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# **Psychological violence in the workplace:**

## **Possibilities of ADR in this context**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Psychological violence is a broad term used to describe a variety of behaviours. In the workplace context, this type of abuse is frequently classified as bullying, harassment, and discrimination. These are actions that tend to be repetitive in nature and cause a negative impact, not only on the victim's physical and mental health but also on the organization in general. Even though there are significant changes in the way companies are managing and preventing those conflicts, it is still often present in the workplace context. Considering that, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) has been gaining the attention of organizations because of its efficiency in solving conflicts, as it is not as costly and time-demanding as the traditional court system. However, some challenges involve implementing those methods in the workplace context, such as the lack of awareness and the number of cases of psychological violence not being reported. Therefore, an online questionnaire was undertaken in order to collect data to support this exploratory research, which aims to comprehend aspects involving psychological violence in the workplace and the possibilities of ADR in this context. This research was undertaken supported by quantitative methods and was written based on Interpretivism philosophy and deductive approach. The results demonstrate that psychological violence is consistently present in the workplace environment, negatively impacting employers and employees, so it is noticeable the importance of adopting preventive measures. Even though it is possible to find some objections in relation to its implementation, by adopting a critical overview, ADR can bring positive outcomes for disputes in this context.

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# **PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE: POSSIBILITIES OF ADR IN THIS CONTEXT**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Psychological violence in the workplace environment is frequently described as unwanted attention and violent behaviours that significantly impact who is suffering this aggression. Bullying, harassment and discrimination or other types of violent language are frequent expressions of this violence in the workplace context, and those tend to be repetitive in nature. Even though a single action can represent psychological violence, the literature suggests that repeated behaviours cause the most harm to the victims (Meyer and Kirsten, 2014).

Stress, anxiety, low self-esteem and other mental health disorders are symptoms frequently presented by the victims. Those actions affect not only those who are suffering the violence but also the organization, directly and indirectly. The loss of productivity, sick absenteeism, time to manage the conflict and expenses with lawsuits are just some of the effects that companies may face when a dispute arises.

Unquestionably, psychological violence in the workplace environment has been underestimated in the past and frequently has been receiving more attention. According to Martino (2002), this phenomenon is currently emerging as a priority issue at the workplace and creating the importance of discussing new approaches and methods of dealing with this type of conflict.

As a consequence of this different perception of workplace violence, organizations have been making changes in relation to developing strategies to find an efficient and satisfying resolution to conflicts that emerge within the organization. Therefore, this dissertation aims to comprehend methods that seem to be increasingly gaining attention in this context, such as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). It is understood that those methods tend to have many



benefits and positive aspects involving cases of psychological violence. However, they need to be critically evaluated beforehand in order to comprehend which ADR method is more appropriate for each case.

Having said that, this dissertation aims to comprehend the phenomenon of psychological violence and the subjective aspects involving the victims and companies. Moreover, this dissertation intends to understand the different types of violence such as bullying, discrimination and harassment in the workplace, as well as identification of possibilities and challenges in adopting alternative dispute resolution in those cases.

The three main objectives of this dissertation are:

To comprehend the implications of subjective aspects involving the different types of psychological violence in workplace context;

To understand the impact of those type of violence on an individual's life as well as in companies;

And to investigate the possibilities and challenges of adopting ADR methods in cases involving psychological violence in the workplace.

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the literature review, also known as secondary research, which critically addresses important data that is used as a foundation for this dissertation. In this chapter, topics such as subjective aspects involving conflict and psychological violence, ADR, and its use involving workplace violence and the comprehension of the different types of violence are discussed.

The second chapter will address the methodology and methods. The author collected the primary data through online surveys sent to workers from different countries, all based in Ireland. The writer adopted quantitative methods, interpretivist philosophy and deductive approaches. These methods were judged appropriate by the author of this research. From that, insightful thoughts were developed throughout different chapters of this dissertation. However,

it is essential to mention that there were limitations related to time and resources available. Once this study was written during the pandemic of Covid-19 and libraries were not working, face-to-face interviews were not possible. Therefore, the author suggests that different approaches such as interviews and qualitative methods should be undertaken for better understandings and better results.

Using those methods previously described, the third chapter aims to present the data, the fourth chapter is about data analysis and findings and the last chapter, called discussion, aims to integrate all the information previously presented through a critical overview of the primary and secondary data.

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter it is intended to explore the concepts of conflict, psychological violence in the workplace and the effects of bullying, harassment, discrimination, as well as other types of violence. An overview of Alternative Dispute Resolution in the workplace context together with negotiation, mediation and arbitration are then considered, finishing with a look at the relevant topic of preventing psychological violence in the workplace.

### **2.1 Conflict**

Firstly, it is crucial to understand some concepts that permeate violence and facilitate comprehension of this phenomenon, such as conflict. A conflict is usually the result when people have incompatible goals or ideas. It can happen for many reasons such as cultural differences, different political interests, values, beliefs or just divergent views about a determined topic. To understand a conflict, it is important to understand what is behind it, which beliefs and values people involved in a dispute have, their history, their interests and the relationship between those (Wallenstein, 2019).

Even though conflicts are often seen as unfavourable and challenging for many people, they

also create possibilities in some situations where something needs to change. It is expected that people tend to avoid the stressful adversities of a conflict. However, a pattern of repetition can be created until someone manifests and takes actions in relation to it. An example of that can be when someone keeps addressing offensive jokes to colleagues in the workplace. This person will likely keep up this behaviour until someone manifests some unhappiness about it. This avoidance of dealing with the situation can facilitate more conflict to arise, and in some cases, a conflict may last for years. At some point, people even forget why everything started, and the issue reaches other dimensions, generating high levels of stress for those involved (Hanaway, 2020). In relation to the example previously mentioned, it is crucial to think that the person who is offending the colleagues may be passing through conflicts in her/his personal life and projecting that in the workplace.

This projection is a very well-known concept in psychoanalysis and is frequently used by human beings to protect the ego from suffering. This process happens in unconscious levels and is a mechanism of defence that people tend to use when they are not ready to face an internal conflict, so they project that on to others (Freud, 1936).

A conflict can be much more about self-defence than it may be about aggression (Hanaway, 2020). According to the writer, people tend to miss the point if only try to minimize this type of violence in order to solve a conflict without looking and considering all roots and the complexities involved in that. A dispute says a lot about emotions and does not rely on logic; otherwise, it would be possible to find logical and rational ways for solving a conflict. However, in reality, it is much more complex once people tend to be threatened by the feeling that are deep within them. It could even be considered superficial to reduce those complexities that involve a conflict into something logical once it is essentially emotional.

When it comes to conflicts in the workplace context, some aspects need to be considered. Firstly, this environment can be unpredictable. Different people with different backgrounds,

ethnicities, and interests are together in the same environment, pursuing their employer's interests and personal objectives. Hence, issues can arise among employees, employers, co-workers or even an independent contractor or worker, and for different reasons. However, the most common employment issues are unfair dismissal, bullying, discrimination, and harassment (Liddle, 2017).

With that in mind, it is also essential to consider that a conflict can affect many levels of people's lives, causing anxiety, stress and even depression. That is why a dispute has internal (which tend to be a conflict of emotions and feelings) and external dimensions. Considering that, ADR can be promising to recognize both and deal not only just with the conflict by itself but with the psychological issues that may arise. From understanding those different dimensions of a conflict, it is possible to think about the alternative dispute and resolution as non-adversarial ways of resolving disputes. According to Hanaway (2020), it is not the role of the professional who facilitates the process to investigate the "truth" behind an event or the facts. There may be different interpretations by different parties, according to their perceptions and beliefs. Understanding those differences and considering the emotions behind a dispute is essential from the facilitator, whether he/she is a mediator, negotiator or arbitrator. By doing that, the professional is able to comprehend what is relevant in every dispute.

## **2.2 Psychological violence in the workplace**

To understand psychological violence, it is vital to comprehend that aggressive behaviours are mostly a product of the personal predispositions of an individual, as well as other precipitating situational determinants. Those predispositions are frequently associated and influenced by biological, genetic and environmental influences that result in the development of emotional characteristics and cognitive processing (Academy, 2015). As a consequence of that, some individuals grow up more likely to have aggressive behaviour than others. That happens because human beings are influenced by many external and internal factors from the moment

of conception during pregnancy and early childhood.

Thus, it is possible to comprehend aggressive behaviours from their roots, in childhood, which is a period of life where primordial functions of the brain and body are passing through development. Physical, emotional and psychological aspects are generating, especially in early childhood and pregnancy. The consequences of those aspects that are developing in this period of life can last a life-long. That says a lot about the importance of providing children with access to a healthy, non-aggressive environment and access to education so they can develop their cognition in the most appropriate way (Coogan, 2011). However, unfortunately, it is essential to mention that a massive part of the population lives in a situation of vulnerability, where children are exposed to poverty, violence and without the conditions necessary to develop their cognition. The consequence of that can be seen in their adult life as a negative developmental outcome. From that, it is possible to understand that aggression is most likely to develop in children who grow in environments that are surrendered by aggression.

Another important fact to be mentioned is that aggressive behaviours are also related to emotional states regarding violence. People in higher aroused states tend to have poorer processors in dealing with situations in life (Bushman, 2016). In other words, when people are passing through stressful moments and are under pressure, they are likely to use more instinctive and basic mechanisms (as a reactive response), and they behave aggressively to deal with other situations in life. It is possible to find psychologists dividing that as a common type of aggression and when the aggressor only has the intention to hurt someone else.

Concerning violence, that refers to a complex, historical phenomenon shaped by different cultural views of justice and morality. By comprehending that, it is possible to understand that there are different conceptions of violence, depending on the culture. An example of that is that violence against homosexual people just started to gain visibility in western countries over the last decades. Social and legal aspects directly influence how some behaviours are seen and

judged (Academy, 2015).

Psychological violence is a broad term used to describe conduct, hostile behaviour, and aggression that can injure and harm the victim. Unlike physical violence, which can be subtle and too complex for some people to recognize, it is often the invisibility that set those two apart. Even without physical contact, this type of violence is likely to cause serious harm for those who are suffering. This can happen in different environments, such as in relationships and the workplace. According to McKenzie (2015) until recent times, little was known about the complexities and how this type of violence could affect an individual's health. Studies have shown how passing through a stressful situation such as psychological violence can involve many levels of life. Suppose the violence happens in the workplace, for example. In that case, the damage can go beyond professional life, affecting relationships and other aspects of physical and mental health, in some cases even leading to mental disorders and high levels of stress.

Concerning the healthy environment previously described, that can be defined as a place where the organization supports the social, physical, personal, among other needs of employees. McKenzie (2015), maintains that even though legislation is available to support and guide employers and employees, the workplace environment has been increasingly characterized by conflicts involving different types of psychological aggressions, which tend to generate stress between the workers.

For a significant amount of people, their jobs are directly related to their 'self-worth'. When an important issue such as psychological violence is not appropriately addressed, employees internalize that and tend to see the professional environment as a threat, leading to high-stress levels. Seagriff (2010) refers to stress, which can be defined as the emotion or mental condition usually experienced by an individual in response to a threat (stressor). This stress in the workplace is one of the most present health-related problems in EU countries. It is directly

related to poor physical health, which can increase work-related accidents and a significant increase in people committing suicide. Therefore, many studies have shown how an interpersonal conflict in the workplace can affect not just relations between the workers of the same environment but also their personal experiences and relations (McKenzie, 2015).

This stress can lead to mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression. According to CIPD (2008), mental health issues had become the main reason for long-term absence in the workplace. The consequences of that can be associated with many negative aspects, such as its effect on the individual's career and their relations outside of the workplace, especially when workers need a period off from work.

Hence, a circle of pressure and discord can be generated. If the situation becomes formalized and legal procedures are necessary, this process can significantly cost the individual. Given the multi-factorial nature of the mental disorders that can be caused by workplace stress, it is likely that the negative impact of that is related to the work environment and the family of those individuals and social relations of him/her (Wang, 2006). According to Hornis and Gabriel (2000), mental health disorders caused by stress in the workplace environment have been underestimated. And it is worth mentioning that they significantly impact different aspects of an individual's life, such as physical and mental health, frequently manifested in depression, burnout syndrome, high blood pressure, and heart diseases. Besides, that can affect the relationship between colleagues and lead this environment to be more likely to have conflicts. From the companies' or employers' perspective, the impact of psychological violence can be seen once unresolved disputes tend to have a high cost, direct and indirect. According to CIPD (2008), formal proceedings such as grievances tend to be time-consuming. This involves financial cost, and the time that could be invested in managing the business is converted into time dealing with the conflict. The time and money necessary to manage a conflict involves many resources from the company's side. Furthermore, the workers tend to lose focus on

corporate goals once they are distracted by the conflict. Besides, aspects such as the low productivity of workers when they are under stress caused by aggression are also considerable. It is also important to mention that traditional models of dealing with conflicts in this context, such as grievance and disciplinary hearings, focus on deciding if people are right or wrong. In those cases, people tend to increase their stress levels generated from the situation and the intimidating environment, such as the court (Liebmann, 2000).

Violence in the workplace can also be physical; however, it is possible to comprehend that the most frequent type of violence in the workplace is psychological aggression, manifested in different ways such as bullying, harassment, and discrimination (Steffgen, 2008). Those are often present in the workplace environment and directly affect the health of those involved and their productivity at work. As a consequence, it is possible to identify serious disorders such as burnout or post-traumatic disorder.

Even though harassment, discrimination and bullying are often associated with psychological violence in the workplace, it is essential to mention that dividing and defining different types of violence creates and enables the risk of ignoring the actual harm that a situation can cause. This division allows people to reshape their behaviour in order to classify it as something other than violence. (Schindeler, Ransley and Reynald, 2020). However, it is necessary to give each case special attention to comprehend seriousness. Suppose there is the intention from one of the parties to cause harm. In that case, even though it is a challenge to prove this intention, a significant amount of people with aggressive attitudes do not assume responsibility for their actions and deny any purpose of causing harm to others. Unlike physical violence, which is very unlikely to happen without intention, the aggressor may give excuses and deny what happened in verbal abuse.

The definition for this type of abuse can be simply resumed in any conduct, which creates fear, anxiety and distrust in the workplace. In this context and organizations, psychological



violence has frequently been present within workers from different organizations worldwide. However, recognizing this problem in this specific environment can involve high costs for organizations and much more than recognition; it demands actions. And even though it is not hard to find pieces of evidence of the relation of psychological violence in the workplace with suicide, posttraumatic disorder and burnout syndrome, very little has been done in relation to preventing it (Academy, 2015).

It is worth mentioning that workplace violence affects society as a whole. That happens because the events and the consequences are not isolated but connected. The harm caused by violent events tends to go beyond what is done to the victim and all the financial cost that a company may face but affects trust and the sense of community between the workers (Love, 2015). However, it is also important to mention that employers must provide a secure environment to their workers, free of threats.

There is a sort of contradiction in cases involving bullying and harassment when it comes to their definitions. In both cases, there is the requirement of a pattern of abusive attitudes. That means that it is impossible to establish an intervention or protection for those suffering from violence (Schindeler, Ransley and Reynald, 2020). That creates the necessity of a critical overview of cases of abuse. Also, it enables the need for more inclusive definitions to protect those at risk and who may be victimized by taking actions and approaches that incorporate the different labels given for violence in this context.

### **2.3 Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, and other types of violence**

It is possible to identify a broad number of synonyms to describe this type of violence in the workplace context. Aggression, intimidation, harassment are some common words that are directly linked to bullying. It indicates behaviour from a group of people or an individual against someone. According to Gillen et al.,(2017) bullying in the workplace can also be described as repeated incidents that can offend and humiliate a person or group. It is usually

related to actions that can cause psychological damage and isolate an individual, and it tends to be characterized by those behaviours in repetition.

Like other types of violence, bullying is related to cultural aspects and how the different workers behave towards each other. Regarding that, it is noticeable that some people will face even violent situations to try to fit in a group in the workplace, in many cases, leading to the perception of bullying as something normal (Gillen et al., 2017).

For employers, the consequence of bullying in the workplace can have a tremendous financial cost. That is a consequence of the lower productivity of victims, who can no longer perform their jobs in the same way. People passing through stressful situations in the workplace environment tend to be de-motivated, without satisfaction and lowered productivity as a frequent outcome. Also, it is possible to identify the relation between bullying and sickness absenteeism (Matthiesen and Einarsen 2010).

Regarding Harassment, legally speaking, this type of violence is related to gestures, words or attitudes that offend people and makes them feel intimidated or uncomfortable. It usually occurs when someone feels discriminated against by their beliefs, colour, religion, sex or sexual orientation. It happens commonly with threats, comments and sometimes hidden by "jokes", which can be offensive for many individuals (Jones, 2018). In other words, this type of violence can be referred to as unwelcome conduct done by a colleague, supervisor, or employers and more than an offensive behaviour, which can affect an individual's mental well-being, it has relation to insults, intimidation, unwanted attention. To be considered harassment, those cannot be isolated conflicts.

Concerning discrimination, there are many concepts used to describe this type of violence. However, it could be referred to as the act of making unjustified distinctions between individuals and when people have privileges and rights denied accorded to others (Tebele, 2013).

Linking those two concepts, it is possible to relate harassment as a form of discrimination, in which an employee suffers ongoing offensive remarks, and that can be done by colleagues or management. This type of discrimination is made by someone who has the intention to humiliate and offend co-workers and other employees (Jones, 2018).

In the workplace context, it is possible to identify the term "employment discrimination", which is directly related to when an employee (or a potential employee) is mistreated for the reason of gender, nationality, age, religion, disability, among others. This specific type of discrimination is a broad term. It can be used to describe different behaviours. Even though the topics of discrimination and harassment are well known and supported by the law, very little has been done to prevent those practices (Love, 2015). Considering that, it is crucial to be aware that it is the role of a company/business to provide an environment where actions concerning the prevention of harassment and any discrimination are taken.

It is important to mention that, even though discrimination is present in the workplace environment, the Equality Act 2010 (Equality Act 2010, 2010) protects employees who suffer discrimination in relation to their gender, age, disability, civil partnership, pregnancy, religion/belief, race or sexual orientation.

More than lower job satisfaction of employees, it tends to directly affect a company's reputation when the discrimination has been done within workers or external contacts, such as clients and suppliers. In some cases, discrimination may happen indirectly but can affect a company's business in the same way. An example of that can be described in a company where it is impossible to find facilities for people who are disabled. This company can lose money in profits from potential clients and can even receive many lawsuits. Legally speaking, discrimination is covered by comprehensive legislation that can provide how employers and employees can respond to issues. The same as in other types of violence, discrimination and harassment costs business millions every year around the world. There are many laws

protecting victims of this type of violence, which allow people to sue their companies for workplace harassment and the litigation fees tend to cost a significant amount of money (Jones et al., 2017).

Psychologically speaking, these costs can be significantly high. From the victims' point, it can cause high levels of stress and physical symptoms such as headaches, fatigue and, in many cases, post-traumatic disorder. (Love, 2015). From the side of the employers, the costs of this are in relation to the money they lose during the absence days, the low productivity of employees victimized by harassment/discrimination. This relation is also given because many harassed workers are stressed and often can be distracted, tending to arrive late in the workplace when this environment is associated with dissatisfaction (Jones, 2018). Besides, companies may face another cost when dealing with harassment cases regarding the loss of customers and employees, depending on the type of business and how public a case of harassment becomes.

#### **2.4 Alternative Dispute and Resolution in the workplace context**

Commonly used as methods that aim to solve disputes between two or more parties, ADR approaches solve conflicts in a non-confrontational way. The most frequently used types of ADR are Negotiation, Arbitration and Mediation. Although they are relatively new approaches, the visibility of ADR has been increasing over the last decades. As those methods tend to create possibilities for the parties to reach an agreement, improving the sense of cooperation enhances the relationship between them and brings a positive outcome in a dispute for all those involved (Shamir, 2016).

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS Code of Practice: Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, 2017) provides guidance for employees and employers in relation to procedures and measures that should be taken in order to conduct those grievances. However, those processes tend to be binary and to promote adversarial ideas in relation to conflict. On the other hand, it is possible to notice the increased interest in different models of dealing with

conflicts, such as alternative dispute resolution, which has a different approach of solving disputes, advocating a shift towards a values-based and person-centred approach. Those methods tend to look for the interest of all involved to reach a win-win outcome (Liddle, 2017). Because of that, ADR has become more popular in the workplace environment over the last decades. Alternative dispute resolution differs from the traditional litigation system and grievances mainly because it is a non-adversarial conflict resolution that seeks mutually satisfactory agreements in a conflict. It tends to be more flexible, faster and does not involve high costs as happens in litigation.

Goldberg, Sander, Rogers and Cole (2020) suggest that the adversarial process affects the presentation of proposals when parties are dealing with each other as adversaries. It is possible that a party can find difficulty expressing concerns because they may fear losing on issues that they would judge as not as relevant, or in some cases, even for fear of the outcome of the dispute, which can involve dismissal or even higher levels of conflict. Besides, in this adversarial conflict resolution, the parties do not deal directly with each other. Instead, they expose the facts to the decision-maker. By doing that, they take the risk of not having the points clearly presented. In ADR, on the other hand, this process happens differently. According to Ojo, Lyiola and Osibanjo, (2014), collaborative processes to deal with conflicts have been gaining attention from different organizational sectors, such as governmental, non-profit, and for-profit. This increased interest is noticeable by the leaders, who have been seeking ways of reducing the damages (relational and financial) from unresolved conflicts.

Furthermore, the CIPD (2011) also stated that the benefits of ADR are related to retaining valuable employees. It reduces sickness absences and supports the development of an organizational culture that manages and develops people.

Budd (2004) reflects on how the conflict can impact the workplace and ADR and its applications. According to the writer, the objectives of employment relationships are

efficiency, equity, and voice. For him, efficiency is directly related to how a dispute resolution manages important resources such as money and time. Slow procedures in which high costs are involved are inefficient. Besides, this price is related to money and psychological expenses; the impact on hostile social relations is also significant. Equity in the context of a dispute has reference to a standard of fairness and unbiased decision-making. According to Budd (2004), decisions in the process should be supported by evidence and provide effective resolutions, especially for those who have violated rights. An equal dispute resolution system should treat the parties equally with respect and be accessible irrespective of race, gender, or nationality. The voice dimension is directly related to how the individuals can participate in a conflict based on the sense of fairness and justice. It differs from the concept of equity because while this is related to the outcome, voice is focused on participation in the process.

Those concepts are relevant to obtain a comprehension of how to measure the efficiency of a dispute resolution. They can be used as a sort of metrics that evaluate and compare which dispute resolution is more appropriate in each case. Considering those theories described by Budd (2004), it is possible to think about the recent and increased interest in ADR because traditional styles of dealing with conflicts have been considered inflexible and bureaucratic. Because of that, people started to see potential in diversity, allowing other approaches to arise, such as ADR. Those traditional models and procedures tend to lead to many conflicts remaining unresolved. In ADR, however, the parties are the experts of conflict. The professional who facilitates the process acts as a neutral third party, creating the possibility to support those involved to solve their difficulties and find a win-win outcome.

On the other hand, it is worth mentioning the perspective suggested by Liddle (2017) that Human Resource (HR) departments in companies are not designed to provide the well-being of employees in the workplaces, but instead, they must adopt practices to make them more competitive and not more comfortable. The writer questions HR's role in companies, which

should be to support, engage, as well as to respect employees. However, very often this is not what happens. In some places where there are no resources for keeping a HR function (especially in smaller businesses), the most common way of dealing with a conflict and exposing it is to present the complaint to the management. That happens in places where there are no formal dispute resolution procedures, so they adopt the idea of 'open door' policies, where any issue should be addressed to the management. In those cases, the employees are usually provided with very little information about how to formalize the complaint or the grievance (Colvin, 2003). Those types of procedures tend not to be effective in many situations. An example of that is when a supervisor has abused an employee. By contacting the management about the case, the management takes sides or feels pressure about co-workers' decisions.

Considering that, ADR can be helpful in the workplace because it has cost benefits and interpersonal benefits. Once that is a non-confrontational way of dealing with conflicts, the length of time necessary and effectiveness tend to cost significantly less than traditional approaches involving the court. As a conflict in the workplace can affect other dimensions of an individuals' life, methods involving less confront can also reduce the levels of stress of those involved (Liebmann, 2000). Liddle (2017) suggests that traditional approaches such as grievance and disciplinary process have potentialities and can work together with ADR to promote a positive outcome to an employment dispute.

## **2.5 Negotiation**

Negotiation is an alternative dispute resolution method that enables the possibility of horizontal communication between those involved. From that, the parties can then comprehend different interests and perspectives in a dispute. As a positive outcome, the disputants try to reach an agreement or some sort of compromise that everyone involved will find acceptable (Nieuwmeijer, 1992). In the workplace context, it is possible to identify the literature

suggesting that negotiation can be used as a tool to reach an optimal outcome in mediation.

According to Goltsman, Hörner, Pavlov, and Squintani (2009), those techniques and procedures used in negotiation are more likely to have successful outcomes when the conflict is at the beginning. In fact, negotiation has many potentialities when the dispute arises and the parties are willing to cooperate. When that happens, this process can happen on unmediated communication. That occurs because parties are more likely to reach an agreement without a mediator when the conflict arises and the levels of stress and emotions involved are relatively low. When a third party does not facilitate it in the negotiation process, the two parties exchange information back and forth directly between themselves in a volunteer process. If a facilitator is present, this professional can be a mediator, who is called to propose an agreement after hearing the arguments of each party. Unlike arbitration, where the professional reaches the final decision, the neutral third party in mediation renders a final decision that has to be mutually accepted between those involved.

Furthermore, considering that negotiation in this context has many potentialities, especially when it comes to early intervention, Lindlle (2017) suggests that:

*"...the simplest, quickest, and most effective way to prevent a harmful and costly conflict from escalating is to have a direct conversation with the other person as early as possible. Adult-to-adult conversations encourage a calmer, more collaborative, more rational and more empowering mindset and behaviour in the parties. The resolutions meeting should be a set stage in the organizations' efforts to promote the early and effective resolution of conflicts and disputes." (Liddle, 2017, p.269).*

By establishing the communication in the early stages, the parties have a chance to reframe the conflict in the most functional way possible and avoid the increase of feelings such as frustration and mistrust. So, negotiation is a helpful tool and approach, a problem-solver where people can underlie needs, desires, interests and perhaps find a solution for their conflict



involving or not a third party such as a mediator. From that, it is possible to think that ADR is efficient mainly in situations where the parties already have a sense of trust and feel comfortable expressing their feelings and emotions (Zwier and Guernsey, 2015).

Thinking about cases involving psychological violence, that can be a possibility, especially in cases where at the beginning of the conflict, the victim already expressed how undesirable the actions of someone are. That is a potentiality because when a dispute arises, who is committing the violence may not realize the impact and the damage that their attitudes can cause (Wertheim 2002). Logically, that is not possible to happen in every case. It also depends on the type of relationship among the parties, their personality, and their willingness to act or to take actions in order to establish this communication.

It is also worth mentioning that psychological aspects tend to be involved in a negotiation and impact the process. It depends on how people are comfortable to talk about the conflict, their assumptions about the other and the situation, their expectations in relation to the other party, between other aspects (Wertheim 2002). With that in mind, it is possible to understand that in cases involving psychological abuse, people will be more likely to feel stress and pressure, directly affecting their engagement in the process of negotiation. Besides, Zwier and Guernsey (2015) suggest that there are some cases where parties could feel intimidated, especially if the other party has authority or power over him/her; in those cases, this previous communication will not happen.

When parties do not manage to settle their difference through communication between them, or when this communication happens, but nothing has changed, the idea of having the mediator in the dispute may be a good possibility for both parties. The mediation process is directly related to negotiation. Once, the first one attempts to comprehend the conflict and its emotions behind a process by using tools provided by negotiation techniques. Besides, it is also important to mention that more than psychological aspects that can affect a negotiation, people with

different personalities, backgrounds, perceptions, and beliefs can impact the procedure (Rodriguez, 2011). An example of that is when an employee constantly makes inconvenient jokes in relation to a colleague's weight. This employee may have come from a background where this type of behaviour is common. For this person, those attitudes are not considered bullying or discrimination. Hence, that can be a challenge in relation to establishing communication, and that can be the role of a neutral third party such as a mediator. This professional, who is not attached to the outcome of the conflict, will facilitate the communication between them. This process will happen so that the victim can express the feeling generated in a safe space, and who is addressing the 'jokes' can have another perception of the facts in a non-confrontational way.

The facilitator in the process brings the whole history of antagonistic relationships, miscommunications, misperceptions and the emotions behind it, with serious negotiations (Rodriguez, 2011).

Furthermore, there are some critics regarding the process of negotiation in the workplace environment, which are mainly concerning interests-based negotiations, where the parties' perceptions of who is right or who is more powerful lead to interests' clash. In those cases, they cannot establish a process of negotiation because the parties are too attached to their perceptions of the issue in the matter. Another negative aspect that negotiators may face is in relation to cases where the conflict already reached levels that could be impossible to negotiate or in parties who are victims of recurrent psychological violence (such as harassment, bullying and discrimination) (Lewicki, Barry and Saunders, 2014). In those cases, where one of the parties is too affected by this abuse, the traditional system of solving disputes may be a viable option once this person has the rights guaranteed by the law.

Therefore, it is crucial when a third party is involved; this professional can evaluate which alternative dispute resolution is more appropriate. Or in some cases, even consider if the

traditional system could be a possibility, especially when it is noticeable that in those cases where the parties are not able to negotiate, and the conflict is escalating. When the dispute has this characteristic, arbitration seems to be an option that can bring positive outcomes. According to Goltsman, Hörner, Pavlov, and Squintani, (2009), in those cases, arbitration tends to perform better than negotiation or mediation. That is a consequence of the fact that the third party who can enforce an agreement (as it happens in arbitration) can be more effective than one adopting a neutral position in the process.

## **2.6 Mediation**

Mediation involves a third party whose role in the process is to support disputants to settle their differences. The mediator is uncharged in assisting the communication between the parties. The establishment of a more respectful relationship between them and comprehending the other's necessities, interests, and concerns are some of the aims of the mediator in the process. By doing that, it is possible to improve the sense of cooperation among the parties in order to reach a voluntary and mutually acceptable outcome for those involved (Wall, Stark and Standifer, 2001).

It is possible to comprehend that mediation in the workplace has applications beyond the professional life of workers. It creates new possibilities of communication and potentialities in human relations. From that, it is comprehensible that this type of ADR can even be a paradigm for successful relations between people and team management. In mediation, interpersonal relationships tend to improve because those involved are encouraged to express their feelings about what has happened. From that, people tend to cooperate and somehow feel a sense of fairness. With that in mind, mediation became one of the most frequently used ADR methods. Studies have shown that this sense of cooperation results in satisfactory outcomes and makes the experience more collaborative and less traumatic (Saundry, Bennett, Joseph and Wibberley, 2013).

For cases involving harassment, discrimination, and bullying, mediation seems to have an important role in dealing with conflicts with emotional and relational aspects. As it does not involve judgments from others, such as in arbitration, it tends to be more satisfactory for all the parties. Besides, Bingham 2004 (cited in McKenzie 2015) suggests that the parties are more likely to apologize in mediation than in litigation. Because of this sense of forgiveness, mediation has a therapeutic effect. This impacts not only those involved in a conflict but also on other team members (McKenzie, 2015). Furthermore, it is possible to understand that people who suffer any aggression in the workplace tend to have emotions and feelings that need to be expressed somehow. In mediation, people have the chance to expose those feelings, and by doing that and being heard, they can find other meanings and values to those emotions.

By expressing the emotions through the words as it happens in the mediation process, it is possible to think about the well-known concept of catharsis, which is directly related to the expression of emotions. According to Bushman (2002), catharsis comes from the Greek *katharsis*, which means cleansing. In psychoanalysis, the comprehension of this word comes from the idea that repressed emotions or feelings could develop into psychological symptoms. In other words, catharsis is seen as a way of relieving emotions, such as anger. As it happens in the case of mediation, when victims of psychological violence have the chance to express their feelings in a safe place, it releases the pressure that those emotions can create inside the psyche.

By enabling the possibility of people expressing themselves and their emotions, it is possible to understand that mediation can improve communication within members of the same organization. It is relevant to mention that many employees tend to lack communication between them and the leaders/employers. An example present in this context is an employee who wants to express an idea and is ignored or marginalized (McKenzie, 2015). What is created from the employees' side, when that happens, very often, is the idea of not being able to

communicate with leaders because they will not be heard. And thinking about cases related to psychological violence, the consequence of that, many times, can be people being afraid, not reporting or expressing themselves because they believe no measures will be taken.

The challenges concerning using mediation as an approach in disputes in the workplace are primarily conceptual. Many people are not aware of this concept and tend to misunderstand and see this ADR as counselling. Besides, organizations tend to adopt traditional styles of solving conflicts without looking for possibilities that could be beneficial for all those involved. When there are disputes involving people with different positions in the same company, those with more authority tend to consider mediation as a threat because the shift of balance of power could be an outcome. Also, concerning this balance of power, there are some cases where mediation may not be the best approach once this power may shape the conduct and outcome of the process. The "weaker party" may feel too intimidated to express themselves, especially when there is a hierarchy and the other party is someone such as a manager, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or other leader. Consequently, the impact is also when another party in the process can feel obliged or pressured not to expose the situation entirely (Liebmann, 2000).

Furthermore, as mediation is a voluntary process, it can only succeed if the parties are willing to collaborate and be suitable for mediation. In cases involving discrimination, harassment, and bullying, that may not happen once the parties involved can be too rigid to their conceptions and perceptions of the facts, especially the victims who tend to be vulnerable to suffering the aggression. That is a debate very often present in the literature, considering that the victims of this type of violence should not "negotiate" as they have the rights granted by law (Saundry, Bennett, Joseph and Wibberley, 2013).

However, it is also possible to find in the literature that each case is singular and needs to be evaluated. Mediation has potentialities in cases involving psychological aggression, as Seagriff (2010) suggests that this type of ADR has a greater likelihood of success for bullying cases.

The writer states that overall, the main goal of mediation in this context can be considered the reparation of broken relationships. By providing the possibility of mediation in the workplace for cases involving this type of violence, employers prevent other conflicts from escalating (Jenkins 2011). That happens because mediation tends to look to the roots of the conflicts and comprehend which emotions and feelings are behind it from all the parties' perspectives. The CIPD (2008) also suggests that the traditional system of solving disputes does not deal with issues that may underlie a conflict. As mediation creates this possibility, it can help prevent long-term absences, bringing positive outcomes for both employers and employees. However, it is important to reflect on which stage the violence is present.

In cases involving bullying and other types of psychological violence, mediation has been gaining visibility in the workplace. It tends to be more effective in the early phases of disagreement; in those cases, it improves the chances of maintaining healthy and productive employment relations in the long term (CIPD 2008). That is understood because, in the beginning, in the early stages, parties tend to collaborate, and mediation can be a good option. On the other hand, if the conflict is already escalating, the levels of stress are increasing and the parties becoming more aggressive is the role of the mediator to evaluate the safety risks and whether mediation is the most suitable approach. In some cases, where the conflict takes proportions where there could be an imminent risk for one of the parties, arbitration, negotiation or even formal procedures might be more appropriate, as the CIPD suggests that:

*"The other issues particularly suited to mediation are bullying and perceived harassment, and perceived discrimination issues, although each situation needs to be judged on a case-by-case basis, as serious cases of bullying and harassment, and clear cases of discrimination, may need to be dealt with by more formal procedures." (CIPD, 2008, p. 12)*

According to Jenkins (2011), some types of psychological aggression, such as bullying, emerge from the escalation of other workplace conflicts. That frequently happens when there is a

balance of power issue when one individual feels 'superior' to the others because of his/her position in the organization, knowledge, or status. When bullying in the workplace happens because of power imbalance, people tend to be afraid of reporting cases, unlikely other types of conflicts (where people can equally engage in the dispute).

In an organization, some individuals' feeling of being superior or more powerful seems to be a common phenomenon in this context. That can be considered a power of structure, which happens among co-workers and can be associated with employees who occupy senior positions or have more experience, knowledge, or job security than others. Besides, gender, abilities, age, race, and sexuality also create this sense of power within the organization (Jenkins 2011). From that, it is essential to reflect that for mediation to be considered successful; the mediator has to be suitably qualified and able to comprehend the emotional and relational aspects of the process. This professional needs to consider ethical factors involving each case and consider essential questions that may affect the process, such as imbalance of power, and decide which approach is more appropriate and if mediation is the most appropriate ADR.

## **2.7 Arbitration**

Arbitration is the process that can be defined as an extra-judicial legal mechanism for resolving disputes and including a third party, who has to be neutral and is focused on reaching the best result possible for the parties in dispute. This type of ADR aims to reduce the differences between the parties seeking a conflict resolution. For that reason, the Arbitrators' decision is determined considering the rights and liabilities of the parties. Arbitration is entirely dependent on the agreement of the parties to adopt it, and the same happens in all alternative dispute and resolution. Without the agreement of the parties, there can be no arbitration. It is possible to find many advantages of this type of ADR over litigation which is the act of bringing the parties to court. The jury decides this resolution, which can increase the levels of conflict in a dispute, once it is a win-lose situation (Doyle,2010).

When it comes to arbitration in the workplace, it has gained visibility in employers and employees' conflicts. It is not hard to find the advantages of this ADR over litigation, mainly concerning the relative accessibility of this ADR, comparing litigation. However, according to Felice (2008), some civil rights lawyers look at the growth of employment arbitration and consider that as the end of workplace justice. This different idea about the topic happens because there are different perceptions of alternative dispute resolution.

On one side of this perspective, arbitration can be compelling for employees and employers, especially when it comes to bringing workplace justice for those who suffered any rights denied (Maltby, 2003). From this perspective, it is possible to think about people who suffered any type of psychological violence or abuse because those go against human rights and the law guaranteed. To bring those cases to court, employees may face financial obstacles, and in many cases, they cannot afford the expenses of the process. Because of that, they never receive justice. So on, arbitration agreements create an opportunity for those employees, as it is less expensive.

Even though there are many critics of this ADR and the effectiveness for cases involving workplace disputes, Maltby (2003) suggests that there is no reason to doubt the potentiality of arbitration, as the outcomes of disputes involving arbitration in this context are mostly positive. According to Colvin (2003), besides the fact that arbitration can bring positive results for employees, it facilitates people to get their claims more than litigation. Arbitration can be more efficient and fair; once compared to broadly-trained judges and inexperienced juries, an arbitrator can have specialized knowledge of employment law. As a result, they can have more sensitivity towards the topic in the matter.

It is essential to mention that workplace disputes have had some changes over the last years. According to Colvin (2003), the most considerable changes have been in relation to the development of employer-initiated arbitration procedures, which can also be called mandatory



arbitration. This type of process has this name because employers usually mandate it as a term and condition of the employment. It can be considered contradictory when it comes to dispute and resolution. This mandatory arbitration tends to have lower costs compared to the traditional ways of solving conflicts, and it gives more security for employers, thinking about the uncertainty of litigation. However, it is possible to comprehend that it may be harming some employees, especially in cases involving psychological violence in the workplace. This negative impact is explained by the fact that many employees tend to enter into the arbitration process because they are required to, and they are not given any options. As a condition, many workers start the process of arbitration by pressure and the fear of being discharged.

And even though the workers have the rights guaranteed by the law, in mandatory arbitration, employees tend to feel a sense of unfairness and less accessibility for resolving their issues. An example of that is in cases involving bullying, harassment or discrimination, and an employee has a complaint against an employer. By enforcing the mandatory arbitration in those cases, an employee loses the right of appealing directly to the courts and, many times, sign an agreement that gives benefits only to the other party. From the employer's point of view, that avoids big expenses and the risk of possible massive awards of litigation. Besides, another attractive point for companies is that by not giving the choice of litigation, employers do not risk the exposure that a litigation process may involve. So it will not affect the reputation of the company. (Colvin, 2014) So, it is possible to think of mandatory arbitration as problematic in many aspects. Firstly, because it does not give the employee the power of choice, it is imposed, and employees are likely to feel pressure and maybe even stress that goes beyond the stress caused by the conflict itself. This pressure can lead workers to adopt or to sign agreements that go against their beliefs and necessities, just in order to keep their jobs. Thinking about that, the negative impact of mandatory arbitration could be even stronger in cases involving people with less education and less socioeconomic conditions. In those cases, people may not be aware of

their rights, which puts them in a vulnerable position.

Furthermore, there are some other challenges involving arbitration. First, this is a relatively new approach, and it seems to be a sort of uncertainty in relation to how effective this method can be. Besides, until not too long ago, there were many concerns regarding the enforceability of the process, and some legal doubts were subject to discussion within the legal system. Plus, concerning the costs of this process, which can be high and costly for many companies, that may not view the process of litigation as a threat. In fact, some employers expressed concerns in adopting mandatory arbitration procedures, and employees interpreted that as a sign that they have a dispute resolution mechanism. Consequently, the numbers of complaints increase. (Colvin 2004).

Another critic regarding arbitration in this context is in relation to an equity perspective, especially disputes involving employees against employers. In many cases, in order to enhance the efficiency of the process, the simplification of procedures in arbitration sacrifices the equity by eliminating the process of protection. What happens in many cases is that employees do not have enough resources in order to support their claims. That occurs because some important information that could support their perspectives, such as witness and files, is under employers' control. Besides, the use of professionals' arbitrators as decision-makers has been criticized from an equity perspective, once they tend to be biased towards the employers (Maltby 2003). The writer suggests that arbitrators in this context are less likely to rule in favour of employee complainants and less likely to make sizeable punitive damage awards to punish employers misbehaviour. From that, it is possible to think of this as a sort of imbalance of power. Cases involving psychological violence, where the victim is already in a vulnerable position, tend to impact the conflict negatively. Usually, this imbalance of power is also an imbalance of money. If the employer-provided an arbitrator, it is possible that this professional will not offer an agreement that can cause significant damages for the employer, even if it is unfair.

However, this type of ADR has positive aspects that go beyond the critics. Considering that arbitration should be regarded as effective, it should be carried out by a professional who has enough expertise and is not directly related to any parties. According to (Felice (2008) the arbitrator should be ethical and sensitive in respecting employees' feelings, conducting the process, and explaining the norms and procedures in clear language, considering that people with different levels of education and knowledge can be involved in the conflict. Besides, some measures can enhance the potentiality of arbitration procedures. An example of that is the idea of participants choosing an arbitrator together, who has the expertise to a determinate topic, increases the possibilities of a reasonable outcome. As this is a dispute resolution that has a final decision (which tends to be faster than litigation), it is ideal for cases where the parties seek to resolve their conflicts within a determined period

Besides, Felice (2008) suggests that companies should invest more in preventive actions, and by doing that, they increase the chances of positive outcomes in dispute, considering that conflicts are inevitable. Employees should be encouraged to share with their supervisors or managers about any conflict that may be happening to avoid it from escalating. Concerning that, another positive aspect of arbitration in this context is the significant increase of preventive produces adopted by companies who have already found in arbitration, positive outcomes for their disputes. That happens because companies noticed that preventative measures could reduce more conflicts in the workplace and enhance employees' commitment (Colvin, 2003). Furthermore, it is vital that employees can identify when a conflict is arising and which procedures and methods should be taken when that happens. The benefits of preventive actions are obvious for companies and employees, once it decreases the chances of lawsuits and consequently, stressed or injured workers.

## **2.8 Prevention of psychological violence in the workplace**

Despite the considerable frequency that violence is present in the workplace, very little has

been done to prevent or predict that from happening. In relation to cases of discrimination, for example, many companies find that as a challenge. Once in our society, it seems to be related to a lack of knowledge and understanding of dealing with situations involving it. This lack of information leads to a significant number of cases of discrimination not being reported. People must understand the policies and the law that gives support for cases of discrimination (Kerr, 2010).

To prevent psychological violence from happening in this context, it is vital to invest in the companies' commitment to promoting and maintaining a respectful and inclusive environment in which any type of violence is not tolerated. That must be supplemented by objective training to create comprehension of the policies and procedures, so workers can be aware of the issue and take actions (such as reporting) any incidents (Philpott, 2019). Besides, it is important to give attention to the fact that violence usually does not appear suddenly. From that, organizations and employees should be able to identify different practices that indicate that violence has been happening over time in the workplace environment.

In relation to this identification/prediction, some external and internal factors can collaborate to understand better workplace violence, such as in personal life: alcohol abuse, self-esteem, and aggressive history. The first one is directly associated with aggressive behaviours in different contexts, and there are different ways of perceiving this. A relevant perspective described in the literature is that people who tend to abuse alcohol (and other drugs) are more likely to have their intellectual and verbal functioning compromised and to express violent actions in the workplace. Regarding self-esteem, it is possible to identify that individuals who have low self-esteem tend to feel diminished from others, and violence tends to be a way of them expressing themselves (Kerr, 2010).

Furthermore, Schindeler, Ransley and Reynald (2020) suggest that another aspect that can help identify violent cases in this context is the sense of injustice, which seems to have an important

role in the violence. That happens mainly when workers from the same environment perceive an inequity (mostly associated with payments) and their attempt to restore justice. Besides, when employees feel threatened concerning the security of their work, violence tends to be a predictable outcome. Regarding that, it is possible to identify that job insecurity can increase the likelihood of violence in the workplace once the feeling of fear is directly connected with the sense of being powerless, and the violence gives the feel of regaining the sense of control. Moreover, implementing zero-tolerance anti-violence measures and policies should include guarantees against retaliation in any form. For this step to fully succeed, it is vital that if an employer, director or HR discovers a case of violence or abuse, several actions should take place and be applied equally (Kerr, 2010).

Jones (2008) indicates that another way of prevention is by providing employment law training for workers. Even though that is an investment that many companies would not be willing to provide, as described before, situations of violence in this context can involve high costs and preventing that tends to be a positive investment, with good outcomes to employers and employees.

Besides, by adopting preventive measures in organizations, managers and leaders should be able to deal with conflicts proactively to avoid them from escalating. That is essential because managing conflicts is part of those professionals' lives, who should develop skills needed to provide a harmonious work environment. Besides, according to Liddle (2017), leaders must create a safe space for employees to express their feelings when a conflict arises and provide security that providences will be taken. Some changes can be made within the organization about how conflicts are seen by acting in a preventative way.

It is also the role of employers to provide support without judgments to victims of workplace violence. Incentivising trust and confidence between workers from the same company, giving assistance and advice when necessary is also essential in order to prevent psychological

violence in the workplace. For some employers, a barrier they may face in this environment is the lack of awareness of the dimension of the problem. According to Love (2015), without being informed about the dimension of the issues happening in the workplace, many employers do not face that as a big problem and do not seek investments in order to prevent the same from happening. Besides, there is an important fact to be considered: in those cases, prevention involves costs, and many small companies with limited resources may face this prevention as a challenge. In this type of situation, where there is a lack of understanding in relation to psychological violence, workers may feel inhibited from reporting incidents or abusive behaviour. People working in such environments tend to believe that nothing will be done if they report bullying, discrimination, or harassment. Sadly, very often, the management can fail in order to respond to company policies and procedures.

Evaluating strategies of actions and prevention of workplace violence is a complex subject that reassures the importance of practices that can promote the wellbeing of employees in their workplace environment. It is vital that each company can consider which approaches and methods are more appropriate in order to promote the safety of employees, so the benefits can be seen not only in the workplace but in society in general, considering that a significant amount of the population struggles with mental health disorders and workplace environment tends to contribute to it. Furthermore, Jonas (2008) suggests that a possibility in relation to prevention that most of the companies can take is adopting some actions to prevent abuse situations even in the moment of interviews or hiring new employees by demonstrating stricter policies about the issue and clarifying what psychological violence is and the harms that can happen in an individual's life.

## **2.9 Literature Review Conclusion**

In this literature review the broad concept of conflict was explored together with deeper comprehension about psychological violence in a work context and also the effects of in

individuals and companies. The application of methods such as negotiation, mediation and arbitration were looked at terms of the advantages and challenges associated with each one. Finally, the prevention of psychological violence in the workplace was considered as a key factor, which brings benefits not only to employees and companies, but to society in general.

### **3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

It is known that research is a broad term used to describe a systematic process of data collection, analyses, and interpretation of this information to understand the determinate topic in the matter.

According to Williams (2007, p. 65):

*"The research process is systematic in that defining the objective, managing the data, and communicating the findings occur within established frameworks and in accordance with existing guidelines. The frameworks and guidelines provide researchers with an indication of what to include in the research, how to perform the research, and what types of inferences are probably based on the data collected."*

Research starts with the identification of a focused, literature supported problem. (Cohen, 2009) The researcher needs to establish the research methodology that can be comprehended differently and from other definitions. According to Igwenagu (2016), research methodology can be described as a set of systematic techniques used in research to understand the limitations and resources utilized in the study. It is directly related to strategies that outline how the research is undertaken and identifies its methods. Those methods described in the methodology define the models of data collection, among other things.

It is essential to mention that, even though methodology and methods are often comprehended as synonyms, they are not the same. The first one is the design process for carrying out the

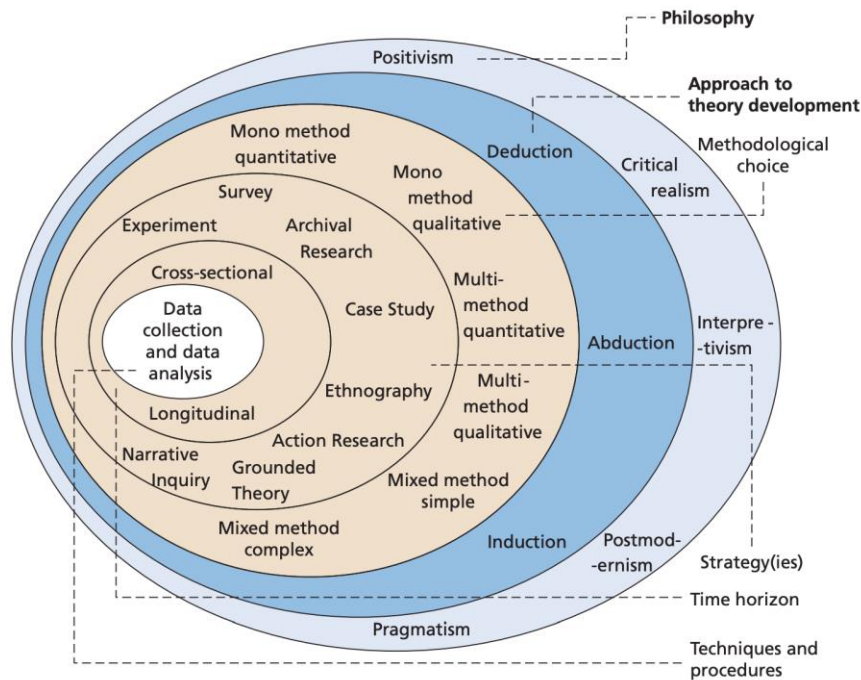
research, and it is not a procedure (Igwenagu, 2016). Methods, on the other hand, are tools, techniques that are used in the study. An example of the method in this research is the surveys, which will collect data. On the other hand, a methodology is a general term, a justification for using a specific research method. It specifies how the research will be conducted and a system of the philosophical assumptions that shape the questions and the choices made in the study (Melnikovas 2018).

According to MacDonald and Headlam (2009), research methodology is directly related to the researcher's steps, techniques, and methods taken by the researcher to solve the research problem. The research methodology needs to underline the study that has been undertaken, how the problem has been defined, the data collection and analyses, and which techniques and methods are utilized in the research. Considering that, this research methodology was carefully delineated in order to gather relevant information to contribute to the area of dispute and resolution, involving psychological and social aspects, by following ethical principles.

Considering that, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) developed a general research strategy that delineates how the research should be undertaken. This research strategy is described in layers, facilitating the researchers' comprehension and providing tools that support the researchers by providing descriptions of each stage of the methodology to accomplish their goals.

The name of this research strategy is research onion, and this thesis was written based on this concept which is in figure 1.





Research onion. Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009)

### 3.2 Philosophies

Philosophy is the first layer of the research onion, and it is the foundation of the comprehension of how the writer is going to approach and conduct the research. Also, it is directly related to the way the researcher views the world, and these assumptions will underpin the research strategy and methods used in a study. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), the researcher who is concerned about the facts, it is very likely to have a different view from the researcher who seeks to understand subjective matters such as feelings and emotions towards a determinate topic. The methods and strategies will differ between those and their conceptions and interpretations about the data collected.

Between the philosophies, there are two significant thinking about it: Ontology and Epistemology. Both have essential aspects that will influence the way the researcher perceives the research process. The first one is used to describe questions regarding the nature of being and has relation to what the researcher believes about the nature of reality. Epistemology is related to what constitutes adequate knowledge in a field of study. In this type of research, the

researcher comprehends reality by representing objects considered 'real', such as machines and computers. Understanding those two points of view, it is possible to comprehend philosophies that operate on Ontological or Epistemological thinking. Those are the research base and work in relation to how the researcher sees the subject in the matter (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009).

The subsequent philosophies are Positivism, Realism, Pragmatism, Interpretivism, Objectivism, Subjectivism, Functionalist, Radical humanist, Radical structuralism and Interpretive. The chosen approach for this research is interpretivism, a theory that comprehends subjective aspects of relations in general. This theory goes against generalisations to explain human behaviours once every person experiences their reality in a specific and singular way. Interpretivism suggests that the researcher must comprehend differences between different human beings. Because of that, it says about the importance of studying subjective aspects rather than objects such as computers.

Furthermore, this philosophy suggests that human beings act according to how they interpret their reality, interpret the everyday roles according to the meaning given to those roles, and analyse social relations following their set of definitions. In this philosophy, the research needs to be empathetic to comprehend all those aspects, even though understanding the complexities of human behaviour and the human psyche and its relations can be a challenge. Having said that, the Interpretivist perspective tends to be appropriate in researches involving organisational behaviour. More than complex situations in this context, they tend to be unique (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

According to Babones (2016) quantitative researches tend to be associated with positivism philosophy. This is a philosophy that researchers frequently adopt once quantitative methods, and positivism seeks to comprehend the reality that can be examined by the researcher through numerical representations, in graphics or statistics. At the same time, qualitative researches

frequently have interpretivism as the chosen philosophy. However, this distinction in relation to interpretivism adopting qualitative methods and positivism quantitative does not necessarily exclude interpretivism's adoption of quantitative research methods to understand social and subjective phenomena. Babones (2016) reflects that by adopting interpretivism as an approach to quantitative data, the understandings can be substantively more enriched than in cases adopting positivist approaches. That happens because interpretative approaches to statistical modelling tend to be less complicated (mathematically speaking) and the understandings deeper and more interesting.

Still according to Babones (2016), by adopting interpretative approaches, it is possible to have a holistic comprehension of the data and the phenomenon in the matter, and this encourages quantitative researchers to think more about the societies (and not only to the statistics) in which their data are embedded and also creates the possibilities for researchers to reflect in relation to their biases in the data collected, which can be already impacted by their perceptions about the subject of the research. Considering that interpretative approaches provide a strong philosophical and methodological foundation to the researcher, it is possible to reach more understandable and meaningful results by combining this philosophy with quantitative analyses. In other words, the research reflects different kinds of expertise required to comprehend complex social realities.

Considering that, the researcher adopted quantitative methods for data collection and data analysis. Even though the topic of this dissertation involves subjective aspects, which are frequently associated with qualitative researches, the subject is broad due to its relation to alternative dispute resolution. From that, the author considers it valuable to obtain quantifiable results. The researcher seeks to understand the level of awareness of workers in relation to ADR and their perceptions concerning alternative dispute resolution's potentialities to solve conflicts in the workplace. All of that is comprehended in this dissertation by obtaining

numerical data collection and interpretivist philosophy.

### **3.3 Approaches**

The next layer of the figure is the approaches is divided into two: Inductive and Deductive approach. The first one is characterized by the type of approach used in areas with insufficient existing research. In the inductive method, the researcher must maintain the mind open to possible results without supposing the facts. Hence, this enables a deeper understanding of the information given once the explanation of the theories is presented from the observation of the data collected (Soiferman 2010).

The deductive approach, differently from inductive, is related to improving a research theory and supposing a hypothesis for further testing. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), a researcher, by choosing a deductive approach, is likely to need the literature to help to identify what will be tested in research. Furthermore, in the deductive approach, the researcher tries to reach conclusions deducting logically things that are already known (Jonker and Pennink, 2010).

Considering the nature, the aim and limitations of this research, deductive is the chosen approach that fits aspects involving this dissertation, such as the quantitative strategy. Besides, the data will be collected through online surveys in which the respondents will be able to answer in an online platform called Google forms. So on, this data will provide a medium sample of workers of different areas of expertise and originally from other countries but all residents in Ireland.

By adopting the deductive approach, important characteristics of quantitative research such as the examination of the connection between variables and the measuring of concepts that tend to be understood through a qualitative optical will be examined quantitatively by the researcher in this dissertation.

### **3.4 Strategies**

The third layer of the research onion is related to how the researcher plans to collect the information for the research in question. This data collection can be done through experiments, surveys, case study, ethnography, action research, grounded theory or archival research. The researcher can choose one or more data collection strategies (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

However, considering the topic in this research and the limitations of this research, mainly involving the length of time, the survey is the chosen strategy. For this dissertation, surveys were sent to colleagues from Independent college, colleagues from work, and groups on social media; all the respondents are based in Ireland.

Questionnaires are often associated with quantitative research because of their capacity to collect data from a suitable amount of respondents. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), quantitative methods tend to be related to the deductive approach because of some characteristics that define the technique, such as testing a theory in question and collecting a significant amount of data in a structured form. Furthermore, questionnaires also enable the possibility of examining the connection between variables, demonstrated through graphics in this research. According to Hox and Boeije (2005), in surveys, a certain amount of questions are asked, and the responses are coded in standardized categories. This type of research has many potentialities when the researchers try to reach and collect data related to observations, attitudes, behaviour or opinions. It can provide subjective characteristics of the determinate group.

MacDonald and Headlam (2009) refer to questionnaires consisting of several questions, carefully selected by the researcher and sent (by post or online). The respondents need to answer the questions on their own. When the researcher collects a significant amount of information, he/she needs to evaluate the results. This is a method of collecting data broadly used in different areas of knowledge. That happens because it has many benefits, such as the

fact that it is less costly and within a short period it can be widely spread, geographically speaking, and from that, a large number of answers can be collected. And even respondents who are not easily approachable can be reached with questionnaires. Furthermore, because the respondents can answer the questions in their own time, with privacy and in a comfortable environment, such as their house, for example, in many cases, they feel able to express themselves and to enrich the questionnaire with deep perceptions and thoughts about the subject matter. Besides, it is free from the interviewer's bias since people respond to it on their own.

However, it is essential to mention that some challenges of adopting this type of data collection can be in relation to the possibilities of low rates of return or duly filled questionnaires, in which the respondents can give surface information and from that, create the possibility of reducing the reliability of the study. This type of data collection also involves challenges concerning the uncertainty of responses when the respondents are unwilling to cooperate (Chand, 2021).

From that, it is crucial to think the researcher must construct the questionnaire; if that does not happen carefully, it is bound to fail. In relation to that, the research needs to be sure that the questionnaire is straightforward in order to avoid any misunderstanding; it should be impartial, simple and easily understood. According to MacDonald and Headlam (2009), questionnaires should be short and not time demanding. All these aspects were considered by the author of this dissertation while developing the questionnaire.

### **3.5 Time Horizon**

The following layer of the research onion is the time horizon. According to Saunders et al. (2009), there are two different options here: Longitudinal and Cross-sectional. The first one is related to research studies that analyse events and behaviours within a long time. Cross-sectional is associated with the collection of data within a not too long period of time. Given

that this dissertation has limitations regarding the length of time, Cross-sectional is the most appropriate choice because it is related to short term studies.

### **3.6 Data collection**

Primary data was collected through online surveys. According to Chand (2021), primary data refers to the data collected directly from the source, and the information is not available elsewhere, but the researchers need to manage it by themselves. Surveys are popular methods of collecting primary data, as they are considered a flexible tool once they can produce a significant amount of quantitative information.

From that, to collect a significant amount of data and evaluate this information, quantitative methods were adopted; once this research aims to collect data and reach the results using mathematical models of analysis. Besides, the researcher conducting the research uses inquiry methods to ensure alignment with statistical data collection methodology.

In the literature, it is possible to find different types of research and other classifications of quantitative research available. For this dissertation, the author comprehends that the most appropriate is descriptive research. According to Mishra and Alok (2017), this is an essential research method that examines the situation as it is, in its current state. It aims to explain the set of circumstances as they are present in the current moment, and the researcher does not have direct control over the variables; he/she can only report the findings. Furthermore, there are different techniques available in descriptive research such as comparative, correlation methods and surveys, and it is the option chosen in this dissertation.

A survey is the chosen data collection method in this research, which aims to comprehend the psychological violence in the workplace environment. By adopting quantitative measurements, it is possible to understand how this has been affecting part of the population in Dublin, its consequences (to employees and employers) and even more, the possibilities of alternative dispute and resolution in this environment through a broader view. A survey was the chosen

method given the options, considering the limitations regarding the lockdown and time limit. The questionnaire was structured through the Google forms tool, in 15 questions including multiple-choice and Likert scales.

It is worth mentioning that a challenge in this method is that it quantifies data and generalise results by analysing a sample of the population of interest. In other words, the results are based on the perspectives of a certain group of people and do not necessarily reflect the reality around the world. According to Williams (2007), quantitative methods aim to investigate and comprehend knowledge using different tools to measure a specific population's existence.

The length of time available and the fact that the respondents are a small number of workers in contrast to the general population can be considered limiting aspects of this research, as (Cohen, 2009) states that every study has potential weaknesses in which should be identified by the researcher. By pointing out what are the limitations in a research project, it is possible to expose to the readers the likelihood that the study means what the research indicates it means and the identification of which findings can be generalised and which cannot. Plus, it can provide the identification of possibilities and challenges for those who intend to follow with studies in the same area.

Furthermore, secondary research (literature review) has an essential role in comprehending how aspects involving this research topic are seen through different perspectives. The information collected on secondary data was found in reliable sources such as books and articles, and it is used as a foundation of knowledge in this deductive study.

### **3.7 Data analyses**

The final layer of the research onion concerns the analyses of information obtained. As previously mentioned, the collection of data for this research will happen through questionnaires, which aim to collect information regarding psychological violence in the workplace and the possibilities of ADR in this context. From that, quantitative methods will be



adopted in order to evaluate the obtained data.

According to Mutua (2021), data analyses is a crucial phase in research. It is related to integrating specific measures and the search for patterns that can help the researcher understand the relationship between the data collected. In this layer of the research onion, it is important to interpret this data, classify and analyse it for fact-finding.

It is possible to notice that there are many data analyses methods, and to use any of them, depends on the nature of the problem in the research and the measurements used and the type of data collected. As this is quantitative research in which the use of surveys will obtain the data, questionnaires will be sent online through the Google forms tool, generating graphics and statistics that will be analysed in this research. According to Kumar (2011) quantitative can be an approach to enquiry in social sciences which believes that by emphasizing a greater sample size and quantifying the variation of a phenomenon, it is possible to comprehend common aspects from the population in general. However, it is essential to highlight this generalisation once the respondents represent only a part of the population, and there are limitations in relation to the possibility of reaching results that can represent the population in general, as previously discussed in the limits of this research. That does not exclude the reliability of quantitative studies but enables the necessity of considering those limitations when adopting quantitative methods.

Having said that, responses were collected and analysed using graphs and charts to comprehend which aspects are involved in relation to psychological violence in the workplace environment and how alternative dispute resolution can fit in this context.

### **3.8 Ethical considerations**

Ethical aspects in research are directly related to the standards of conduct for scientific research. Those standards are used to give the idea of support and guarantee participants' rights and dignity. According to Greener (2008), ethics are related to moral choices that affect

decisions and behaviours and a challenge in relation to how to establish and lay down a set of clear rules that can cover all the moral choices. Regarding that, Kumar (2011) suggests that ethical principles are frequently changing according to society's necessities, and it is important to mention that any judgement that a particular research is ethical is made based on the code of conduct prevalent in that time. Even though it can be challenging delimitating what is moral and what is not, and even though each area has different interests, purposes, understandings that can affect the way research is carried out, there are some universal aspects involving ethics in the context of researches that are essential in order to maintain the dignity and the safety of those involved.

Still, according to Kumar (2011), all those involved directly and indirectly involved in research are considered participants and anyone who collects the information for the purpose of comprehension, consolidation, and development of knowledge should follow a code of conduct to protect those participants.

Some aspects should be considered while doing academic research, such as the necessity of not causing any type of harm to the participants (stress or discomfort, for example); the maintenance of objectivity during data collection; the importance of assuring the informed consent of the participants and the guarantee of their autonomy while participating in the research; the respect for those by keeping the process confidential and/or respecting their decision to not collaborate in the research if they are not willing to. Furthermore, the participants should be informed about the purpose of the study and the researcher's status and role (Greener 2008).

Using those aspects as a guideline, this research was carried out following ethical research guidelines and considering and maintaining the participant's integrity. The survey, which was the data collection instrument, was carefully examined before sending it to the respondents, who did not suffer any harm while answering the questions. Furthermore, participants were

informed about the nature of the research and questions involving their autonomy in the process and confidentiality of answers. The questionnaire was created in “Google Form”, an online tool where the participants did not expose themselves as the respondents. Besides, they were guaranteed that the data collected will remain confidential and that this information will not have any other purpose other than academic study.

### **3.9 Research Methodology Conclusion**

The research methodology and methods were carefully delineated by the author of this dissertation in order to facilitate the data collection and data analysis. Interpretivist philosophy, deductive approach, quantitative methods were choices made that better suit the limitations of this study and their use can be seen on the following chapters where the data will be presented and analysed.

## **4 PRESENTATION OF DATA**

The data presented below was collected through online surveys. With the aim of comprehending the use of ADR methods and its use in the workplace context, as well as the phenomenon of psychological violence and the subjective aspects involving the victims and companies. Besides, through the data collection, it is aimed to understand the different types of violence such as bullying, discrimination and harassment in the workplace, and the identification of possibilities and challenges in adopting alternative dispute resolution in those cases.

From that, there are three objectives that help are important to mention in order to comprehend the data collection and analysis:

This research aims to comprehend the implications of subjective aspects involving the different types of psychological violence in workplace context;

To understand the impact of those type of violence on an individual's life as well as in

companies;

And to investigate the possibilities and challenges of adopting ADR methods in cases involving psychological violence in the workplace.

The following data was collected in order to facilitate the comprehension of those objectives.

#### 4.1 Gender

The survey starts with a question about the gender of the respondents, which is relevant in this research because, as the literature suggests, some types of psychological violence in the workplace are commonly associated with a specific gender, such as the experience of sexual harassment, which is frequently associated with female workers. As the graphic below demonstrates, the biggest amount of the respondents are also females, in total 86,1% (n=130) in contrast to only 13,9% (n=21) males' respondents.

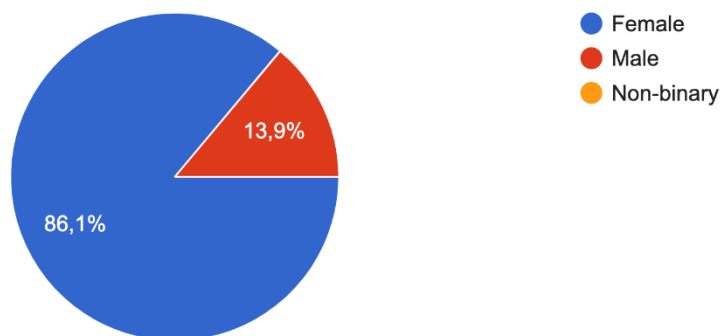


Figure 2 – Gender of Respondents Source: Author.

#### 4.2 Nationality

The second question is regarding the nationality of workers based in Ireland. As cities like Dublin are multicultural, this is an aspect that may directly impact the results. Considering that cases involving violence such as bullying, discrimination, and harassment have, in many incidents, their roots in nationality, language barriers and cultural aspects, this is relevant information to consider while comprehending aspects related to psychological violence in the

workplace. Similar to the previous questions, where the respondents have the same characteristic of being female, it happens that the most considerable amount of answers are of people from different nationalities, outside the European Union, reaching a total of 83,4 % (n=126) respondents, while only 16,6% (n=25) are European citizens.

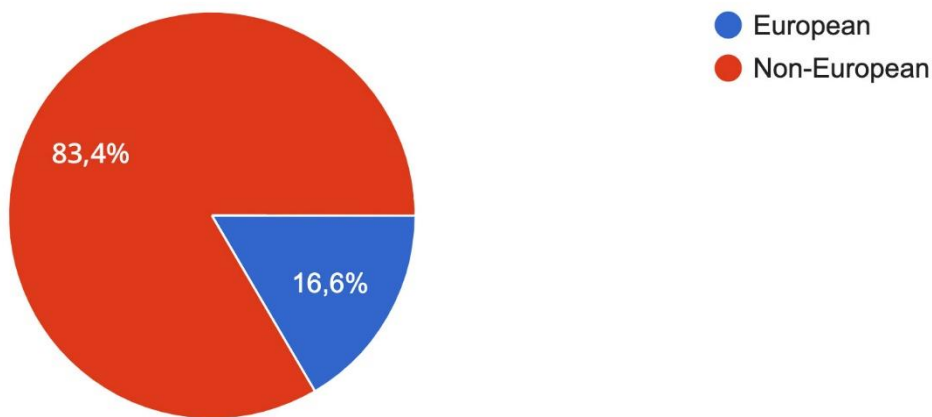


Figure 3 – Nationality of Respondents Source: Author.

### 4.3 Occupation Area

The respondents were asked to state their occupation area to try to comprehend any prevalence's in the determinate area or specific group. However, from the 151 participants, the occupation area of all those involved are diversified, Hospitality workers, Cleaners, Sales assistances and Costume services, Health care workers, Educators, Childminders and Logistics annalistic, were prevalent areas among the respondents.

### 4.4 Psychological violence in the workplace

In this question, the respondents were asked to answer if they have ever experienced any type of psychological violence in the workplace environment, such as discrimination, bullying or harassment.

The results suggest that most of the respondents 66,9 % (n=101), already suffer psychological violence involving them directly. A considerable amount of the respondents already

experienced psychological violence involving others, such as colleagues and co-workers 23,2 % (n=35) and only 9,9% (n=15) respondents never experienced psychological violence involving them or others.

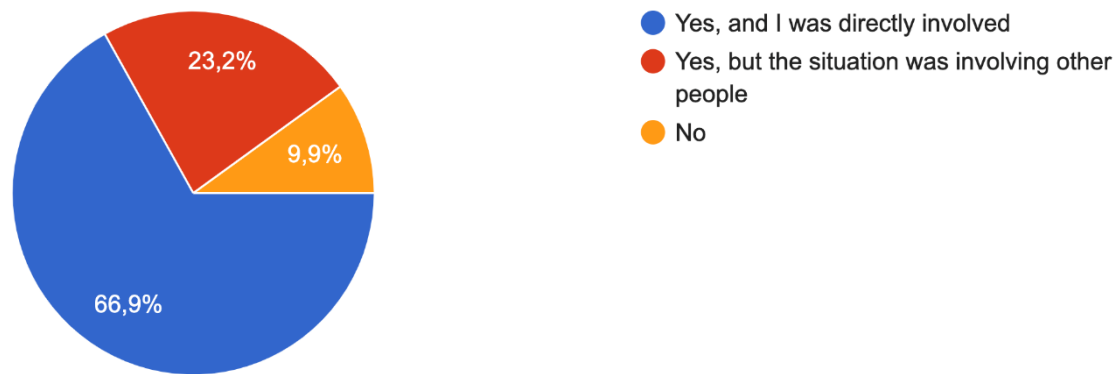


Figure 4 – Psychological violence in the workplace. Source: Author.

#### 4.5 Who was involved in this conflict

Those who experienced psychological violence in their workplace environment were asked to indicate who was involved in this conflict. The majority of answers in this question is involving leaders in general, such as managers, supervisors and employers, 60,9% (n=92), following by the second most significant number of answers in relation to colleagues and co-workers, 49% (n=74). Furthermore, 27,8% (n=42) of respondents who work in direct contact with customer and clients state that those were involved in the conflict. Suppliers occupy the smaller percentage in this specific question, followed by the 10% (n=15) of the participants who have never experienced psychological violence.

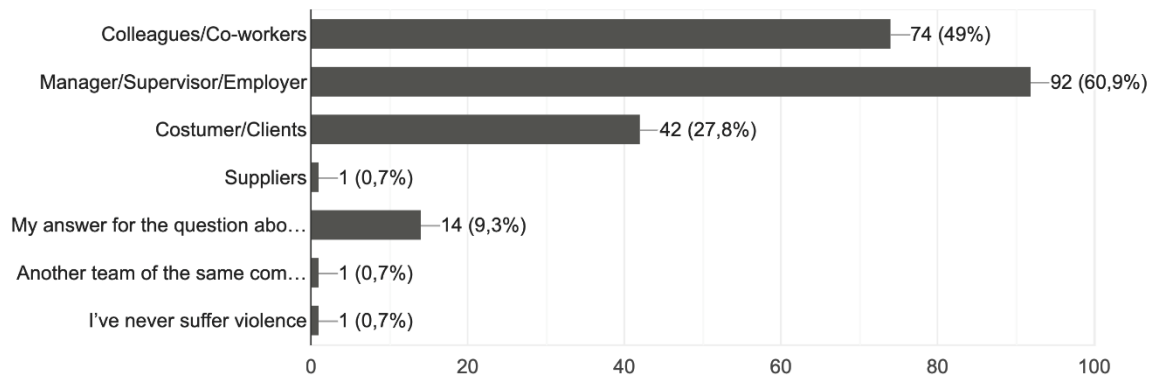


Figure 5 – Parties involved in this conflict. Source: Author.

#### 4.6 Aspects involving psychological violence

In this question, the participants were asked to answer which aspects they believe were involved in the violence they were, directly and indirectly, involved in. Nationality was the option of more than half of the respondents 51% (n=77), followed by gender 34,4% (n=52). Aspects such as colour and race impacted 18,5% (n=28) participants and religion or beliefs (13,2%) (n=5).

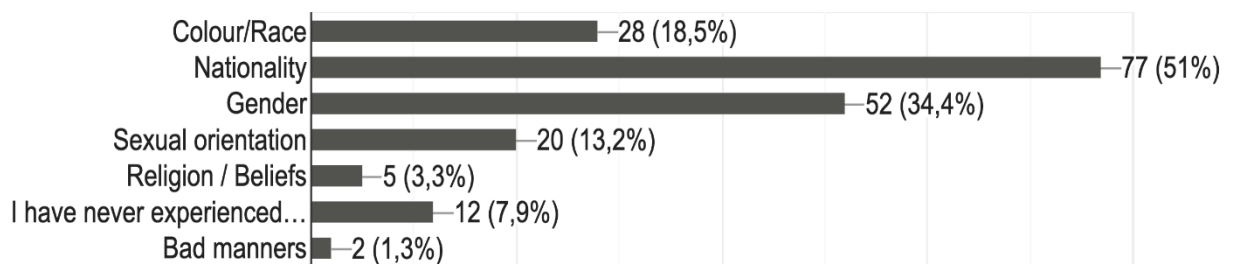


Figure 6– Aspects involving psychological violence in the workplace. Source: Author.

#### 4.7 Feelings and emotions associated with psychological violence

This question is related to which feelings and emotions the respondents experienced and applied to psychological violence. The majority answered frustration and dissatisfaction in relation to their workplace; in total 77, 5% (n=117) of the respondents related that. Stress was the second biggest number, reaching 69,5% (n=105) of the participants and anxiety 61,6%

(n=93). Following these, low self-esteem impacted 41,7% (n=63). In this question, the participants had the option to include other aspects related to experiencing psychological violence in this context. Some respondents demonstrated how important it is to draw attention to this topic by expressing serious mental health impact and relating this conflict in the workplace with panic attacks, impotence, and even suicidal thoughts.

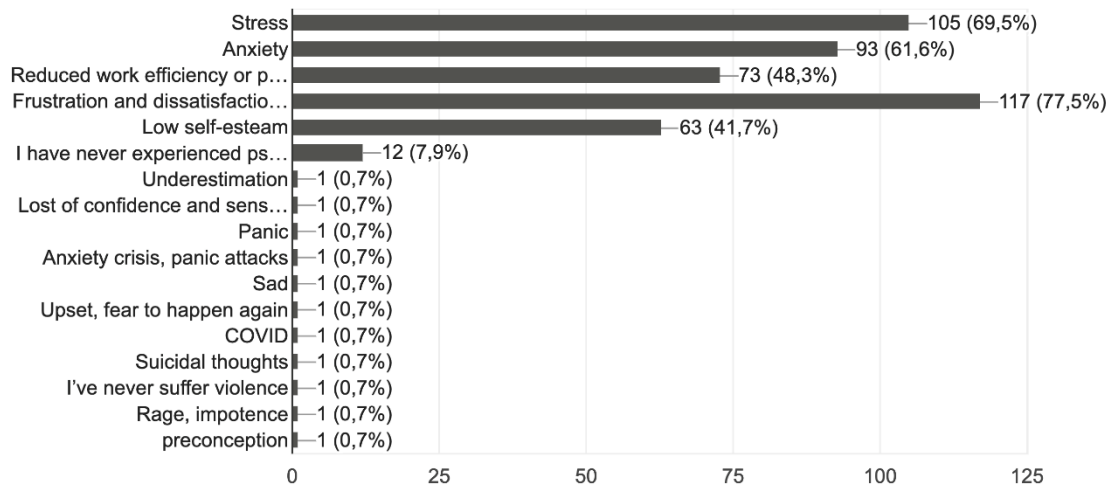


Figure 7-Feelings associated with psychological violence. Source: Author.

#### 4.8 Impact on job performance

In this question, those who experienced violence in the workplace were asked if they believe that those emotions and feeling affected the way they perform their job. 67,5% (n=102) answered yes; those feeling and emotions negatively impacted their workplace. While 17,2% (n=26) have never been directly involved in a conflict. 11,3% (n=17) stated that they manage to cope with their feelings and it did not affect their job performance, while 4% (n=6) are not sure about that.



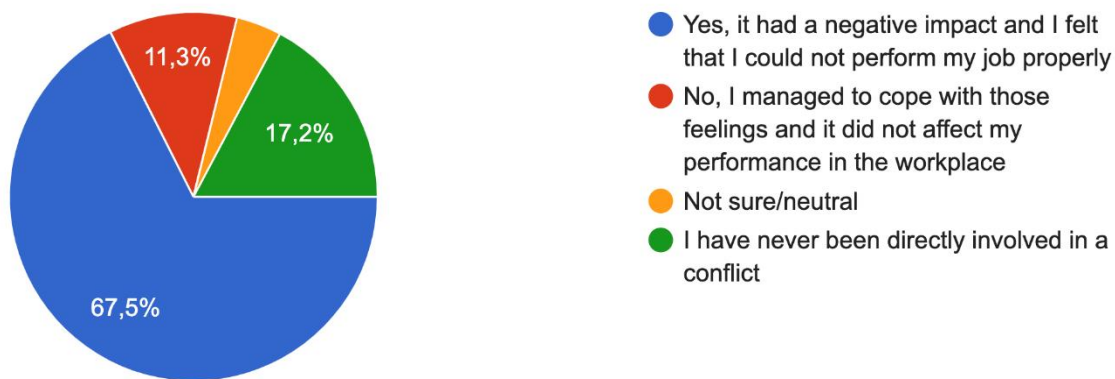


Figure 8. Impact on the job performance. Source: Author

#### 4.9 Impact in other aspects of their life

This question aimed to comprehend if this conflict affects other dimensions in the participant’s life, such as relationships and physical and mental health. 49% (n=74) had ‘yes’ as the answer, 21,2% (n=32) are not sure about that, and 14,6% (22) believe this conflict did not impact other aspects of their lives, while the remaining 15,2% (n=23) have never been directly involved in a conflict.

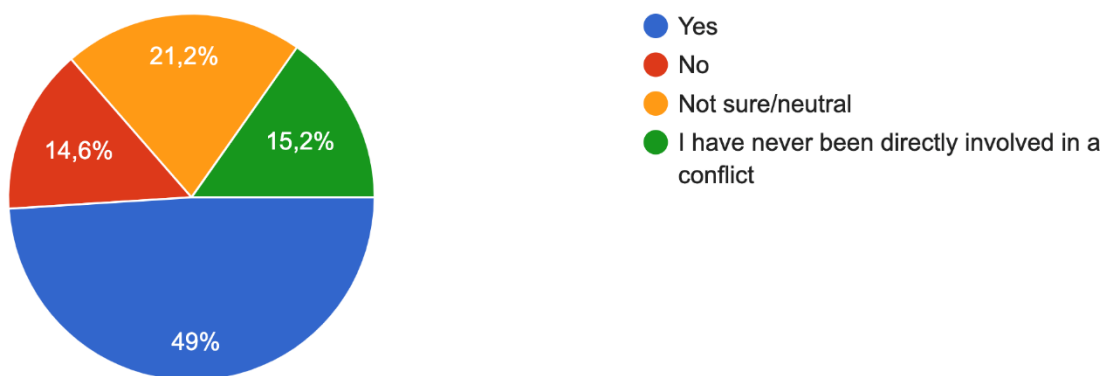


Figure 9. Impact on different aspects of the respondent’s life. Source: Author.

#### 4.10 Familiarity with Alternative Dispute Resolution

In the following question, the participants were asked to answer if they are familiar with ADR.

The majority here, are not aware of those methods 55,6% (n=84) while mediation seems to be the most popular between the options 39,7% (n=60), 25,5% (n=25) are familiar with mediation and only 16,6% (n=25) know about arbitration.

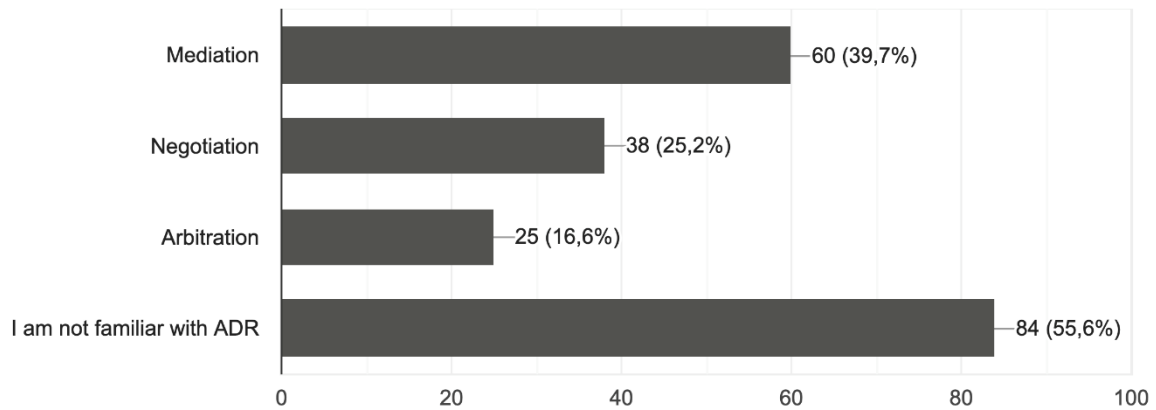


Figure 10 – Familiarity with ADR. Source: Author.

#### 4.11 Potentialities of ADR in this context

Those familiar with ADR were asked if they believe those methods could be useful in dealing with a conflict in the workplace. As the majority is not familiar with ADR 55% (n=83), only 27,2% (n=41) believe in its potentialities. 13,9% answered maybe and 2,6% (n=4) of the participants do not believe that ADR can be effective in this context. Furthermore, in this question, the respondents had the possibility of giving open answers. One participant stated that mediation was not effective, and another participant believes that it depends on the situation.



Figure 11 – Potentialities of ADR in this context. Source: Author.

#### 4.12 Possibilities in reporting a case of conflict in the workplace to leaders

In this question, the participants were asked if they would feel comfortable reporting to leaders in general cases related to psychological violence involving them and or others. 44,4% (n=34) answered yes; however, they are not sure if measures would be taken. 22,5% (n=34) said they believe measures would be taken. 12,6% (n=19) of the participants would not report psychological violence cases because they are afraid or uncomfortable. While 11,3% (n=17) stated that they would not report because they believe nothing would happen.



Figure 12 – Reporting cases involving psychological violence to leaders. Source: Author.

#### 4.13 Possibilities in reporting a case of conflict in the workplace to colleagues

This question aims to understand if the respondents would feel comfortable reporting cases involving psychological violence to colleagues and co-workers. Here, the majority answered 'yes' 62,7% (n=92), 23,3% (n=35) of the participants are not sure and 13,3% (n=20) would not feel comfortable reporting cases involving psychological to colleagues.

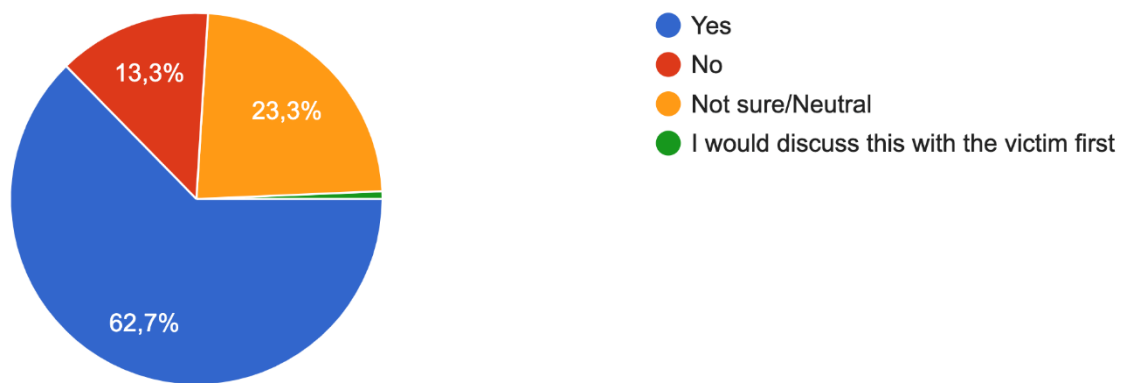


Figure 13 – Reporting cases involving psychological violence to colleagues. Source: Author.

#### 4.14 Concerns of the workplace in relation to the well-being of employees

The last question seeks to comprehend employers' concerns regarding the well-being of their employees in the workplace environment. To understand this question, a Likert scale was used as a tool and the respondents had the option to choose from 1 (not concerned) to 5 (extremely concerned). In this question, most of the participants adopted a neutral position by selecting the number '3', reaching a total of 24,5% (n=37) respondents. The next most considerable number was '4', 22,5 % (n=34) of the respondents, '01' 20,5% (n=31) are not concerned at all, 16,6% (n=25) choose the number '02'. Lastly, the smaller number of the respondents believe their employers are highly concerned about their well-being 15,9% (n=24).

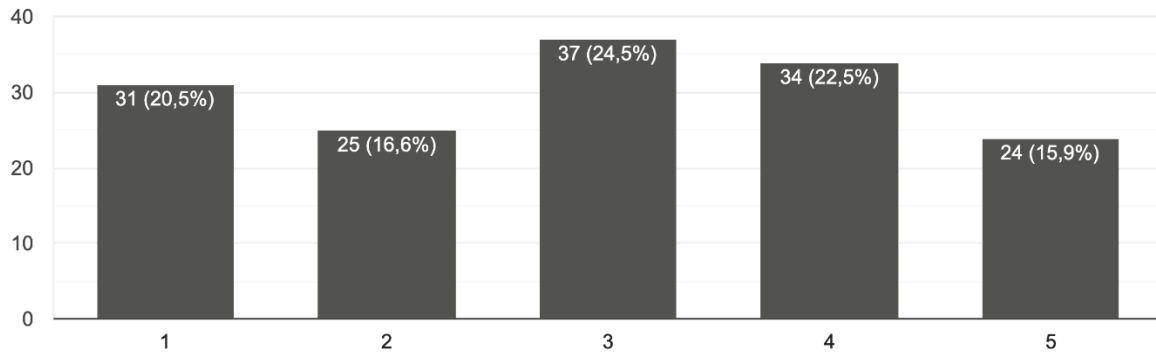


Figure 14 – Concerns regarding workplace well-being. Source: Author.

#### **4.15 Data presentation conclusion**

The data presented above was collected and presented mainly in charts in order to facilitate the reader's comprehension. In this chapter, it was possible to comprehend which aspects are involved psychological violence, such as the impact in the workplace and in different areas of the respondent's life, as well as the use of ADR methods in the workplace, and the challenges involving its recognition.

### **5 DATA ANALYSIS**

This chapter aims to analyse the data collected and integrate with the literature previous discussed in this dissertation. Considering that this research is based on deductive approach, the literature has the role of supporting and is used as a foundation for the data collected. This chapter is divided using the three main objective of this dissertation as guidelines, in order to facilitate the comprehension and presentation of the data.

#### **5.1 Subjective aspects of the respondents**

The first questions of this questionnaire are related to the gender and nationality and other subjective characteristics of the participants. Those questions are directly related to one of the main objectives of this research: to comprehend the implications of subjective aspects

involving psychological violence in the workplace context.

The researcher found it relevant to collect gender and the nationality of the participants once those are aspects frequently associated with discrimination and harassment in the workplace. And interestingly, the majority of the respondents are women (86,1%) and immigrants (83,4%). Concerning those two groups, there seems to exist a pattern of disadvantage, segregation and discrimination, which are persistent and affect many workplace environments. Even though laws are in place to support and protect those groups, members of these groups are frequently associated with workplace conflicts.

About gender, Berdahl and Moore (2006) suggest that women often face hostile attention in traditionally white male-dominated domains. Accordingly, most of the victims of sexual harassment are women, and it is easily possible to find studies have to show how inadequate sexual behaviour can negatively affect those who suffer this violence, causing the psychological and organizational well-being of the victims. Furthermore, Martino and Mursi (2001) maintain that gender should be considered when referring to aspects related to violence in the workplace. The reason for that is that women are at greater risk of violence of a sexual nature, such as harassment. Martino and Mursi (2001) also mention that women tend to face additional stress combining family and work responsibilities, which increases the chances of this group being more affected by stressful situations in the workplace. However, it could be argued that these writers do not represent the reality of all the woman, considering the changes that society has been passing through the last decades and the more significant number of women who do not consider motherhood as an option. However, the author of this dissertation highlight this perspective because still today, there are women who fit in this traditional family structure, and for those women who already have many responsibilities, a situation of violence in the workplace can be intensified, and even be a trigger for mental disorders such as burnout. When it comes to nationality, which was the second question asked in the survey, the

prevalence of Non-European respondents based in Ireland needs to be considered since a significant majority of the literature suggests immigrants are frequently associated as targets to discriminatory behaviours in the workplace. It is worth mentioning that nationality can be considered a broad term. It represents the country someone is born and ethnicity, colour, race, cultural aspects, and even language and communication barriers. According to Krings et al. (2014), this discrimination is often present in a subtle way and can include verbal or nonverbal offensive behaviours. In some cases, the discrimination can be indirect when employees do not get a promotion at work for reasons involving nationality, race or colour.

The following question aims to understand if the respondents already experienced psychological violence in the workplace context. The majority (66,9%) had already experienced psychological violence in this context involving them directly. Other (22,2%) witnessed a situation involving it, and the minority (9,9%) never experienced nor witnessed it. According to Martino (2002), the number of employers who never experienced nor witnessed violent behaviours in the workplace is likely to be small. Among those who already experienced violence involving them or others, a large number stated the conflict was related to leaders in general (60,9%). About that, it is possible to consider that those conflicts involving leaders, CEO's, managers or supervisors might have been associated with the imbalance of power. According to Meyer and Kirsten (2014), psychological violence may emanate from superiors, colleagues or clients. However, leaders are more likely to be the perpetrators of violence in this context. For the writers, the power imbalance tends to be a characteristic of psychological violence related to the victim's inability to defend themselves against their 'superiors'. Furthermore, Branch, Ramsay, and Barker (2013) suggest that this power imbalance is often connected to cases involving bullying, discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

In the questionnaire, other respondents refer to the conflict as being related to colleagues and

co-workers (49%) and (27,8%) of the respondents, who work with customer services, refer to them being involved in this conflict.

Even though the aspects involving power imbalance are frequently associated with psychological violence in the workplace, it is essential to mention that they are not exclusive. There are other reasons which explain and helps in a better understanding of psychological violence in this context. As Martino (2002) refers, workplace violence can result from a combination of causes, including the conditions of work, individual behaviours, the way that costumer and colleagues interact and the interaction between employers and employees. That gives a perspective in relation to how complex and singular violence can be, depending on the environment where it happens.

The majority of the respondents believe ‘nationality’ (51%) is the main reason for a situation involving psychological violence, which they had experienced directly or indirectly. As previously mentioned, immigrants tend to be a target for cases involving discriminatory behaviours. Considering that the number of respondents from Ireland are a minority in this survey, it is possible to comprehend why ‘nationality’ is directly associated with any type of psychological violence. More than that, it raises the importance of looking at those aspects with a critical view. From that, consider which measures of prevention and actions can be undertaken to transform this reality.

In the same question, the second option that a significant amount of respondents related to was gender (34,4%), followed by colour and race (18,5%) and sexual orientation (13,2%).

## **5.2 The impact of psychological violence in victims’ lives and companies**

The second main objective of this research aims to understand the impact of this type of violence in the individual’s life and the effect on the companies. The following questions are related to that. The respondents were asked about feelings they experienced in a situation involving psychological violence. As responses, frustration and dissatisfaction concerning the



workplace was the option affected (77,5%) of the participants. The following options that affected a significant amount of respondents were stress (69,5%), followed by anxiety (61,6%), reduced work efficiency (48,3%) and low self-esteem (41,7%). Rajgopal (2010) refers to those damages caused by those stressful factors that can directly affect their capacity to manage their personal and professional lives.

Considering that, it is possible to think about those aspects as being related to negative experiences in the workplace, bringing negative outcomes for the person who suffers the violence and the organization in general. As 67,5% believe that the feelings and emotions described had a negative impact on the way they perform their jobs, and 49% of the respondents mentioned that not just in the workplace, but the conflict affected other aspects of their lives, such as relationships, physical and mental health.

According to Martino (2002), even though organizations have been recognising those aspects involving violence more and more often, the idea of prevention measures being a mere cost item is still prevalent in the workplace.

It is important to mention that the costs can be much higher in cases where conflict arises. It can involve absenteeism, illness, disability and some indirect costs in relation to the performance, production and in some cases, when cases of violence go public, it can represent serious threats to the efficiency and success of organizations. That is combined with the fact that many public companies tend to be associated with a specific violence case, giving a negative image to the company. Looking for an alternative to solving conflicts that do not involve the traditional courts can result in positive outcomes for those companies. That is due to the confidentiality of some methods such as alternative dispute and resolution.

### **5.3 Possibilities and challenges of ADR in this context**

Following the main objectives of this research, the possibilities and challenges of adopting ADR methods serve as a base to better comprehend the following questions. So, the next

question aims to understand the level of awareness of workers based in Ireland in relation to ADR. Among the respondents, the majority (55,6%) do not know about those methods. This lack of awareness about ADR methods can be considered one of the biggest challenges concerning implementation. They believed in having many potentialities for solving the conflict in a less adversarial way, thereby increasing the chances for each of the parties to find a satisfactory outcome without a judge imposing a decision ( Ojo, Lyiola and Osibanjo, 2014). Among those familiar with alternative dispute and resolution, mediation seems to be the most known (39,7%), negotiation is at 25,2%, and arbitration only 16,6% know about its existence. The respondents who are familiar with ADR were also asked if they believe that those methods could be helpful when dealing with a conflict in this context, (27,2%) of the participants do believe in those methods, (13,9%) are uncertain about that and (2,6%) do not believe ADR can help to deal with a conflict in the workplace. The remaining participants are not aware of ADR. According to Ojo, Lyiola and Osibanjo, (2014), workplaces are breeding grounds for psychological violence such as discrimination and harassment. Considering that, the importance of adopting dispute resolution processes can be given in the necessity of parties dealing with the conflict without violent confrontations or litigation. Ojo, Lyiola and Osibanjo, (2014) refer to some benefits of those methods in the workplace context. The reduction of the chances of complaints and dismissals regarding human rights, the efficacy (related to time and money necessary in the process), and improving the chances of management demonstrating their commitment concerning the employees.

The next question asked in the questionnaire is if the respondents would feel comfortable in reporting to leaders in general about a case involving psychological violence in the workplace. The majority would feel comfortable (44,4%). However, those respondents are not confident if those leaders would take measures. Among those who would feel comfortable reporting, only (22,5%) believe that measures would be taken. The remaining participants would not report

because they believe nothing would happen or because they would be afraid or uncomfortable with the situation. Considering that, not reporting or properly addressing cases of psychological violence in the workplace can increase the chances of this conflict escalating and causing even more harm to employees' well-being and the organization's goals (Ojo, Lyiola and Osibanjo, 2014).

When asked if they would feel comfortable reporting cases related to psychological violence to co-workers, 62,7% believe they would do it. 13,3% would not report or share and the remaining participants are neutral or uncertain about that. The difference between the number of respondents who would feel comfortable reporting to leaders and the respondents who would feel reporting to colleagues enables a reflection about the politics of those companies, which should provide a safe space so their employees can express themselves without fearing negative consequences.

Following the last question of the questionnaire, this is related to the companies' level of concern for the employees' well-being. In this question, most of the respondents choose a neutral option (24,5%), while 20,5% of the participants believe that there is no concern and 15,9% believe in their work environment, there is a lot of concern about it. According to Simone (2014), the well-being of employees should be a concern of companies since well-being can directly affect the way employees perform their job. From that, a lack of well-being can potentially diminish their contributions to the organization.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The final section of this research aims to bring together the literature review, research methodology, and analysis of data in order to develop a constructive conclusion in relation to the objective of this dissertation. Furthermore, in this section, the author will summarize the results, research findings and answer the research question and objectives. Considering that,

the author of this dissertation undertook quantitative research through questionnaires, which are available in appendix one. The data collected was analysed and proved insightful to confirm important theories and concepts in alternative dispute resolution and psychology. To support the comprehension of the methodology and methods utilized in this research, the author will be following the guidance of the Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) diagram, in which the researcher found interpretivist philosophy, deductive approach and quantitative data analysis the most appropriate choices to apply with this research.

This chapter will identify psychological aspects of violence in the workplace and the comprehension of alternative dispute and resolution challenges and potentialities in this context. It is also important to mention that the author aims to deliver the best results possible. However, it is relevant to consider some limitations related to the length of time and words and the COVID-19 restrictions, which had a negative impact, such as the impossibility to access libraries. Although quantitative methods were chosen for this dissertation, for further studies, the author suggests qualitative studies in the area, which would enable in-depth questions involving psychological violence and the application of ADR in the workplace. Besides, it would be necessary to undertake more research inside the companies that already have adopted those methods to comprehend their effectiveness.

Even with those limitations, the information collected will provide insights for future researchers interested in investigating ADR as a tool for dealing with conflicts in the workplace.

## **6.2 Subjective aspects of psychological violence in the workplace**

Considering that many people spend a significant amount of time in the workplace, it is argued that psychological violence in the work setting is an important topic. Also, the importance of having a healthy workplace environment needs to be considered, where employees can find a safe space to share conflicts at any stage. Through the secondary data analyzed in this research,

it was possible to notice that companies are starting to adopt practices and measures to promote their employees' well-being by observing the negative impact that a conflict can cause within the organization. However, there are still many challenges when it comes to its implementations and efficiency, as it was possible to notice in the primary data of this research, as a significant number of the respondents mentioned that in their work environment, there is a lack of concern in relation to employees' well-being.

In addition, bullying, harassment, and discrimination seem to be the most common types of violence in this context, frequently associated with gender, power imbalance, nationality, and other cultural aspects. Even though laws are supporting these groups, members of these groups are still a target for psychological violence in the workplace for many reasons, such as the fact that violence happens in a subtle way or in an indirect form.

In some cases, it can happen that those who are suffering the violence are not aware of their rights or afraid of reporting it. That leads to many cases not being reported, highlighting the importance of the awareness of those issues, mainly when the conflict arises. Avoiding escalations of disputes, particularly in relation to psychological violence, can bring many positive aspects to workers and companies in general.

### **6.3 The impact of psychological violence in an individual's life and companies**

The impact of these types of conflicts tends to be negative for those who are directly and indirectly involved in them. For individuals, this is frequently evidenced by the increased levels of stress, anxiety and lower self-esteem. When stress reaches extreme levels, some people can present psychosomatic symptoms such as high blood pressure, representing risks for their physical health.

Furthermore, other dimensions in the life of someone who is suffering or who have suffered any psychological violence, such as relationships and social life, can be affected by the stress of being the target of discrimination, bullying, or harassment.

Moreover, it tends to affect the victim's productivity, performance and engagement while executing their jobs. That is evident, considering most respondents referred to this violence as having an impact on how they perform their jobs, which can directly affect (negatively) companies.

In order to avoid the impact reaching those proportions, it is crucial that measures can be undertaken when a conflict is just arising, as it is easily found in the literature the importance of handling disputes at the beginning and the consequences if that does not happen, as Enehaug, Helmersen and Mamelund (2016) refer, if they are not addressed in early stages, the conflict tends to 'paralyse' the organization, in the sense of the management not being able to take measures and the conflict escalating, causing damage to individuals' personal and professional life, as well as to the company.

By promoting preventive measures, companies may avoid expenses with lawsuits, sick absences, and all the investment of time and money to deal with a conflict. Then it is given the importance and necessity of investing in possibilities in promoting a safe workplace environment, with strict policies anti-violence in which not type of offensive behaviour is tolerated. Furthermore, if employees feel the existence of commitment and trust of their employers in relation to their well-being, and if they feel the sense of fairness in case a conflict arises, it is more likely that those workers will be more engaged and productive while executing their functions, bringing positive benefits for both: employees and employers.

#### **6.4 ADR possibilities and challenges**

In relation to alternative resolution, it was possible to find controversial perspectives regarding those implementing those methods in the workplace context. To start the discussion about that, it is worth mentioning that many writers are defending its efficiency and potentialities. However, ADR's lack of awareness can be considered a significant challenge, according to the findings of this research and the literature.

Besides, as it is possible to find in the secondary data of this dissertation, there are critics regarding cases involving a power imbalance. In relation to that, victims might feel intimidated in reporting cases of psychological violence, which leads to a more significant number of related conflicts not being reported.

Gramberg (2006) refers to this power imbalance and suggests that ADR practitioners look to please their client, who frequently is the employer. Accordingly, the nature of this bias dilemma concerning the professional (mediator, arbitrator, or negotiator) being motivated to achieve the employer's goals to obtain further work. However, it is relevant to mention that not necessarily every professional will be impacted by this bias issue since a capable and ethical ADR professional needs to be aware of a sense of fairness and that adopting sides will go against ethical principles.

On the other hand, Kalter, Bollen, and Euwema (2018) stated that ADR could be effective in workplace conflicts even when there is a power imbalance issue. However, it is essential that the professional who is facilitating the process needs to be mindful of very likely differences of options and perceptions of the case.

From that, Moore (2014) maintains that mainly in cases where the parties reach an agreement, such as in mediation, this professional should help those involved in implementing and monitoring the agreement as part of the process. That is important because when there is a hierarchy between the parties, it is difficult for subordinates to address supervisors when there is an agreement, and it is not respected. So the mediator must pay special attention to those aspects while discussing the agreement.

Another critic regarding the use of ADR for cases involving psychological violence is that in most cases, people have their rights guaranteed by the law (such as in cases involving discrimination, for example). By adopting ADR or employers enforcing it, the victims might feel a sense of unfairness in relation to this conflict. So employees must be aware of their rights,

and they should be given the right to decide if they believe that ADR can bring positive outcomes for their issues, without being imposed to determine what is offered and without feeling that as a threat to their jobs.

Besides, in cases where the conflict is reaching more considerable proportions, and there is a risk for those involved, it is important that the professional who is conducting the process is aware of those aspects and decide whether ADR methods are appropriate for the case in the matter.

On the other hand, when the conflict arises, the parties are willing to cooperate, and communication between them can be established; those practices can enhance the victim's perception of fairness, as they are given a space where they can share their feelings and emotions. Considering that, those practices involving alternative dispute resolution may have a therapeutical effect on those who are suffering any violence, increasing the chances of an effective positive outcome, preserving the sense of fairness.

Furthermore, another point to be discussed is the differences between the types of alternative resolution and how important it is to choose the most appropriate method depending on the case in the matter.

Negotiation can be a potential tool for the parties to settle their differences. In many cases, by establishing horizontal communication, the parties involved can perceive aspects that they were unaware of and see each other's point of view. It has the power of bringing insights to those who perpetrate offensive behaviours without noticing how hurtful it can be, and it gives the chance of preventing more conflicts from arising.

When this communication is not happening between those involved, a neutral third party such as a mediator can bring positive outcomes. This professional will help the disputants see each other's perspective about the conflict without taking parties and reaching a mutually acceptable agreement. Mediation is frequently associated with positive outcomes in disputes in the



workplace, and it has many potentialities in this context. As it is a method that goes into the 'roots' of the conflicts, it is also related to long-lasting positive outcomes.

Furthermore, when the parties are not willing to cooperate, and they are looking for a way of settling their differences without involving the traditional court system (which can be slow and costly), arbitration can be an option, in which a third party, with enough expertise, will decide for those involved.

The author of this dissertation suggests that further studies should be undertaken in order to comprehend the long-term efficiency of those methods.

## **6.5 Discussion Conclusion**

In this chapter the writer had the opportunity to integrate literature review, the data collected through a critical overview of the topic of psychological violence in a work context and also the effects of different types of violence. The application of negotiation, mediation and arbitration were looked at terms of the advantages and challenges associated with each one. The lack of knowledge of the respondents in relation to those methods became evident, as well as the importance of this topic and how people can be affected by stressful situations in their workplace context.

## 7 CONCLUSION

This research was written to present the author's comprehension in relation to the impacts of workplace psychological violence in victims and companies. Considering the results collected from primary and secondary data, it is possible to comprehend negative aspects related to this type of violence, affecting different dimensions of individuals' lives, such as physical and mental health. In relation to the companies, the impact is directly related to the investments that many companies need to make about time to solve the and money.

Having said that, it is possible to comprehend that the workplace context tends to be frequently associated with different types of psychological violence, which has relation to the increased interest for alternative dispute resolution methods to support those involved in a dispute to settle their differences. Once they tend to be less costly, faster, and are mostly non-confrontational methods, they have been attracting the attention of many companies. Even though it is noticeable in the literature that those methods have many potentialities, there is still a lack of awareness of the population in relation to it. Besides, it is understood that those methods need to be carefully evaluated. Its effectiveness depends on many aspects, such as the stage of the conflict, which also tends to determine which ADR methods are more suitable for this conflict. Also, ethical considerations of the professional who is facilitating the process need to be evaluated. Furthermore, the author of this dissertation suggests that qualitative studies focused on the awareness of the companies concerning ADR and long-term effectiveness could provide insights and better understandings about this topic.

And even though those methods occupy an essential role in order to solve those disputes, it is relevant to consider the development of practices for combating and preventing this phenomenon of workplace violence. By doing that and avoiding this type of conflict from arising, companies are providing benefits to their employees and the organization in general. That happens because conflicts of this nature tend to be associated with higher costs involving

violence such as the court, court-awarded damages, fines, absences of victims and their lower productivity, as well as the reputation of some organizations can lead to significantly higher costs.

What is more, preventive and systematic approaches tend to have an important role when it comes to approaching the phenomenon of workplace violence. Companies must be able to disseminate legislation and practices concerning anti-violence actions and encourage programs to employees and management about dealing with violence in this context. Not only that, but also assisting and encouraging workers to report cases involving psychological violence.

So it is possible to comprehend the importance of this topic and the relevance in educating and incentivizing the awareness of companies and employees regarding this violence and adopting non-confrontational methods when possible. As it is noticeable that a significant amount of the population struggles with mental health issues, by promoting good mental health practices and providing tools of recognition and early identification, the benefits of that can be seen much beyond the workplace environment with the reduction of costs, but in society in general.

## **8 REFLECTION PAPER**

While writing this dissertation, I became aware of the importance and role the workplace has in our lives, considering that in our society, people tend to spend a significant amount of time in the workplace environment, and it occupies a vital role in our life. So important that we spend many years studying in schools, universities and courses to prepare and to have the best career possible. Our career, even if I consider that unfair, it determinates our role in society.

I became aware of how necessary it is to feel well-being in this context because if that does not happen, many aspects of our lives can be impacted. In relation to the mental health aspect, this is a particular subject that always caught my attention, considering that I studied psychology in Brazil. However, I never noticed how this mental health could be affected by our jobs and how frequent workplace conflict it is present.

Another aspect of learning during this dissertation is in relation to the use of alternative dispute and resolution. I have never heard about those before starting this Master's degree, and studying and comprehending their potentialities when it comes to solving conflicts in this context was fascinating. By writing this dissertation and mixing the topics related to psychological perspectives, which was my previous area, and ADR, I understood how interesting it is to have a holistic approach when dealing with human beings once different aspects of our lives (such as mental health and workplace conflicts) are correlated. Besides, this topic made me think about how important it is to have critical thinking in every field of knowledge. For example, when a mediator is called to deal with a conflict involving bullying in the workplace, and this professional needs to evaluate if mediation or any other ADR is appropriate for the case, considering many aspects.

Previously, I was not sure about what to expect about this dissertation, I just knew this was the moment that the majority of the people from my class feared the most. This anxiety in relation to this moment generated so much stress among everyone, including me. However, while writing it, I learnt an important lesson about how that anxiety and fear just anticipate feelings and emotions and that the process of writing can be pleasant. During the weeks I have been dedicating for this dissertation, a mix of emotions became evident, especially in a global pandemic, but getting the work done and building a study that I was interested in, made this process easier.

Over the weeks writing this research, I learnt much more than aspects that are related to the topic chosen, but I learnt to be patient with the process and with myself. I knew that without those aspects, it would be much harder, not only in the academic world but in life. For this reason, I had insights during writing the dissertation that I will keep in mind during my further studies and daily life.

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## APPENDIX 1.

Psychological Violence in The Workplace Possibilities of ADR in this context

MASTER OF ARTS IN DISPUTE RESOLUTION

\* This research has an academic purpose only. \*

### OBJECTIVE

The aim of this research is to comprehend the impact of psychological violence in the workplace environment, as well as the possibilities of alternative dispute resolution in this context.

This research is being carried out by Francine Ardais Cabral with the supervision of Orla Tuohy as a part of the requirements for the conclusion of the Masters Degree in Dispute Resolution (Independent College Dublin).

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Any answers provided will be sent to a link at Google Forms and the data collected will be stored online in an electronic format protected by a password. Information such as name, email address or IP address will not be collected by the platform. As a result of this, all responses are completely anonymous and no identification is required.

### DECLARATION

This research is being carried out in accordance with the WMA Declaration of Helsinki ethical principles (available at - <https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki-ethical-principles-for-medical-research-involving-human-subjects/>)

### CONCERNS

In case you have any doubts or concerns in relation to this research, you are welcome to contact the researcher Francine Ardais Cabral <[francineardais94@gmail.com](mailto:francineardais94@gmail.com)> And if you believe this research is not able to maintain ethical principles, please contact Independent College Dublin <[info@independentcolleges.ie](mailto:info@independentcolleges.ie)>

Proceeding with the questionnaire, you are automatically indicating that:

- You have READ and AGREED with the above information;
- You agree to participate in this research VOLUNTARILY;
- You are 18 years or over.

Thank you for your time!

### Questionnaire

1. Gender:

2. What is your nationality? \*

3. Please, state your occupation area below \*

4. Have you ever experienced any type of psychological violence in your workplace environment? (Such as discrimination, bullying, harassment, etc.) \*

\* Yes, and I was directly involved

\* Yes, but the situation was involving other people

\* No.

5. If you answered 'yes' to the previous question, who was involved in that conflict? \*

\* Colleagues/Co-workers

\* Manager/Supervisor/Employer

\* Customer/Clients

\* Suppliers

\* My answer for the question above was "NO"

6. Which option do you believe is related to this situation, previously mentioned?

\* Colour/Race

\* Nationality

\* Gender

\* Sexual orientation

\* Religion / Beliefs

\* I have never experienced psychological violence in the workplace (involving me or others)

7. If you've witnessed or experienced psychological violence in the workplace, which feelings or emotions do you associate that with?

\* Stress

\* Anxiety

\* Reduced work efficiency or productivity

\* Frustration and dissatisfaction in relation to the workplace

\* Low self-esteem

\* I have never experienced psychological violence in this environment

8. If you were directly involved in a conflict involving psychological violence, do you believe those feelings and emotions had impact on the way you perform your job? \*

\* Yes, it had a negative impact and I felt that I could not perform my job properly

\* No, I managed to cope with those feelings and it did not affect my performance in the workplace

\* Not sure/neutral

\* I have never been directly involved in a conflict

9. Did this conflict affect other dimensions of your life? (such as relationships, physical and mental health) \*

\* Yes

\* No

\* Not sure/neutral

\* I have never been directly involved in a conflict

10. If you answered yes in the previous question, can you briefly describe the impact this conflict had on your life? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Are you familiar with any of the following alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods? \*

\* Mediation

\* Negotiation

\* Arbitration

\* I am not familiar with ADR

12. If you are familiar with ADR, do you believe it could be helpful in dealing with a conflict in the workplace? \*

\* Yes

\* No

\* Maybe

\* I am not familiar with ADR

13. Would you feel comfortable reporting to a leader, manager, HR manager, CEO, or other colleague about a case related to psychological violence involving you or others? \*

\* YES, and I believe measures would be taken

\* YES, but I am not sure if measures would be taken

\* NO, I would be afraid/uncomfortable reporting cases involving me or others

\* NO, because I believe that nothing would happen

\* Not sure/neutral

14. Would you feel comfortable in reporting a case of psychological violence to colleagues and co-workers? (involving you or others)

\* Yes

\* No

\* Not sure/Neutral

15. Do you consider your current workplace an environment where there is a concern regarding the well-being of employees? \*

Not concerned

1

2

3

4

5

Extremely concerned