study used a mixed-method that went through qualitative and quantitative data that had either open



or closed questions due to the questionnaires. It was important to answer the research question because both choices focus on behaviours and beliefs from the qualitative data. Furthermore, the quantitative was used from how the information was obtained and how the interpretation was developed.

## **2.5 Research Strategy**

For the purpose of this study and going hand-by-hand with the statement above, qualitative and quantitative data were collected by a questionnaire that had open and closed questions. Having a qualitative approach will be flexible for the assessment of the research question. Hence, it is helpful to use this strategy to get information from the participants in order to comprehend what is behind the perception of mediation, conflicts, manager's skills, and ideas for the last objective of this research.

## **2.6 Research population and sampling**

The present paper aims to question if having mediation skills would help managers solve a conflict. Thus, the investigation focused on people who work in the hospitality sector in Ireland, either bars, restaurants, or hotels.

Guest, Namey, and Mitchell (2013) define in their book "*Collecting Quantitative Data: A field manual for Applied Research*" that a non-probability is usually defined in relation to a counterpart where two points of comparison exist, which are: 1) non-probability samples are not selected randomly 2) it is complicated to identify how much represents the population since it is hard to know the odds from them.

Also, the authors note that probability sampling is a derivation of random selection within a population. That means that the characteristics of the sampling could calculate the possibilities within a larger population.

Thus, the non-probability method seemed to fit better for the present study. That is why it was

chosen due to the people surveyed were employed in the hospitality sector, and no random selection was made.

## **2.7 Time Horizons**

Saunders also remarks that these time horizons are needed within the methodology that will be used. Hence, the author mentions two types of horizons: Longitudinal and Cross-sectional. At the same time, the longitudinal focuses on repeated studies and for a long period, while the cross-sectional studies have limited time. The researcher opted to a cross-sectional one due to the research is also limited to a specific time frame.

## **2.8 Justification**

In this context, the research used qualitative and quantitative methods. On the one hand, it will be necessary to understand thoughts and experiences, which the qualitative method will be a straightforward way for this research. Taylor (2016) declares that qualitative researchers must have the ability to develop concepts, insights, ways of understanding some patterns from the data collected instead of collecting data to assess some theories made by the researchers. Also, it is set that making decisions will be regardless of the data collected from the literature that will help to learn from the participants' experiences.

On the other hand, this will be related to the survey that was created with open and closed questions to understand both sides. The quantitative method will be used to confirm the question of this study in how mediation skills could be helpful or not in managerial positions in the hospitality sector in Dublin.

Thus, this research aims to demonstrate how those mediation skills could be beneficial and how mediation would help solve conflict within this peculiar sector. Hence, to reach one of the objectives will be by proposing an approach that managers in this sector could get when knowing the answers from the surveys.

Kong (2020) remarks that quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews encourage participants to accurately recall details regarding experiences, situations, feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and even behaviours that were asked. However, in this study, only online questionnaires were applied. In conclusion, the interpretivism philosophy, the inductive approach, mix-methods, cross-sectional time horizon, and surveys are going alongside for this research' purpose.

### **Ethical Considerations**

For this dissertation, the study was then based on aspects that would not harm any of the individuals or authors that, in the end, helped the current study. In all disciplines in life, ethics is one of the vital aspects that must be considered. Hence, it is better to mention that all data for this paper had been collected for research and academic purposes in academic research.

As the present paper used surveys, it is necessary to mention that all answers collected were anonymous. Therefore no one will identify or link the participants to the answers collected. Thus, their privacy and confidentiality will remain. The questionnaires were sent to people who work in the hospitality sector in Dublin. The intention was to get as much information from people who had been dealing with conflict in the sector and what skills managers use when solving conflict to identify if mediation skills would be helpful for them as set in the objectives from the current study.

It is worth mentioning that all participants in the study answered the survey voluntarily.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **PRESENTATION OF THE DATA**

As the subject of the current research is related to the dispute resolution field, it is important to emphasize that the study is linked to the master's dissertation from the researcher. The principal characteristics of this research are mediation, managerial skills, and conflict.

Focus on the research; the paper highlights the narrow of the conflict and managerial skills on only the hospitality sector in Dublin. However, conflict is a broad topic, so it was necessary to make the investigation smaller.

Mediation, on the one hand, meets the requirements for this research. As one of the ADR, mediation alongside conflict is analysed through past literature that helps to meet the objectives. The previous could build ideas or unexpected theories that would be considered for future investigations.

In managerial positions, it can be discussed that most of their skills have been obtained through experience and not for an academic aspect. It is relevant to relate those managerial positions deal with conflict quite often. Also, that mediation is having an enormous impact on the workplace nowadays. It is clear that the subject is related to the dispute resolution field, despite other ADR, such as negotiation. The study focuses on conflict and how managerial positions might need mediation skills to improve the way they solve conflict within the Irish workplace. Last but not least, this paper aims to propose an approach to how managers could obtain these skills.

#### **3.1 The Data Collection**

Sixty-three participants answered the online questionnaire with the following results. The survey aimed to identify some aspects that could be related to the objectives of the research. In the current chapter, each question is justified and what was expected to get from it. The intention is to make

a better understanding of why each question was asked. As mentioned in previous chapters, this survey had quantitative and qualitative measures due to it had open and close questions. Thus, each chart or table used in this section helps to understand some features with the addition of percentages and their explanation.

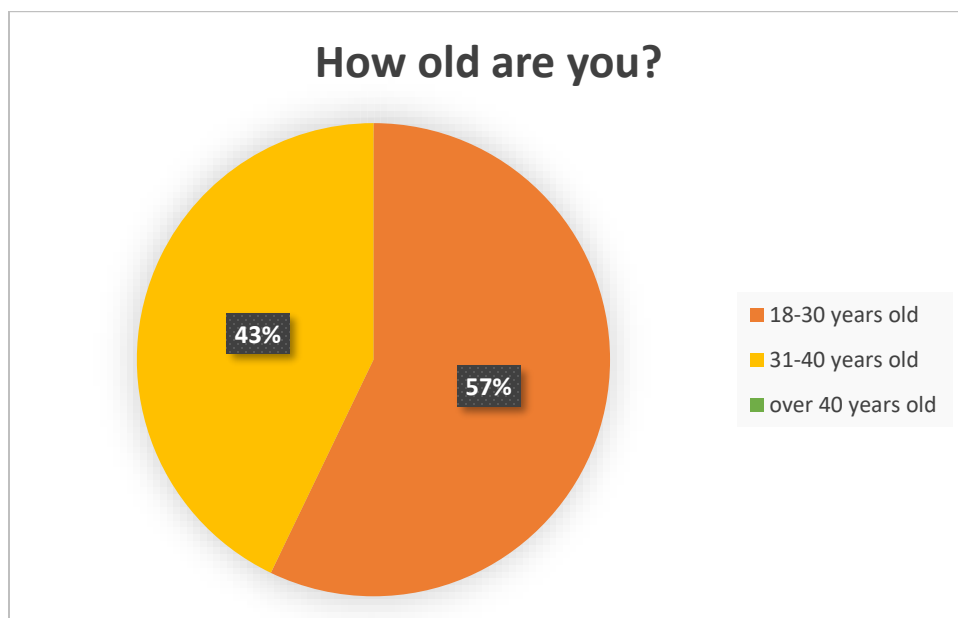
On the one hand, when the open questions are explained, the researcher tried to be brief and precise with the objectives, due to the analysis of the questions will be done in the next chapter of the current paper.

### 3.2 The Questionnaire

#### Question 1

#### How old are you?

Objective: by knowing the age of the participant, it could determine the population in a range of age with a different perception of how conflict could be managed, and by answering some other open questions from this survey, data could be collected with different opinions and perception for an age difference. Moreover, age could bring an effect on the conflict dynamics that was mentioned in one of the chapters within this paper. Age could influence different generations facing conflict, knowing about mediation and how they perceive their managers or superiors dealing with conflict.

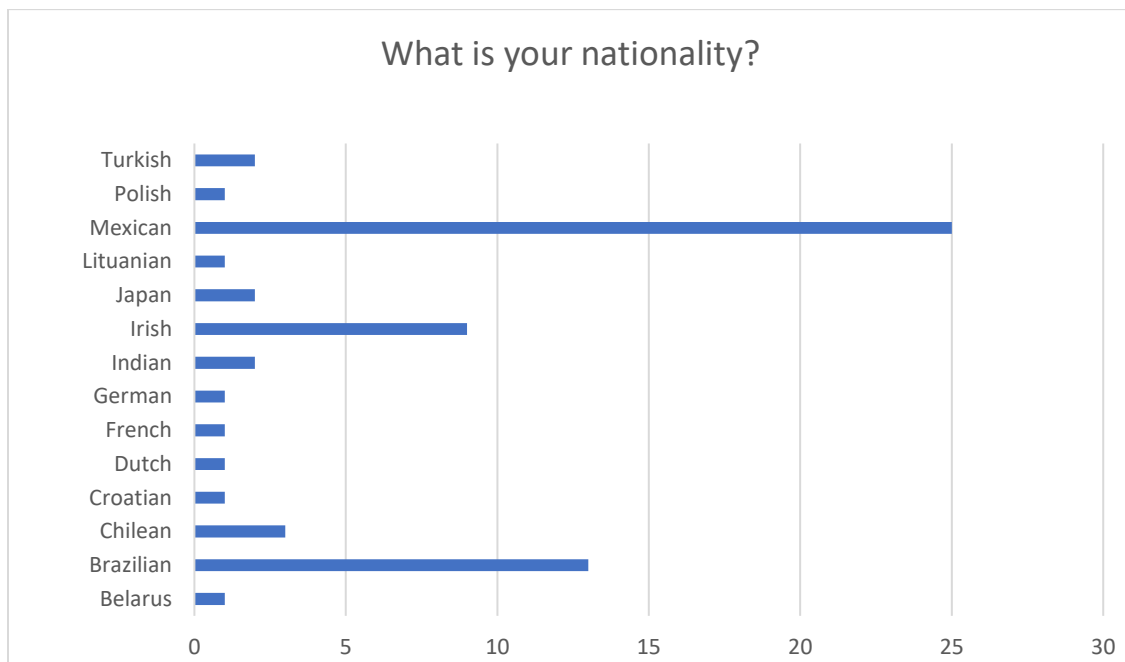


**Figure 1 Percentage of Age**

## Question 2

### What is your nationality?

In aspects of conflict, culture could have an impact. Although the present work does not focus on the impact of culture in conflict, it is necessary to know if nationality plays a role by answering this survey. There are some open questions, and despite that, it aims to get a beneficial point of view from the surveyed. Also, all the answers are private and confidential. Therefore, the research could benefit from this question and get some value from it.



**Figure 2 Nationalities of the surveyed**

### Question 3

#### For how long have you been working in the hospitality sector?

Their experience and time working in the sector have to be taken into account because it would be helpful in order to analyse the different mindsets and approaches that the participants might have. Thus, their experiences during that period could be beneficial for the research because we can obtain relevant information or points of view in relation to the research question.



Figure 3 Duration of working in Hospitality Sector



#### Question 4

##### Which workplace does it apply to you? (Bar, restaurant, hotel)

As this research aims to identify if mediation skills could be helpful for managers in the hospitality sector, this question seems to get how many surveyed people are working in different jobs regarding hospitality. The last could directly focus on three workplaces hotels, bars, and restaurants. However, it was given another option where more than one could apply. As it is known that in Dublin there are places that apply for more than one which it could be bar/restaurant, hotel/restaurant to mention a few.

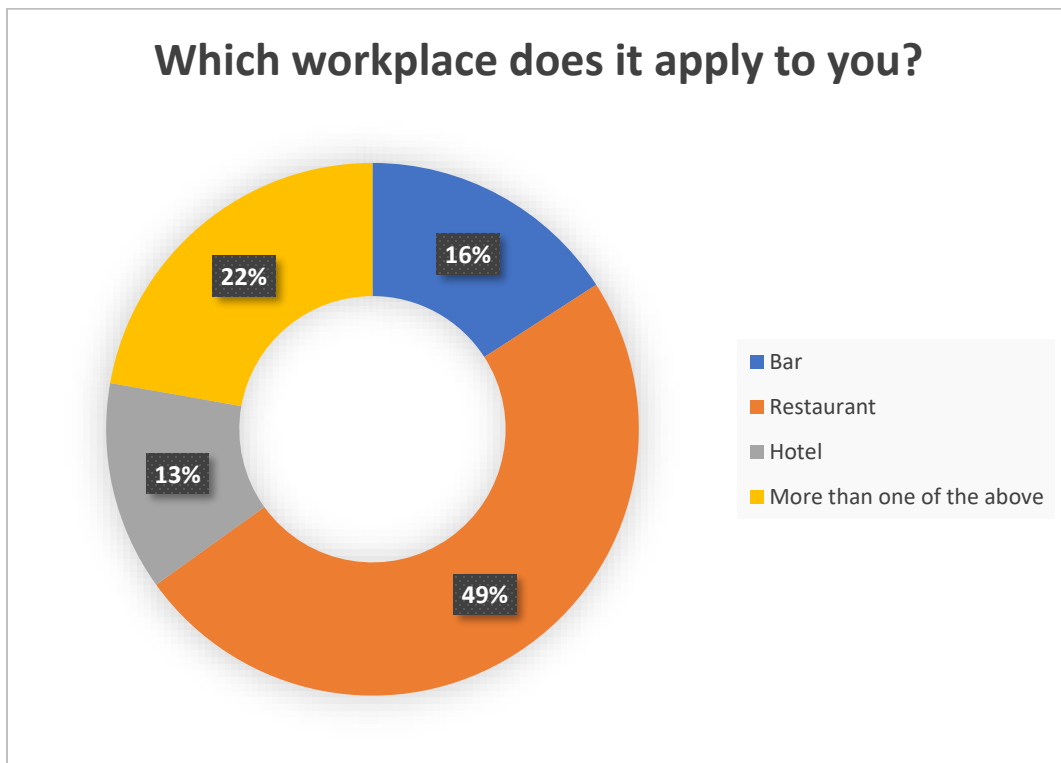


Figure 4 Place of work

## Question 5

### Type of work done in your current job (Waiter, bartender, supervisor)

This question aims to be answered by people who are currently working in the hospitality sector in Dublin City. However, it could apply for people who had used to work in any of those jobs that could apport something interesting to the research. Knowing this would give fundamental data that would help the research that people are working in that sector or used to deal with conflicts in the past and have a perception about how their managers used to solve conflicts. Moreover, it focuses on what kind of work they do or used to do (if applicable). At the end of the question, a few options/examples were written so the reader or participant could understand clearly what was needed.

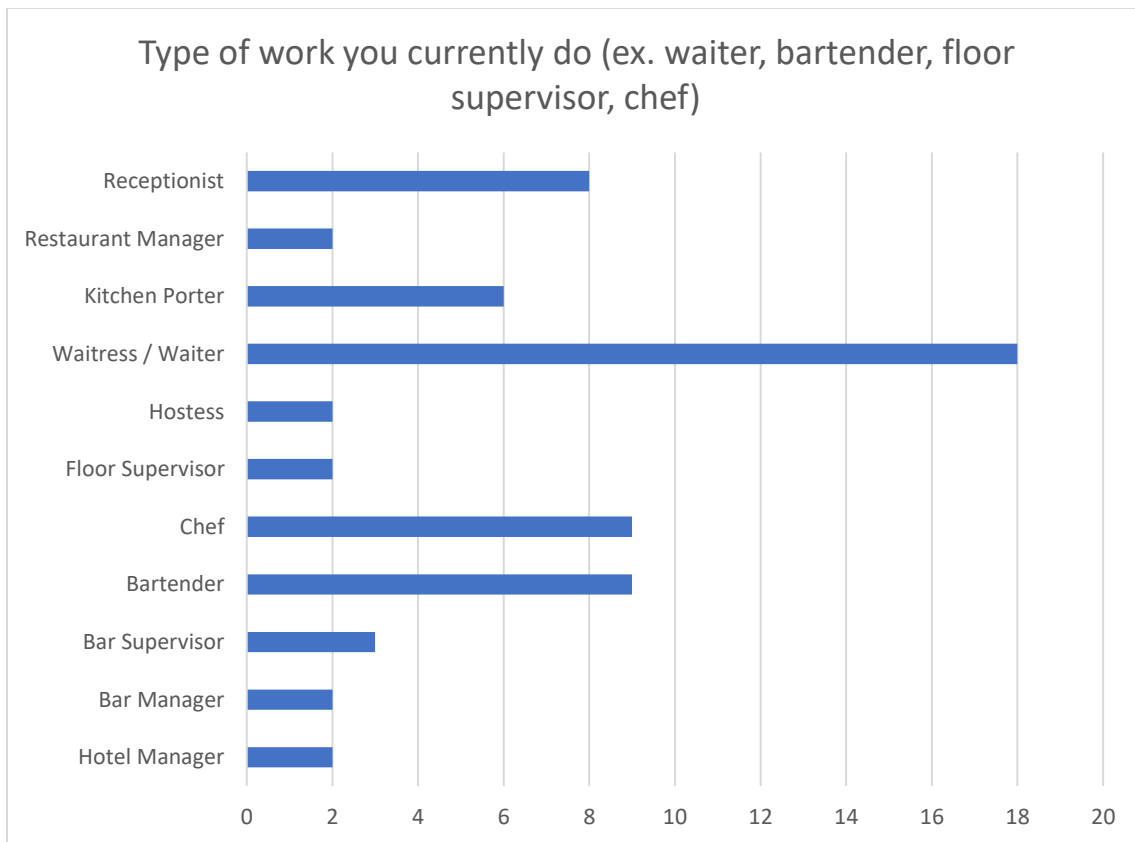
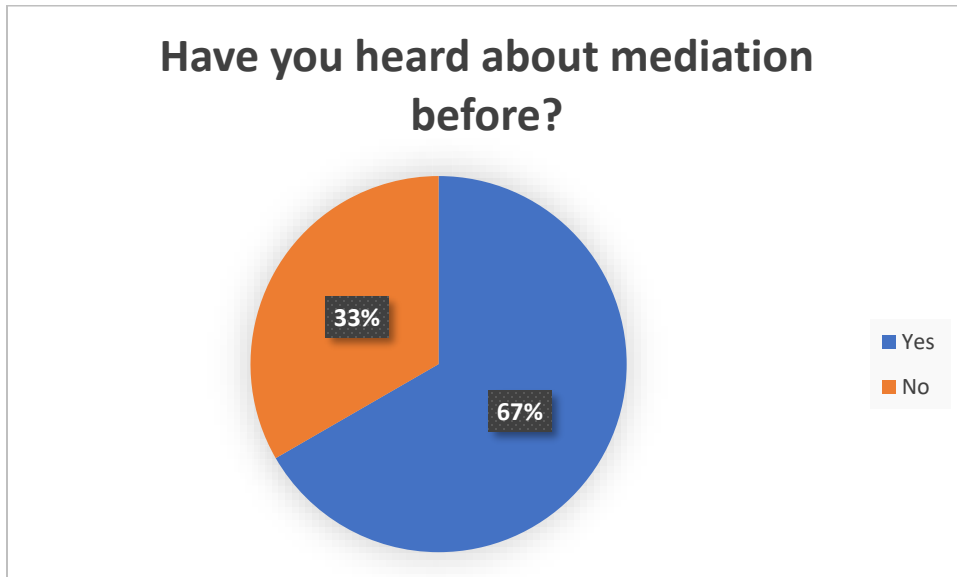


Figure 5 Surveyed' Type of Work

### Question 6

**A brief explanation of what mediation is “an alternative dispute resolution method in which a third party (mediator) uses techniques to help the parties in dispute to settle down a conflict without imposing a decision or giving any advice. The outcome will be up to the parties”. Have you heard about this before?**

Within this question, the mediation concept is briefly explained, as the participants could either answer "yes" or "no" in case they have heard about this or not. The researcher added the concept because, in case of getting negative answers, the participant could get an idea about this ADR. Therefore, by answering this question, the study will get information that even though mediation has had a growth lately in Ireland, people who work in this sector might not be involved in the concept and, for that reason, neither managerial position.



**Figure 6 Percentage of knowing about mediation**

### Question 7-8

#### Is there a mediation protocol within your company? If so, what is the protocol?

This question aims to obtain information from the participant in case that a mediation protocol exists within the workplace. Thus, the researcher could analyse how involved the businesses are and apply internal mediation or mediation in the workplace. For that reason, within the literature review, this concept was mentioned. Also, the question was divided to know if a mediation protocol exists in the workplace where the participant is working.

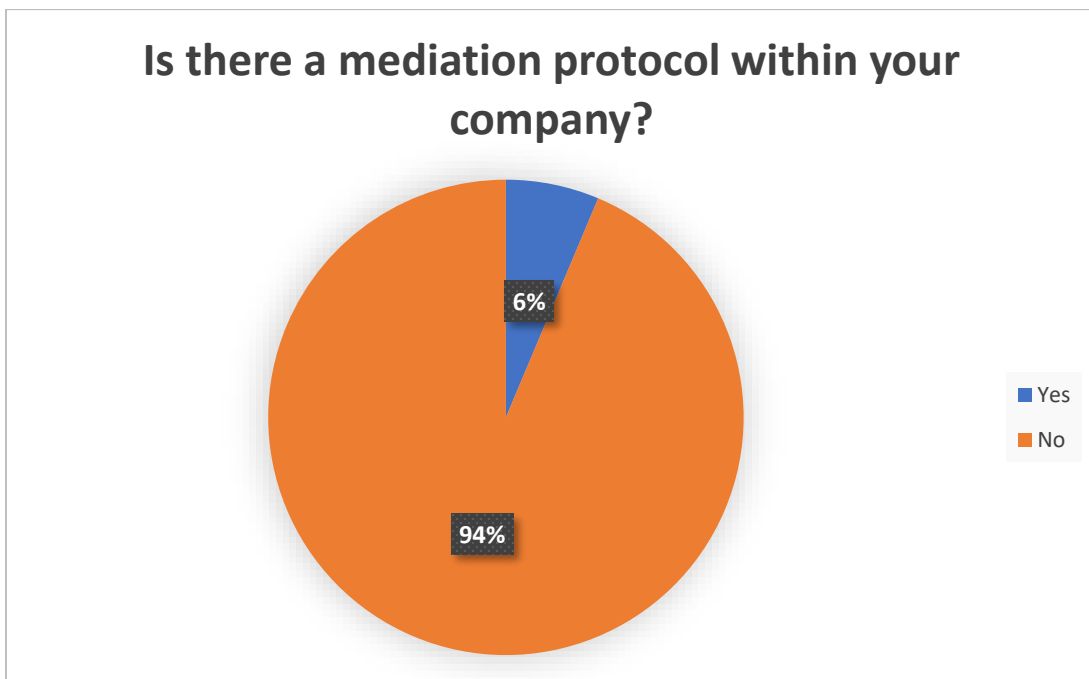


Figure 7 Protocol of Mediation

What is the protocol?
Talk to the manager and see the Mediation Manual Protocol (2 Answers)
Not sure but there is one. (1 Answer)
There is one but did not write what.

Table 1 What the protocol is

### Question 9

#### Have you ever dealt with a conflict within your workplace?

This question is relevant for the study due to by knowing the answers from the participants, it could lead to analyse what this study is looking for. Furthermore, by knowing if they have dealt with a conflict, it will be helpful to link these answers, and the following due to the answers would be more accurate and realistic; therefore, it will help the research be analysed in a better way.



Figure 8 Percentage of dealing with conflict

## Question 10

### How often would a conflict arise in your workplace?

Participants share their perception of how often a conflict arises, which will give data that will support why the objectives of the research were set. By giving these answers, it could be easier to identify if some conflicts arise more often than it has to. Moreover, this question is related to the following (questions). The answers to this question could lead to linking the answers with the objectives established.

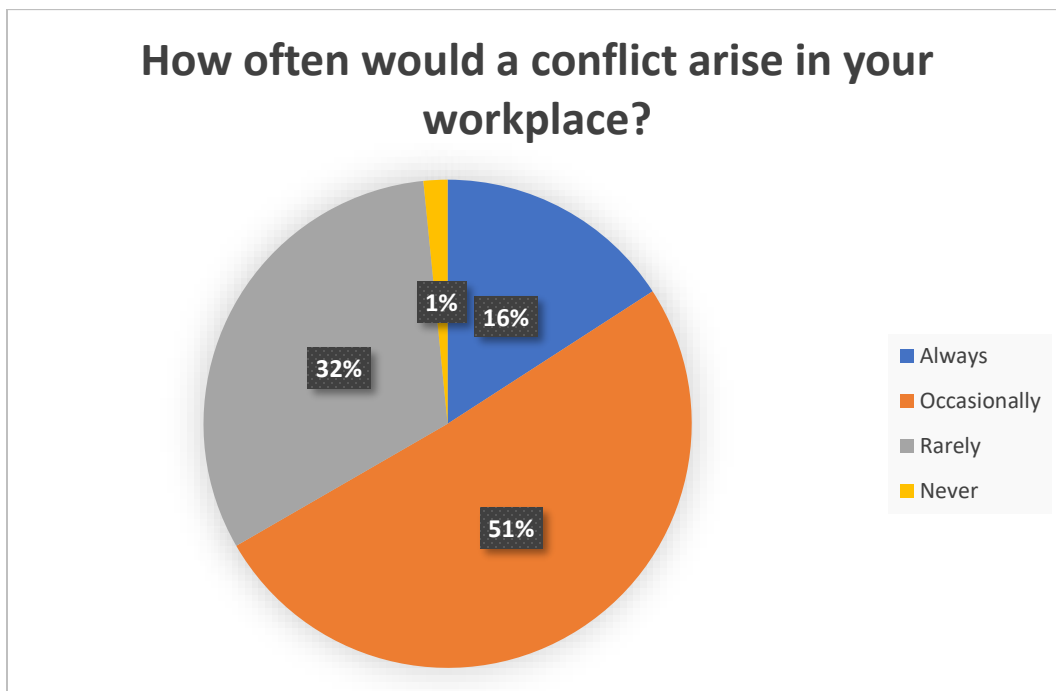


Figure 9 Percentage of conflict' arising periodicity

## Question 11

### **Briefly describe or mention a dispute situation within your workplace**

Although conflict could arise at any workplace or situation, this research mainly focuses on the hospitality sector. The participant briefly shared an experience that had to be related to conflict without the necessity that they were involved. However, they could also have been part of it. This open question allows the participants to explain a little about that conflict. Although it could be even a few words, it gives the researcher an idea about people's perception of a conflict or dispute. An open question also intends not to influence the participant's answers to write more open and honest answers.

<b>Most popular conflicts mentioned in the survey</b>
<b>Related to racism</b>
<b>Miscommunication within staff</b>
<b>Language conflict</b>
<b>Customers and staff disputes</b>
<b>Abuse of power (management)</b>
<b>Job Roles</b>
<b>Personalities Disputes</b>
<b>Working shifts</b>
<b>Lack of management (Leadership, A Listening, lack of communication)</b>

**Table 2 Most common conflict for the surveyed**

## Question 12

### Had the conflict had an important impact on your workplace? Why?

By knowing this, the data collected could show the effects of that dispute within the conflict. Hence, it could be based on how the manager dealt with the conflict. As an open question, it allows the participant, as the previous one, to be honest, and direct about the dispute they shared.

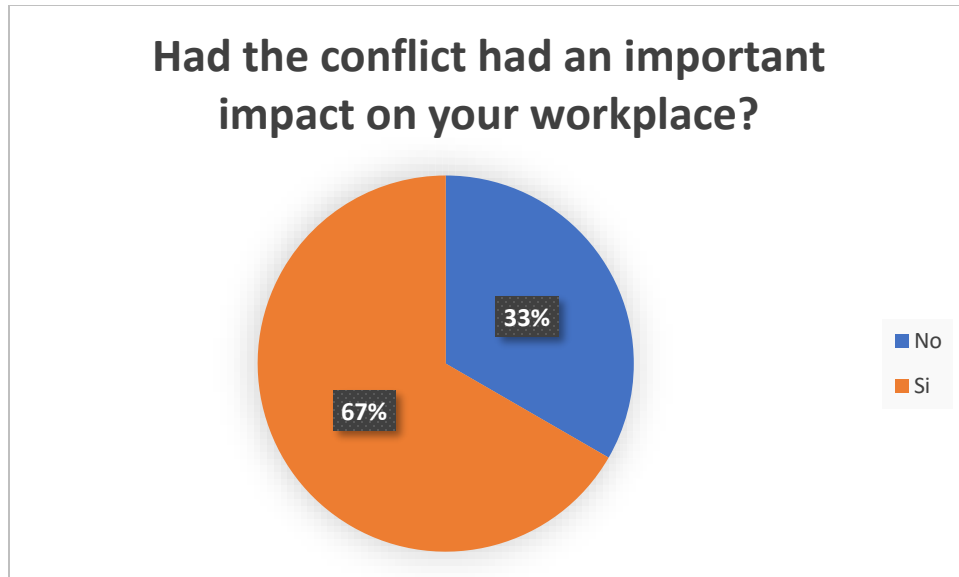


Figure 10 Percentage of impact within the workplace



Figure 11 Reasons of why the conflict had an impact



### Question 13

#### How was the conflict resolved?

This question aims to know if the conflict was solved or not. The participant responded in a closed question, which offers quantitative data for the study. The analysis would go hand in hand if the participant's perception affected the conflict was either solved or not.

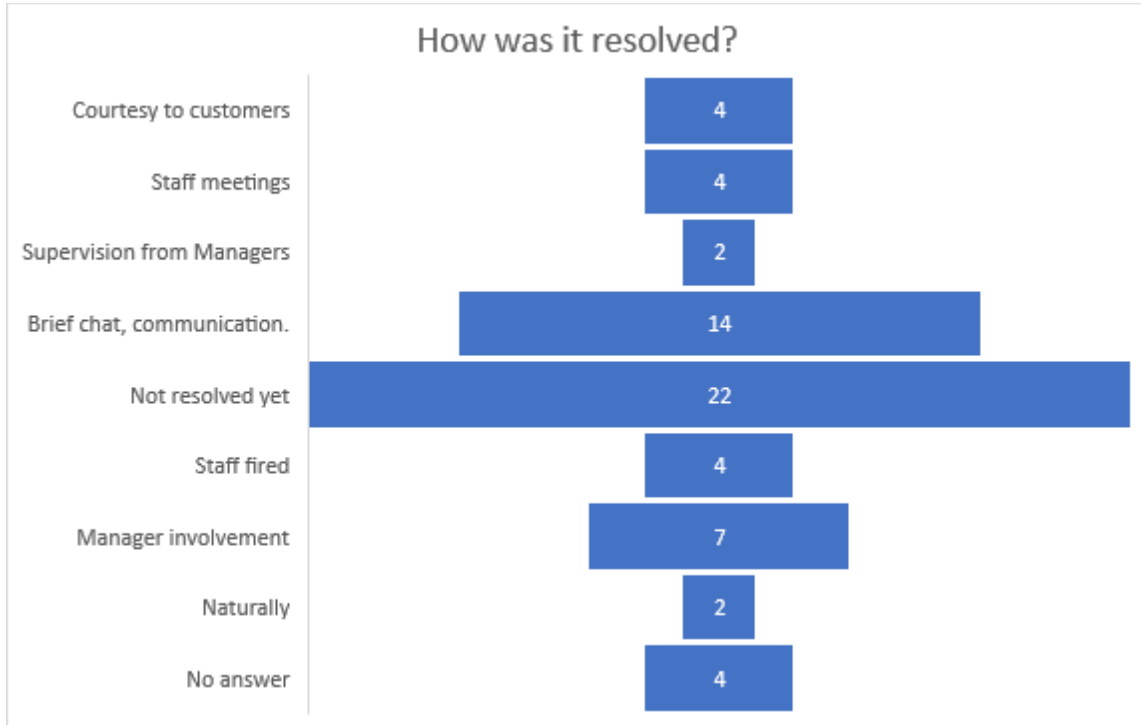
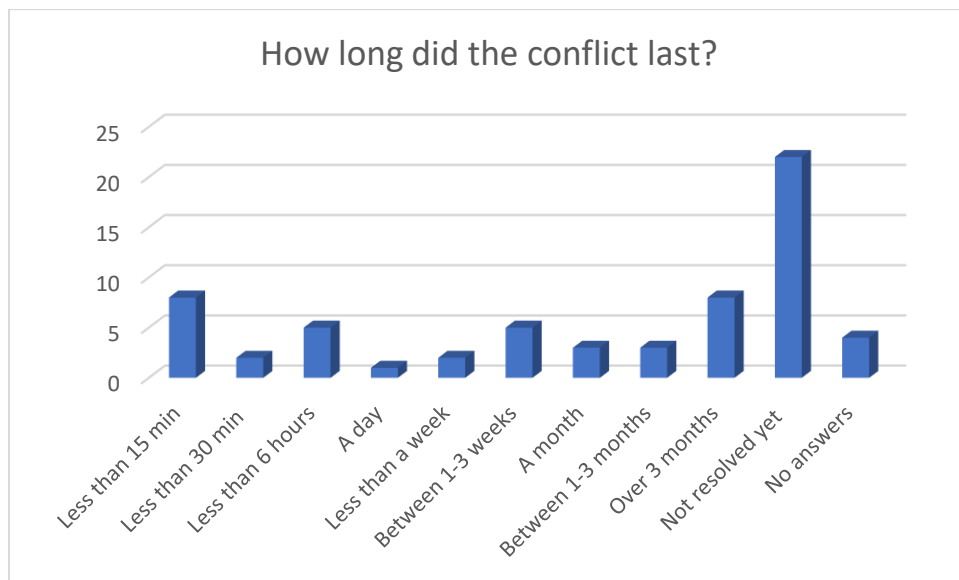


Figure 12 Solution after the conflict

## Question 14

### How long did the conflict last?

When answering this question, the participant offers the duration of the conflict. By knowing this, we could determine if managers can solve conflicts effectively based on literature and other studies. There are no assumptions in the data analysis at this stage. However, it is a vital question to understand conflict within the workplace. In consequence, it is an open question; therefore, the participant could respond openly.

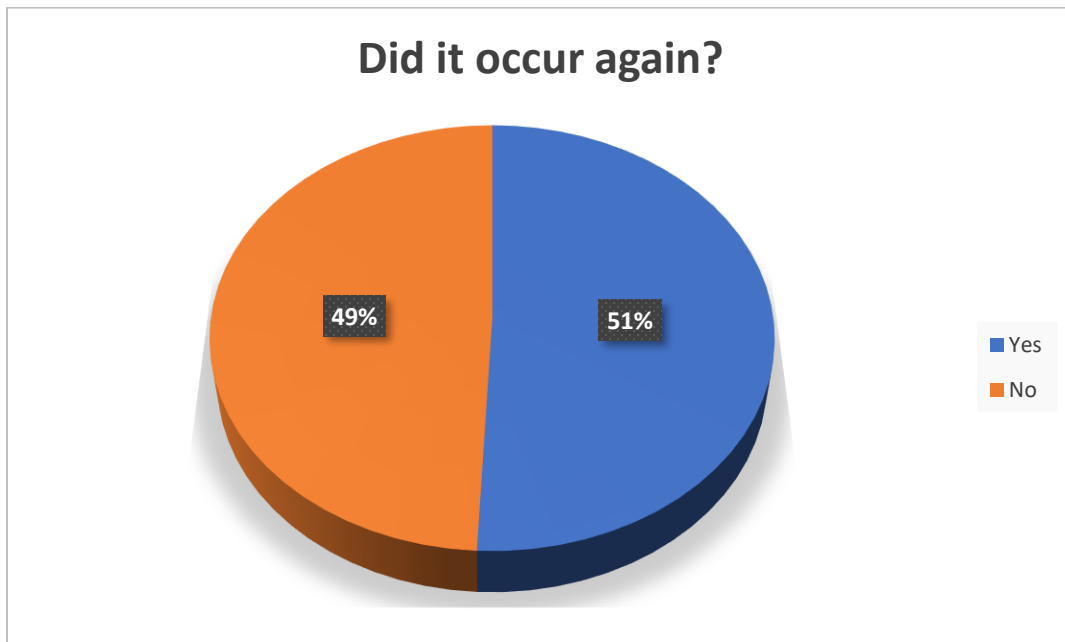


**Figure 13 Duration of the conflict**

### Question 15

#### Did it occur again?

Knowing if it occurs again will give fundamental data needed to justify the intention of doing this research. As a close question, it is defined just by "yes" or "no". Thus, the researcher will identify the percentage of how likely conflict in the participant's perception could arise again even though it was "solved"



**Figure 14 Percentage of the conflict consistency (repetition)**

## Question 16

### Which skills could you identify from your manager by resolving a workplace conflict?

This question will allow us to determine and analyse skills that have been observed and learned from their managers and whether the participants mention mediation skills or not. This will be related to the purpose of the study to know if some mediation skills are applicable or could be applicable and helpful for the managerial position. In case that some skills are similar to mediation skills, are these being effectively applied?



**Figure 15 Skills identified when dealing with conflict**

## Question 17

### How are the conflicts in your workplace managed by your superior?

This question aims to explain those situations where the managers apply their skills and how the conflict is managed. The participants' perceptions will be important because they are also part of the organization or the dispute itself. From now on, all the questions left are open questions. The purpose of this is to not interfere in their way of thinking and narrow some responses. In this manner, the questionnaire will not lead the respondent to a specific answer but only the ones they share. It is expected, though these questions, to get answers that the researcher did not think about. Moreover, it would be helpful for the research and its objectives.



**Figure 16 Percentage of managing conflict by managers**

### Question 18

**Communication is an example of a method of conflict resolution. What other methods does your manager use when resolving conflicts?**

As part of the operational area, the participants can easily identify their managers' skills when dealing with a dispute. Thus, this question aims to get answers that the participants propose as something that their managers unintentionally lack. Also, they could mention which skills or methods their managers use so that these replies could be perfectly analysed with the literature review obtained.



**Figure 17 Different methods identified**

### Question 19

#### Which factors do you consider most important for resolving a conflict and why?

Adding the additional question "Why?". This question intends to know what factors would be necessary when facing conflict. Besides that, it could be a hard question, and the answers could lead to some similarities that were found in the literature review so that it could fit for better analysis in the next chapter.



**Figure 18 Other factors to consider facing conflict**

Factors	No. of participants
Impartiality	10
Empathy	7
Transparency	5
Negotiation	12
Proper communication	17
Open minded	7
Patience	5

**Table 3 No. of participants by mentioning other factors**

<b>Why those factors?</b>	<b>No. of Participants</b>
Avoid repeating the same conflict	14
Help to handle and deal with conflict	12
De-escalation of conflicts	7
Better Management' Leadership	7
Better work environment	7
Staff motivated and happy	4
Customer Service Improvement	4
Customers happy	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>58</b>

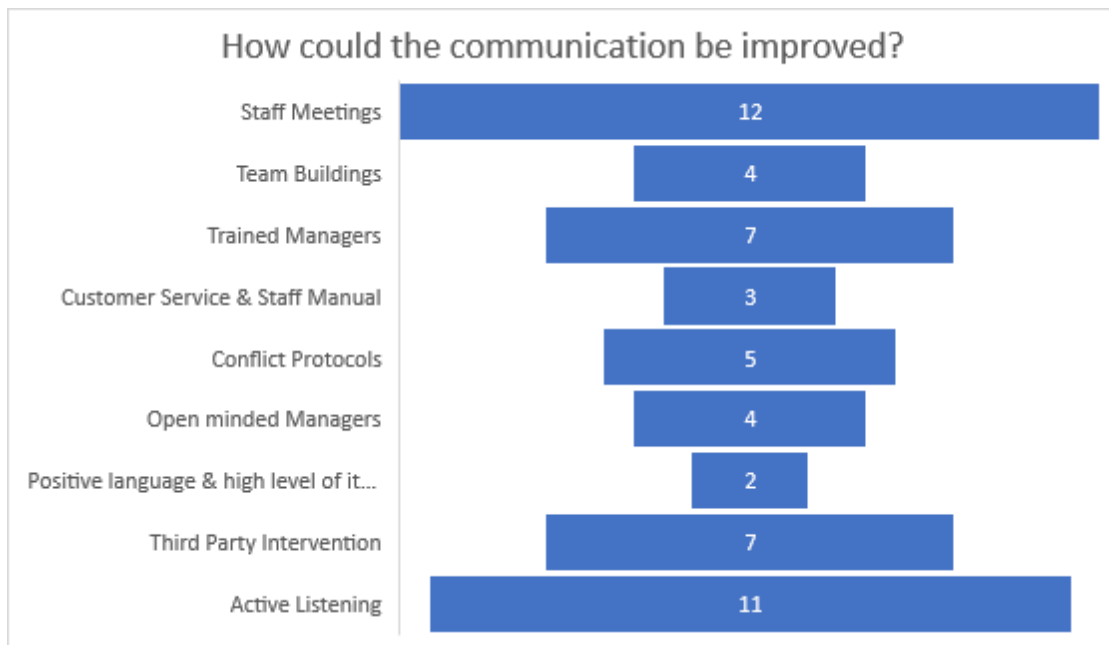
**Table 4 No of the reason why those factors are important**



## Question 20

### How could the communication be improved between managers and staff by facing a conflict in your workplace?

The participants shared ideas about how communication could be improved in the workplace. This question is necessary because it could offer replies that could help managers understand how important communication is within the workplace with their staff. Also, it could be linked to the possibility that mediation skills are helpful for a managerial position depending on what answers the survey got.



**Figure 19 Recommendation to improve communication**

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DATA ANALYSIS (FINDINGS)**

This chapter focuses on the data collected through the surveys. Although the last chapter mentioned the objective of the questions within the questionnaire, that information will play a vital role in relation to the survey's findings. The data collection helps the research in any field to find, discover, and analyse if there are any other ways or differences by knowing the age or nationality of the participants. Background, duration of working in the sector, and how they perceive conflict within the workplace should also be considered. Despite the data collected from the survey, some points of view might be explained regardless of the workplace conflict existing and how managers in that sector solve them. In addition, the participants shared how any communication and managerial skills could be improved. The literature review and the studies of different authors could be compared if those skills are similar to the mediator's skills.

As mentioned above in the methodology chapter, the analysis to be used in this stage will be through the interpretation of the research. Moreover, the literature review plays an important role here. The aim is to observe differences or similarities in what the authors explain; however, the research must be objective in analysing a precise result. Therefore, qualitative and quantitative data are added in this chapter. Furthermore, the survey was divided into open and closed questions; thus, the quantitative data will be analysed using charts and percentages to explain the results clearly. On the other hand, qualitative data is reviewed by objectively interpreting the participants' thoughts and answers.

#### **4.1 Mixed Method**

Using a mix-method, qualitative and quantitative data was collected for the ongoing study to achieve the objectives established for this research. In the following chapter, a mix of the data

mentioned earlier is analysed to analyze if the research question can be answered.

## **4.2 General information**

The general information collected from the survey was age and nationality. These questions sought to ensure that a diversity of age existed within the participants and to ascertain whether their responses affected the quality of the answers due to the age. This is also related to nationalities as cultural diversity could influence the way of a conflict perception.

### **4.2.1 Age**

Based on the general information, the first stage is age. The last was among two options, 18-30 years old, which corresponded 57% of 63 participants. On the other hand, 43% corresponded to people between 31-40 years old, which means that there were responses from both young and adult people, also means that it is beneficial to this research to have different perspectives. Unfortunately, there were no replies from people over 41 years old. This shows that the survey only could collect two of the three possible options.

### **4.2.2 Nationality**

The questionnaires were conducted online to reach more people who work in the hospitality sector. The responses were shocking due to the surveys show that around a third of the people who answered the survey were Mexicans. Moreover, Brazilians and Irish were the most frequent respondents in this questionnaire. This question has shown the diversity in the hospitality sector in Dublin, which could be accompanied by a different perception of conflict by any of them. Moreover, the role of nationality in this research is of interest, as it could show a relationship with the following questions.

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>
<b>Mexican</b>	25
<b>Brazilian</b>	13
<b>Irish</b>	9
<b>Chilean</b>	3
<b>Turkish</b>	2
<b>Indian</b>	2
<b>Japan</b>	2
<b>Croatian</b>	1
<b>Lithuanian</b>	1
<b>Dutch</b>	1
<b>Polish</b>	1
<b>French</b>	1
<b>Belarus</b>	1
<b>German</b>	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>63</b>

**Table 5 Number of participants by nationality.**

### **4.3 Hospitality Sector**

In addition, the level of experience in the sector, the type of work the participants have, type of workplace, among some other options mentioned, could give to the research help understand how the conflict arises in that sector. This has a major influence on the responses by facing conflict management and the experience that comes with it.

### **4.3.1 Duration of work in the hospitality sector**

The overall responses to this question were surprisingly shocking from the researcher's point of view. Four options were given in this question: Less than one year, between 1-3 years, between 3-5 years, and more than five years. It was found that 25% have worked less than a year in the sector; also, 35% of the surveyed chose that they have worked between 1-3 years. This shows that there is a lot of new staff within the participants, such as students. Also, that could be related to the previous analysis of this data since several Latin Americans answered the survey. However, of the 63 participants, 22% have chosen to be working in the sector for over five years. The latter percentage could be helpful in comparison to those who have been working in the sector for a short time. Working more time there could give a different perspective from what this research aims. Finally, the minority of the surveyed answered that they had worked between 3-5 years in the sector, getting an 18% of it.

### **4.3.2 Participant's workplace**

This question gave options such as Restaurant, Bar, Hotel or more than one previously mentioned. Further analysis showed that 49% of the participants are working in a restaurant. Also, there was a correlation between the option of a restaurant and more than one of the previously mentioned. A 22% of the surveyed chose the last option, which includes one or more options. That means that over 62% percent are working either in a restaurant, bar, or hotel. Either because people have two or more jobs, or their workplace includes options such as a bar restaurant in Dublin's city centre. The last two show that 16% of the people work in a bar, which is constructive to get information about conflicts within that workplace. Moreover, 13 % of the participants are working in hotels.

### 4.3.3 Type of work in the workplace

This question has noticeably higher the number of people who work as waitress or waiter, representing around the third part of the surveyed. From that information provided, it was found that the following with the highest participants is from chefs and bartenders. The sum of both represents another third part of the surveyed. Nevertheless, very few mentioned that their job is managerial or supervisor. The last is interesting due to the objective of the research is to know if mediation skills could help managerial positions, and having answers from supervisors and managers would amplify the perception of the analysis in more of the following questions. Another small number, 14 people of the subjects, is reported from receptionists and kitchen porters. The diversity of the types of jobs that answer the surveys help due to their experiences.

Type of Job	No. of Participants
Hotel Manager	2
Bar Manager	2
Bar Supervisor	5
Bartender	9
Chef	9
Floor Supervisor	2
Hostess	2
Waitress / Waiter	18
Kitchen Porter	6
Restaurant Manager	2
Receptionist	8

**Table 6 Number of participants by type of work**

## **4.4 Mediation**

This study aims to identify through the questionnaires aspects related to mediation to achieve the objectives and the research question. The purpose is to establish whether the participants have in mind what mediation is and some skills from mediators that could be identified without knowing that management and mediation skills could be similar or not. Thus, the study measured a variable from the surveyed who answered the following by now having qualitative and quantitative data, compared to the last two sections.

### **4.4.1 Knowledge about mediation**

This section shows the aspects of whether the surveyed know about mediation or not. This question takes a vital part from the research as mentioned in the presentation of data. The majority of the respondents answered that they know about mediation, a 67 % from them. However, 33% left mentioned that they do not know about this ADR. This question's correlation to the following is worth mentioning because it will give a big picture of how the managers manage conflicts in turn. Also, alongside other questions, people knowing about this method would help to respond whether mediation skills would be helpful to managerial positions in the hospitality sector in Dublin.

### **4.4.2 Mediation Protocol**

One of the objectives of the ongoing paper is to analyse how mediation would help solve conflicts within the workplace. Hence, knowing if some protocols exist within these workplaces will lead to achieving part of the objectives.

The most striking result from the data is that 94% of the respondents answered that there is no mediation protocol or similar in their jobs. Nevertheless, these responses give an idea of what is lacking within that sector and help this study. On the other hand, the 6% left correspond to 4 participants who mentioned that a mediation protocol exists. Following the last statement, two

mentioned the protocol (talk to the manager and ask for a mediation protocol). The other one just knows that a protocol exists but does not know how to proceed in that circumstance. Moreover, the one left said that exists a protocol but did not write which one.

An observation that emerges from the data is how many people know about mediation. However, there is nothing close to an ADR method to solve conflicts in their workplaces, which shows that conflicts are resolved internally by the supervisors and managers. Moreover, this could answer the research question of whether mediation skills are helpful.

## **4.5 Conflict**

As mentioned in the literature review, some authors explain that conflict could be either negative or positive. In this section, the questions focused on how conflict impacts the workplace and the perception from the participants when their managers deal with conflict.

### **4.5.1 Dealing with conflict**

It was found that conflict in the respondents' lives is present. However, 72% of them have faced or dealt with it within their workplace. Unexpectedly, however, 28% of the participants responded that they have not dealt with any situation in the workplace. That answer could lead that only the % of the respondents who answered "yes" might give vital data for the research. Although a large percentage of the answers were negative, getting a 28% from the survey does not mean that a conflict did not arise within the workplace. The question aimed to see if the participant was directly involved in the dispute; if not, that does not mean that the surveyed could not share a conflict they knew happened. It is still surprising that almost 30% percent of it has not been involved in a dispute.



#### **4.5.2 How often a conflict arises**

Following the previous idea, the participants were asked about how often a conflict arises. As the study sought to investigate how managers solve a dispute or deal with them, it is relevant to know the periodicity of a dispute within the workplace. This question highlights how often a conflict arises, showing a surprising 51 % of the respondents answering that a conflict arises occasionally. Three more options were given (always, rarely, and never) to get more quantitative data. Hence, it was found that 16% confirm that conflict always arises, meaning that disputes are in the workplace daily. It can be said that the sum of always and occasionally responses make a 67% from the participants, showing that conflict is part of their work lives. This data shows that regarding some statements of some authors could be important the way that those situations are handled. Likewise, the question shows a 32% by answering rarely. Last, a lonely 1% from one participant mentioned that conflicts never happen in his or her workplace.

#### **4.5.3 Dispute situation from the participants**

In this stage of the questionnaire, the question aims to find out what kind of conflict the surveyed faces in the workplace, to compare to answer the research question and achieve the research objectives. Also, it could be related if those situations have a specific way to be handled by managers.

As can be seen in table 2, the most popular answers are mentioned from the survey.

These results need to be interpreted with care due to was found a conflict related to racism. Worth mentioning that the surveys were answered voluntarily, and all personal information was private and anonymous. The research follows the ethical requirements not to be affected. The analysis will be the focus on the other conflicts mentioned.

By getting this answer from the participants, it can be identified to some general questions section

that Dublin is a multi-cultural city, allowing people from different ethnicities and cultures to get a job in the hospitality sector. However, the answers show that racism is one of the issues within the workplace, and it affects the work environment.

Besides that, most of the participants mentioned conflicts related to miscommunication with staff. The last is related to a conflict with job roles and working shifts. This section also presents the perception of lack of management related to leadership, active listening, and communication. Thus, it can be triangled that some answers focus on the same communication issues. Likewise, as is mentioned, language conflicts arise within this stage. That means that communication in different scenarios is important for the surveyed.

However, more of the respondents focused on customer service disputes, personalities disputes, and abuse of power from the manager on duty.

#### **4.5.4 Importance of the conflict**

This section indicates that 67% of the participants found that those conflicts impacted their workplace, leading to low performance and motivation within the staff or even escalating the conflict. However, 33 % of them responded that it did not have a significant impact on them. This section in the questionnaire intends to approach how they face conflict and how they perceive it.

Thus, the following question was asked to justify a little about whether it had an impact or not.

Contrary to expectations in this question, 47 of 63 participants answered the question. (See figure 11) Thus, 10 of 63 mentioned that people quit their jobs due to conflict. Also, four other options were mentioned as the lowest number of answers getting two responses of each. Because it had an impact, the options were a bad workplace environment, bad relationships among the staff, lack of motivation, and bad reviews for the establishment or staff. It is aware that the research had its limitations; this is one of them. These limitations highlight the difficulty of collecting more data

from this question. However, all the limitations are mentioned further.

Finally, and regarding the study's objectives, it was found that 7 of 42 people answered that the dispute had an impact due to bad management decisions and lack of trust in the management. Evidence suggests, as expected, that lack of conflict management affects the workplace, and thus, mediation skills could be helpful in those scenarios.

#### **4.5.5 Conflict Resolution**

This section is relevant because knowing how the conflict was resolved could identify some aspects that go hand in hand with mediation and management skills. However, it was found that 22 of 63 participants mentioned that the conflict had not been resolved yet. That corresponds a 35% of the population. This leaves us with 65% of possible conflict resolution in the respondents' workplace.

Surprisingly, 14 of the 63 answered that the conflict was solved with a brief chat or communication between the parties involved. This caught the researcher's attention because in the answers above, it was found that there is a lack of communication within the workplace. However, in this section, some of the conflicts were solved through that method.

Worth mentioning that 7 of the participants replied that there was management involvement in the conflict. Hence, it can be linked aspects such as communication in managerial characteristics that are having an impact on the investigation

Finally, just two people answered that the conflict was solved naturally, and there was no answer from 4 of the participants.

#### **4.5.6 Duration of the conflict**

Following the previous answers, it shows that 22 of the participants replied that the conflict had not been resolved yet. This shows that a lack of conflict management exists within Dublin's

hospitality sector, which makes the researcher ask if managers can solve disputes within the workplace. Also, 4 of them did not respond. Besides, 16 of the 63 surveyed confirmed that their conflicts happened, and it was solved within a day. Such answers included options such as less than a day, less than 6 hours, less than 30, and 15 minutes.

Nevertheless, six surveyed answered that the conflict was solved within 1-3 months. It also concerns that a conflict in this kind of business takes so long to be solved. Our findings show that the survey collected data from the respondents who said that the conflict took over three months to solve.

#### **4.5.7 A constant dispute situation**

In addition, 49% of the participants answered that the conflict did not happen again. On the other hand, the other 51% responded that it happened again. In conclusion, this last could be analysed that the managers have done nothing to avoid these conflicts all over again.

### **4.6 Managerial skills**

The following analysis is focused on the questions of managerial skills when facing conflict.

#### **4.6.1 Managers skills**

The results show that 14 of 63 respondents did not see any skills from their manager, concluding that 22% could not identify anything from their superiors. However, 24 of 63 could identify effective communication and active listening as skills during a dispute. Only 4 of 63 identified that respect and patience were used by their managers.

#### **4.6.2 Conflict management**

This section presents how managers manage conflicts. Likewise, it is shown that 19% of the participants think that the conflict is managed excellently. Other 33% of the participants follow this idea by saying that they are handled well. However, within the options of poor and very poor,

there is 27% of the population. Although 21 % of the respondents mentioned that the conflicts are barely acceptable within their workplace, there is a gap or line that proves that conflict could be managed in a good or bad way. The last answer could be hard to analyse due to barely acceptable could be different from each participant. Despite some responses above, management solves conflict, showing that the lack of communication and active listening affects the outcome.

#### **4.6.3 Other methods of conflict resolution**

Different methods are used to solve conflicts; ten of the participants shared that active listening is one of the most recognizable skills from their managers, followed by communication with 8 of the 63 respondents. However, ten surveyed showed that there are no other skills seen from their superiors. Despite that some answers have shown that the conflict has not been resolved yet, it confirms that communication and active listening are the main aspects when solving conflict. Two more aspects to consider in this section are that 7 of the participants emphasised that understanding conflict and the counterparts are elemental to solve the conflict. On the one hand, 7 of the 63 explained that negotiation is vital to help reach a good outcome for the parties. In a small percentage, 5% of the surveyed showed that emotional intelligence must be considered.

#### **4.6.4 Factors to consider when facing conflict**

Undoubtedly, communication has been the most repetitive aspect of the analysis. When the participants were asked about other factors to consider when facing conflict, 27% argued that proper communication is the main factor. Followed by negotiation with 19%, empathy with 11%, impartiality with 16%. Negotiation is considered one of the ADR. Meanwhile, impartiality is one of the skills and aspects of a mediator. It ends with 11% being open-minded and finishing with 16% shared with patience and transparency. The majority agreed that effective communication is the most important factor.

Within this section, it was asked why those aspects. The results were inadequate due to only 58 of 63 answered this question. However, there is some data helpful for the research. The majority believes that those aspects will help to avoid the conflict over again. Also, it will help to handle and deal with conflict at work. Two more interesting aspects were mentioned. The first one would help de-escalate the conflict, an aspect that managers in the hospitality sector do not know how to do—the second one, to improve the management leadership.

#### **4.6.5 Communication improvement**

When asked about how communication could be improved, the answers were the following. By getting 55 answers of 63 from the respondents, a proposal for improving communication is mainly by staff meetings. 12 of 55 assure that staff meetings could help to know and improve relationships within the workplace. Also, and as mentioned before, active listening is the second with more votes. 11 of the 55 think that active listening can improve that lack of communication. What is interesting is the sharing of the idea that managers need more training to deal with conflict. This helps the research because it is one of the objectives either to propose a course of action to get different skills or even improve them. The study showed that managers in this sector are not fully trained. Moreover, another proposal is by using a third party who is not involved in the business or even someone trained to be impartial when an intern conflict arises.

In conclusion, this chapter focused on the analysis of the surveys collected. It was shown how communication and active listening are important aspects of resolving conflict in Dublin's hospitality sector. There were more findings surprisingly found, such as a high percentage know about mediation. Despite that only 63 people answered the survey, it was helpful for the objectives, although not for a deeper analysis. The data collected was enough to discuss it in the following chapter compared to what was found in the literature review. However, it supports more the main

idea of what the research was the intention to find.

#### **4.7 Findings**

The main purpose of this research was to assess if mediation skills are helpful to managerial positions in the workplace in the hospitality sector in Dublin. In order to achieve the objectives, it was necessary to focus on different stages of conflict and how managers deal with them. Hence, with the help of a survey, data could be collected so that the researcher could analyse it and get a conclusion from it. Also, the literature review within this dissertation focused mainly on conflict, mediation, workplace conflict, and managerial and mediation skills. Regarding the previously mentioned, the paper analysed the importance of mediation within a workplace conflict, not only as an external method of conflict resolution but also as a possibility to acquire those skills to deal in a better way with conflict.

It established a connection between mediation skills, workplace mediation, managerial skills, and workplace management to be detailed accurately to know if the research question could be achieved.

Communication, active listening, and even negotiation were aspects and factors to reach a better outcome when facing a conflict. However, the study was affected by the lack of approach from people answering the survey; this will be mentioned with details in the limitations section.

Moreover, the research methodology helped collect the data that was correlated in the literature review of the current paper. Thus, the first research objective was to determine how mediation skills could be helpful for managerial positions. The findings indicated that 27 % of the respondents believed that proper communication is helpful to resolve a conflict. Surprisingly, 19% of them also believe that negotiation is necessary for those situations. Negotiation, however, is another ADR method. The use of active listening also took part in the questionnaire. The surveyed

did not know what mediation skills existed. Nevertheless, some of them mentioned mediation skills that could help managers when resolving disputes.

Another objective was to analyse how mediation as an ADR would help by solving conflict. That support comes from the literature review that some authors state that it is helpful. Within the surveys, a few questions were asked that the answers could lead to the answer of this objective. There was no question about “if mediation is needed or helpful” if no one had been in mediation before. However, it was found that some answers were related to mediation when people replied to the involvement of a third party within the questionnaires.

Notwithstanding, the results show that mediation might work in different workplaces but not in the businesses that the hospitality sector in Dublin has. That means that despite a possible intervention of a third party in those businesses, the surveyed explained that the manager inline would rather face the situation among staff or customers.

Some findings would seem to show that mediation skills are needed in the perception of the participants. But, again, there is evidence that supports that with literature review and responses.

Finally, it was chosen not to ask something related to capacitation or similar because the participants could have some bias or no knowledge about that. On the other hand, the answers have shown that training for the managers in that sector would be beneficial. Therefore, the objective achieved is to propose an approach of how mediation skills could be obtained.

Given that our findings are based on a limited number of participants, the results from such analyses shall be considered relevant despite not reaching the number of people surveyed. Also, the amount of quality replies confirms that our findings are significant for a discussion in the next chapter.



## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

A discussion will be presented in the present chapter, where the data is gathered from early stages related to the research question and objectives. Here it will explain and discuss everything that was found in literature, theories, data collection, and the analysis done in the previous chapter. It will give a big picture of how this dissertation is presented.

The current research aims to analyse if mediations skills can be helpful to managerial positions to solve a conflict in the hospitality sector in Dublin. It also aims to answer the objectives of what skills these would be and if mediation would be helpful when facing a conflict in this sector.

The previous chapter showed that some skills that managers in Dublin use are related to the mediator's ones. Furthermore, such analysis showed a significant relation to what people perceive important skills that are important for managers.

#### **5.1 Discussion in relation to mediation skills in managerial positions**

Mediation is one of the main aspects of this study. Hence, as part of this paper's objectives and research question, mediations skills were analysed and researched in previous chapters to find out if mediators' skills would be helpful for managerial positions in the hospitality sector in Dublin.

Thus, when people were asked which methods their managers use, the main aspects were communication and active listening. The last could be related to one of the skills that a mediator may use in a mediation.

Following the above, these elements must effectively deal with conflict. Supporting this idea, Sen (2009) remarks that listening is one form of communication. Linking the previous statement by the author, the surveyed answered that active listening is a way to improve their communication at their workplace to avoid conflict. Also, a staff meeting was part of their answers, so it could be

mentioned that communication plays an important role when dealing with conflict. The last follows Jennings' (2007) observation about the importance of meetings because it helps build relationships, focus on professional development, and, most importantly, solves problems and make problems.

In line with the research question, managers' skills might need improvement are followed by other aspects. Promoting effective feedback helps to a positive way of communication. (PON, 2021)

Moreover, after mentioning the above, meetings are relevant to solve conflicts or improve communication. Hence, Svennevig (2012) remarks that it is possible achieving a better meaning between the participants by using a meeting frame to accomplish verbal and non-verbal aspects. The last within the communication; making a meeting a good approach to solving conflict after work, avoiding it, or de-escalating the problem.

The mediation and management skills results must suggest that active listening and good communications seem to be the perfect tool to solve a conflict. However, one observation from the data comparison was that those skills related to the ones that a mediator has yet do not help solve or avoid a conflict dispute.

Contrary to the researcher's objectives, the survey showed that understanding conflict, using external mediation, negotiation could lead to a better outcome in those disputes.

Our results also have some similarities with Olang (2017) that negotiation is a helpful tool to solve a conflict. Likewise, the same author in previous literature mentioned mediation, communication, and active listening in a list of aspects needed in workplace conflict resolution management.

In addition, some results are lent support to previous findings in the literature. Knowing how managers manage conflict from barely acceptable to very poor showed that over 50% of those results are not well handled. Hence, following the objectives of this research, it could be found

that managers could use an interactive mediation skill, which will help the manager to think out of the disputants' limits and help them through impartiality and their own experience. (Crawley & Graham, 2002)

Following the previous idea, managers could get or improve some of those skills mentioned in early stages that could help them deal with conflict to solve or avoid them.

## **5.2 Discussion in relation to Mediation**

In contrast to earlier findings (Weinstein, 2001), the survey showed that despite mediation or the intervention of a third party were mentioned and as follows with the author's idea, apparently is not a popular idea or tool to deal with conflict in this specific sector. However, the improvement or acquirement of skills used in mediation is mentioned within the survey and problem-solving, impartiality, and understanding conflict. It can be discussed that understanding conflict goes alongside communication because the interpretation of the dispute from all its stages will help get a solution. Thus, according to Jeong (2008) is not only the goals, issues, strategies, and parties that may indicate the conflict's nature but by mentioning the key elements from factors such as interest, values, and needs that could lead to improvement in the parties' behaviour and to avoid the escalation of the conflict.

Some inadequate answers were shown about factors that must be considered when facing conflict. Nevertheless, there are no signs of how these factors could be related to mediation by being helpful in this sector in Dublin.

Following the idea of Schreier (2002), she argues that mediation is not needed for managerial positions skills; however, she also remarks that it helps to have an emotional intelligence with subordinates when dealing with conflict. Thus, the survey shows some findings such as empathy and impartiality, making the parties in dispute feel more comfortable facing conflict.

However, according to Crawley & Graham (2002), managers might not be good mediators, but some mediation skills could help. The previous chapter showed that around 33% of the conflicts that arose within the workplace had not been solved. Also, 15 of the participants mentioned that it took over a month to be solved. Moreover, 67% of the surveyed affirmed that it had a big impact on the workplace.

These results support the idea of Bennett (2020) that a manager must be trained in conflict resolution and get proper support, in this case, from the business owner. These statements follow the researcher's expectation of finding that there is lacking training in conflict resolution.

During the research, it was found that mediation, despite that being known by the participants, is helpful to solve and deal with conflict in the workplace. Some problems that have arisen within the workplace in the hospitality sector in Dublin shown by the participants are:

- Misunderstanding among staff
- Language conflict
- Abuse of power

As in the chapter of data presentation, the respondents mentioned more issues that they faced. In relation to other questions within the questionnaire, it could be seen that managers better solve those conflicts than the intervention of an external third party. These results do not fit with the research's objective that mediation would be helpful for this sort of workplace. The data contributed a clearer understanding that despite mediation being an amazing tool to solve conflicts in Ireland, within the hospitality sector in Dublin, it seems not suitable for the small and medium businesses considered in this study.

One implication is that the owners might not be willing to train their managerial staff as a small business, perhaps for the lack of intention to improve their business or not a worthy investment.

From experience, it can be seen that there are too many gaps that managers could improve. Staff would instead solve their issues between people they do know when impartiality exists. It can be explained in Chapter 1 that staff would prefer any intervention from their managers than externals. While previous research has focused on mediation, these results demonstrated that negotiation could help alongside mediation to solve a conflict in this sector.

As mediation has not been proven to be the best tool to solve conflict within these businesses, improving skills and adding other tools could help managers and owners improve the business in the hospitality sector.

For future research, it could be challenging to existing theories or works that mention that mediation would be beneficial at any stage. However, as proposed in this research, mediation skill could be perfectly adopted and improved for managerial positions to help improve the work environment, conflict solving, and business growth.

## CONCLUSION

The study shows that as part of this dissertation's objectives, the main skills in managers were identified. The ones to be improved are communication and active listening. Moreover, the skills of mediation that managers could use in the hospitality sector in Dublin were mentioned. This work has led to conclude that some management skills are similar to those used by mediators. However, evidence from the study suggests that those can be improved but not necessarily asking for the intervention of a third party or mediation within the workplace.

Despite that mediation has been found as a good approach to deal with conflict and practical at the moment of solving, it was found that mediation within restaurants, hotels, and bars within the area of Dublin is not well seen to be the best approach when solving conflicts

Although, the results in the chapter of analysis have shown that the surveyed believe that improving managerial positions could lead to a better way to solve a conflict.

However, it can be stated that these results could be small due to the limitations of finding more responses through the questionnaires. Despite the limitation of this research, some findings suggest that other methods could better help the managers when facing conflict. For example, negotiation was not a primary goal in this research, but surprisingly, it was mentioned a few times in the participants' answers. As part of the master of Dispute Resolution, negotiation is part of one of the ADR.

In addition, the results have not confirmed previous research and literature on how mediation could help in the workplace, specifically in Dublin's hospitality sector. Despite this, it serves to know that some surveyed focused mainly on methods or ways to improve face-to-face interaction. Thus, even though these results differ from some previous studies mentioned in the literature review,

mediation is a good method to deal with conflict, but adapting mediation skills by managers apparently would be more beneficial for the workplace in Dublin.

A consequence of the approach was affected in the results because it was not reached the among of surveyed expected. However, it can be said that if their responses had been more, the research could have been more interesting. Also, it could be a different approach than it could have been used by using interviews instead of only questionnaires. Nevertheless, due to what was explained in the methodology chapter, the surveys were the most accurate for the study.

Some questions that arose were the possibility of having investigated negotiation instead of mediation as the primary method through its skill to help managers solve conflict within the hospitality sector. In some of the answers were mentioned that negotiation could be one method to solve conflict efficiently. That arose the question to the researcher at some stage if it would have been better to study that aspect instead of the current one.

Despite that, the investigation stayed on track. Due to all the results obtained and what was found in the literature review, some recommendations that the researcher's perspective could help improve the management.

Some recommendations are by getting a course or training where managers could understand more about these concepts and how they impact the workplace. Some aspects that it could be taught in it should:

- How to respond to conflict and disputes at work
- Basis of workplace mediation & mediation
- Phases of a mediation process
- A process of mediation and the skills to must use in it.
- Managing emotions and improvement of active listening

- Effective communication
- Problem-solving
- Bargaining
- Leadership and know how to delegate.

Moreover, future studies can benefit from this study in order to research how negotiation could help managers in the sector when solving conflicts. Also, by using interviews, the data collection could be different from the perspective of this study. Through his experience in the sector, the researcher contributed to the knowledge of the aspects mentioned in the literature, and the results were linked with the ones in his workplace. Therefore, despite the bias that it could happen, everything done in this paper was intended to be as more unbiased as possible for the matter of the research.

It can be concluded that conflicts lead to turnover, and its cost usually is enormous for the organizations. For example, this could lead to a high cost of losing or even replacing an employee; it might be as high as that employee's annual salary. (Buon,2014)

Hence, managers with the proper training and adaptation capability will help the businesses in this sector improve. The researcher matters because there is no focus on improving how to deal with conflicts in Dublin's small or medium businesses. All businesses must follow a hierarchy of how to do things, and like most companies around the globe, the employees are the most valuable resource to keep a business up. Despite conflicts with customers, co-workers, or others, it is relevant to be prepared for it, but even more, be proactive. My own experience and the results obtained in the research shows there is no proactivity to prevent conflict but to deal with it. However, it is not enough to deal with it because the result showed that most of the conflicts within the workplace had not been resolved yet. Mediation has been proof of a good approach in a



different level of business. However, mediation skills are better accepted to help managers solve and deal with conflict in the hospitality sector in Dublin.

This paper highlighted that effective communication as a skill for managers would help them to improve the conflict management they do.

## LIMITATIONS

Like any study, limitations were part of this project. The first and most stressful was to change the subject due to the lack of a small population to do any surveys or questionnaires. It was thought that it would be hard to reach the population, so the decision was made to change the project. Due to the pandemic, mental welfare was also included. Finally, through some personal problems and the ones the participants could have had.

Even though there was enough information about the current topic, some articles or chapters could not have been reached because the researcher had to pay for it. That makes a bit of a struggle for the investigation.

Another limitation was the time to develop such work. Despite being told when the dissertation shall be done, it stops you from doing some things, such as the questionnaire draft. Personally, it took me a few weeks to make it done and have a good perception from my supervisor to move on to my investigation.

The language was a limitation within the study, as I have never done any paper of this magnitude before. It was worse to do it in English when it is not my first language. However, it was a positive challenge for me to prove what I am made of.

Finally, one of the most important limitations was the people who did not respond to my survey. After waiting around a month to see if my questionnaire was good enough to move on, it took me almost a month to reach over 60 people to answer it. However, the answers helped enough for the research from the researcher's perspective.

## REFLECTIONS

There was an interesting experience that I got from this dissertation. Personally, because I never thought to study a Master. Secondly, to study for a Master in a different language. I proved myself in any stage. My mindset changed radically. I can say that I wrote over fifteen thousand words in this research. Some moments I felt down, I believed that I could not make it. However, I realized that this is a once lifetime opportunity. If I failed, it would have been because of me. If I failed, I would learn. So I took this work as a challenge for me.

Having a background in management, a guy with a big passion in sports, working in a sector where conflict arises every moment. It took me to change from a subject and work related to sports to another that I was not having that feeling for it. However, I learnt a lot through the last couple of months. I can even confirm that I got more knowledge from my surveys, from talking to people about my dissertation, than last year in college. I do not take merit from what I saw during my lectures, but this experience made me grow in many aspects.

I found it interesting how many authors and people have different points of view on the same subject. It motivated me to keep going on what I do and know. Despite that it was not the expected amount, the data collected was a challenge because it could affect my work. Nevertheless, I feel motivated that in the future, with more time and having this experience, I could improve this investigation. I wish I could have more people answering the survey and more information from different sources.

Changing the perception that there is always a way to improve in the workplace was the reason to do this dissertation, I am entirely sure that it can be better with a little more commitment to communicate.

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