INTERCULTURAL MEDIATION AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR THE PROMOTION OF INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT IN IRELAND

by

LUCIENE PEREIRA DOS SANTOS

Student Registration No: 51710048

A dissertation presented to the

FACULTY OF LAW

INDEPENDENT COLLEGE DUBLIN

MA in Dispute Resolution

November 2021

Independent Colleges
learn to succeed

Dissertation Submission Form

LEARNER NUMBER:	51710048
NAME:	LUCIENE PEREIRA DOS SANTOS
COURSE:	MA DISPUTE RESOLUTION
DISSERTATION TITLE:	Intercultural Mediation as an Instrument for the Promotion of Inclusion and Integration of Immigrants in the Workplace Environment in Ireland
SUPERVISOR NAME:	ALISON WALKER
WORD COUNT:	17.607
DUE DATE:	05/11/2021
DATE SUBMITTED:	04/11/2021

I certify that:

- This dissertation is all my own work, and no part of this dissertation has been copied from another source: Yes **X** ☐ No ☐
- I understand that this dissertation may be checked for plagiarism by electronic or other means and may be transferred and stored in a database for the purposes of data-matching to help detect plagiarism: Yes **X** ☐ No ☐
- This dissertation has not previously been submitted in part or in full for assessment to any other institution: Yes **X**☐ No ☐
- I consent to the retention of my dissertation (hardcopy)in the library for the purpose of future research: Yes **X** ☐ No ☐
- I consent to the inclusion of my dissertation in an electronic database maintained by the library: Yes **X** ☐ No ☐

(Note that if no check boxes are selected, this dissertation will be regarded as NOT properly submitted, and may be subject to a late submission penalty)

Name: LUCIENE PEREIRA DOS SANTOS Date: _____

Notes:

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ii
Abstract iii
List of Figures iv
Introduction 1
Background of the Dissertation 5
Chapter 1 - Literature Review 7
1.1. Culture and Cultural Diversity 7
1.2. Immigrant Cross-Cultural Adjustment Challenges 8
1.2.1. Language Barriers 9
1.2.2. People's Attitudes in the Host Country 13
1.2.3. Visas, Work Permits, and Illegal Status 16
1.2.4. Racism and Discrimination 19
1.3. Mediation and Integration 21
1.3.1. Intercultural Mediation 23
1.3.2. Intervention Fields 26
1.3.3. Techniques and skills 28
1.4. Intercultural Competence in the Workplace 30
Chapter 2 - Research Methodology and Methods 34
2.2. Research Approach 36
2.3. Research Strategies and Choice 36
2.4. Data Collection 37
2.5. Population and Sampling 39
2.6. Ethical Considerations 40
2.7. Limitations of Methodology 40
Chapter 3 - Presentation of the data 42
Chapter 4 - Data Analysis and Findings 46
4.1. Demography 46
4.2. Cultural Diversity in the Irish Workplace 50
4.3. Barriers to immigrants' integration 51
4.4. Use of mediation to promote integration 53
4.5. Intercultural Competence 57
Chapter 5 - Discussion 62
Conclusions 68
Reflection 71
Bibliography 73
Appendix A - Online Questionnaire 85
Appendix B - Consent Form and Concluding Statement 90
Appendix C - Research and Ethics Form 92

Acknowledgements

Being an immigrant may be a lonely walk at times, as people come and go from our lives regularly. As a result, I would want to thank those few but important friends who have joined me on my adventure of starting a new life in a new country in search for new opportunities and possibilities. They gave me advice, direction, and ideas for my dissertation; they listened to my problems and concerns; and, most importantly, they were my family.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the people who came into my life last year, during the chaotic pandemic scenario, who have been encouraging and convincing me that a new world of new opportunities awaits me.

Finally, I would like to thank my supervisor, Alison Walker, for helping me through the execution of this project, as well as Sharon Morrissey and John Dunne for their suggestions.

I am quite pleased with the outcome of this work, and I hope that it heralds the start of a new chapter for me in Ireland.

A**bstract**

The aim of this study is to collect migrant workers' impressions of the Irish workplace integration process, with the goal of establishing how such workers would regard the use of intercultural mediation as a technique to help them integrate into Irish companies. This study used an inductive method, and a quantitative and pragmatic approach. A total of 113 immigrants who are currently or have previously worked in Ireland responded to the survey.

A study of all data obtained found that the majority of immigrants in this poll felt integrated at work in Ireland, which may represent the wider immigrant population but does not refute their opinion of a visible lack of cultural understanding in Irish workplaces. In terms of migrants' perceptions of workplace attitudes toward cultural diversity, the findings of this study show that it is more likely to reward cultural competence development at all levels at the workplace rather than at the managerial level. The vast majority of participants thought intercultural mediation was a worthwhile and desired strategy, preferring to delegate this task to a co-worker who shared their immigrant status.

In summary, the most important findings are not totally consistent with the author's initial projections. The preliminary adoption of the intercultural mediation techniques by creating cultural competence development inside Irish workplaces, notably among management levels, was what this study initially proposed, followed by the introduction of staff specialised in this area within the workplace. However, based on the outcomes of the study, it is concluded that both tactics would be seen positively by immigrants, implying that concurrent implementation may be feasible from the standpoint of immigrant staff.

Keywords: intercultural mediation; integration process; immigrants; Irish workplace; cultural competence.

List of Figures

Figure 1: Determinants of national identity 10

Figure 2: The percentage of people worried about ‘legal’ versus ‘illegal’ immigration 18

Figure 3: Table of Question 1 47

Figure 4: Charts of Questions 2, 3 and 4 48

Figure 5: Charts of Questions 5 and 6 49

Figure 6: Chart/Table of Question7 50

Figure 7: Chart of Question 9 51

Figure 8: Chart of Question 8 52

Figure 9: Graphic of Question 10 53

Figure 10: Chart of Question 11 and 12 54

Figure 11: Chart of Question 13 55

Figure 12: Chart of Question 16 56

Figure 13: Char of Question 14 56

Figure 14: Charts of Question 15 57

Figure 15: Chart of Questions 17 and 18 58

Figure 16: Chart of Question 19 59

Figure 17: Chart of Question 20 60

Figure 18: Chart of Question 21 61

Introduction

For immigrants worldwide, relocating to a new nation and beginning a new life is a difficult process. When immigrants arrive in a new country, they go on a journey into a new environment, culture, and community. The numbers of migrants have been increasing over the previous few decades, and it seems doubtful that they will reverse course. Around 258 million people lived outside their country of birth in 2017, in the whole world (OECD, 2018).

Ireland has become a destination for many migrants; and with a foreign-born population of 17%, it has one of the highest immigrant resident rates in the EU in 2019 (McGinnity et al., 2020b), leading to an increase in the migrant workforce. Since 2004 (Lucey, 2019), migrants have filled about 60% of newly created jobs in Ireland; and employment visas for migrants have also risen significantly, from 11.305 in 2018 to 14.163 in 2019 (Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, 2019).

There are 12 nations in Ireland with a population of over 10,000 individuals, including Brazilians, French, Germans, Indians, Italians, Latvians, Romanians, and Spaniards, as well as Poles, Lithuanians, and British. Immigrants in Ireland are extremely different in terms of age, social background, religious beliefs and practices, and English language ability adding to the diversity of the Irish community. This community diversity can have an impact on and cause problems in various areas, especially in the delivery of public services such as education and health, how people access work, and how they perceive Irish society (McGinnity et al., 2018a).

In this perspective, the most critical indicator of integration is frequently defined as access to jobs, as employment provides migrants with a source of income and an opportunity to establish a foothold in the host community (OECD, 2018 and McGinnity et al., 2020b).

However, despite the fact that employment is frequently defined as the most important indicator of integration, there is almost no emphasis on the workplace, with programmes designed to provide

access to employment but little focus on the process of integration within businesses when immigrants are already employed.

In that regard, it becomes pertinent to consider the integration process of these migrants into the Irish labour market, assuming and assessing the difficulties inherent in adjusting to a new language, a new culture and a new job (Rajendran et al., 2017; Hopkins, 2012 and Lee et al., 2016).

Studies on immigrants' integration into society in general shed light on how intercultural mediators can aid in this process (Schuller, 2016; Theodosiou and Aspioti, 2016 and Bianchini, 2015). Mediation, particularly in an international environment, is practised in a variety of ways and guided by a variety of philosophies, most notably regarding the mediator's role and the manner in which the mediation should be done. Culture is especially essential to mediation practice because it impacts how people perceive conflict and resolve disagreements within the legal system (Law, 2009).

There are various definitions of intercultural mediation, but one widely accepted definition defines it as the act of bridging and mediating between individuals or groups of varied cultural backgrounds with the goal of resolving conflict or effecting change (Jezewski, 1990, cited in Souza, 2016). It is a form of intervention by third parties in and on circumstances characterised by enormous diversity, according to Romero (2010), in order to foster mutual understanding and awareness, learning and development of coexistence, and governance.

Individuals with transdisciplinary, multi-linguistic, multicultural, and multi-professional abilities participate in intercultural mediation to get a better knowledge of their responsibilities as responsible members of a community. These mediators, according to Bianchin (2015), provide a range of purposes, including cultural engagement policies, diversity acknowledgement, and knowledge of diverse cultures and points of view.

Unfortunately, the workplace has not been a welcoming environment for adopting the benefits of

intercultural mediation. Mediation is widely used by employers to resolve workplace conflicts. Nonetheless, the purpose of this study is to demonstrate how intercultural mediation can be used to increase immigrants' involvement and participation in their work environments, an area that is often overlooked, in order to help them feel more engaged as "part of the team" and thus more welcomed in their new country of residence.

Taking these points into consideration, this research project will investigate how intercultural mediation can be useful in the process of integrating immigrants into the workplace environment, not in a way that allows immigrants to find jobs in the foreign country, but rather how to integrate them within the job, and inside the company. However, to reduce the scope of the inquiry, this initiative focuses only on immigrants working in the Irish workplace.

The significance of this study is validated by what has been stated thus far. Not only Ireland, but the entire world, has become increasingly culturally diverse. Immigration has always occurred and has only risen in recent decades. The literature identifies a variety of causes for migration, including economic, political, cultural, familial, and career motivations (OECD, 2018), as well as the importance of labour demand in target countries (De Haas et al., 2018).

Integration of migrants in the workplace appears to be an important issue in Ireland, where integration and inclusion are regarded as critical employment issues. The country seeks to foster fairness, a culture of human rights respect, and intercultural understanding in which everyone, regardless of ethnic origin, has equal access to employment opportunities and equitable treatment in the workplace (McGinnity et al., 2018a).

As a result, given the dearth of literature on the subject, it is worthwhile to conduct research to ascertain migrant employees' impressions of Irish integration procedures and their attitudes toward the use of intercultural mediation and its approaches in Irish workplaces.

Thus, one of the most critical phases in this type of study is to define the research questions at the start of the study in order to guide the researcher throughout the process as it is typical to become disoriented during the research process if this is not done.

According to Saunders et al. (2016), the research topic determines the destination, strategy, data collecting, and analysis, as well as the methodologies and literature employed in the research project. This study aims to answer the following research question: ***How intercultural mediation can promote the inclusion and integration of immigrants in the workplace environment in Ireland?***

The research goal for this project is to acquire a better knowledge of how intercultural mediation may be used for more than simply cross-cultural challenges, and how it can also be beneficial in the process of immigrants' integration into the workplace. To accomplish this, the following research objectives were established as a means of fulfilling the research's aims:

- To determine the challenges that impact immigrants in their integration, especially in the workplace;
- To assess the relation existent between intercultural mediation and its approaches and techniques and the process of integration of immigrants;
- To determine how intercultural mediators' methods and techniques can be employed by Irish firms to improve immigrant workers' integration.

This study used a hybrid methodology that included a literature review to elucidate the above-mentioned objectives and a quantitative approach based on responses from 113 immigrants who are currently working or have previously worked and resided in Ireland.

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. In Chapter 1, we will review pertinent literature on cultural diversity and ethnicity, as well as the cross-cultural adjustment issues faced by immigrants,

with an emphasis on how these characteristics affect immigrants' workplace integration. This will be followed by a discussion of the connection between mediation and integration, what constitutes intercultural mediation, its characteristics, application fields, and required skills, to demonstrate how its application in the workplace context can benefit the integration process of immigrants. This is a technique for laying the groundwork for addressing the research question and, as a result, the inquiry's aim.

Then the methodology is outlined in Chapter 2 outlined presenting the research question and objectives of this research, and it explains to the reader the methodology used and why was considered appropriate for this study.

The data and findings acquired from the inquiry are given to the reader in Chapters 3 and 4, summarising the outcomes and key discoveries. The major conclusions and links to related literature can be found in the discussion chapter. Finally, the study demonstrates possible conclusions and recommendations.

Background of the Dissertation

This researcher has been living in Ireland as an international student for the past two and a half years. In Brazil, I spent most of my professional life working in clerical jobs before enrolling in college to pursue a law degree. Consider my time in college as well as my experience as a lawyer after graduation, and you will see that I have more than 5 years of experience in the legal profession.

I need to start over from the beginning and leave, or perhaps a more accurate phrase would be "paused" my career and life. In Ireland, I became an immigrant who was learning a new language and assimilating into a new culture, all while having no friends, no home, and no family to rely on for support. I was alone. This encounter forced me to go through a variety of positive and negative

experiences. As an immigrant myself, some of the issues that will be discussed in this dissertation will present some experiences that even I have gone through or have heard about from friends and colleagues while living in Ireland.

Being a master's student in Dispute Resolution has allowed me to examine various elements and phenomena throughout an organization, showing that conflicts are not always as negative as we usually believe and that a solution to such phenomenon is within reach. It also made me understand that there are other options available that may be more successful and useful than going to court, which is a method of dealing with problems that I was more accustomed to, given my previous experience with the legal system.

The experience also prompted me to pay more attention to the most important resource of every organization, which is their employees, in order to design a scenario that is more equitable and sensitive to the needs and interests of everyone. Taking the course also forced me to reassess how I deal with disagreements in general, even in personal situations such as those with friends, colleagues at work, and family members.

This study, combined with my personal experiences as an immigrant in Ireland, including discrimination and dealing with others, as well as hearing about other immigrants' struggles to feel integrated into their workplace, and much more, has increased my concern about immigrants and how Irish employers/companies can make improvements to assist those immigrants in this process to become a part of this new culture. However, having stated the background information and concerns that I have raised, this research will be based on that information and will investigate how intercultural mediation and mediators can be beneficial in the process of integrating immigrants into the workplace environment in Ireland.

Chapter 1 - Literature Review

1.1.Culture and Cultural Diversity

Any discussion about immigrants and immigration will include the terms culture and diversity. These are the keywords in these debates. With this in mind, it seems appropriate to begin this dissertation by discussing what those two words entail.

When dealing with cultural differences, it is customary to start by trying to define the term "culture". Some scholars have researched culture in terms of ethnic or geographic groups, rather than culture as a whole. Triandis (2002) defines culture as a shared meaning system among people who speak a certain language within a specific historical period and geographical place.

The cultural process is seen as a dynamic process by McLean and Kromkowski (1991), who understand it as a foundation for social relationships. Moon (1996) argues that some hegemonic definitions of culture exist and studies other cultural conceptualizations, as well as the implications of these alternative cultural conceptualizations for intercultural communication research. Throughout his study of the evolution of culture, the author situates it in the frameworks of politics, economics, and social life. He also criticises international literature for missing diversity of viewpoints.

At this point, the connection to diversity becomes crucial. Diversification embraces all distinctions between individuals, groups, and civilizations. Anyone can perceive diversity in a variety of ways, depending on their perspective. Due to the complexity of the concept, the term diversity has gained popularity in recent years. Seymen (2006) defines it as a social mix of individuals with varying group personalities and, hence, different cultures.

LeBaron's (2003) concept of culture appears relevant for this study because it incorporates both

culture and diversity. According to the author, cultures extend beyond language, dress, and food and they are not restricted to racial/ethnic/national origins. When one part of cultural identity is questioned or misunderstood, it can become dominant, resulting in stereotyping, incorrect projection, and conflict. When differences emerge in families, communities, or organisations culture is constantly present, influencing perceptions, behaviours, thoughts, and outcomes. Furthermore, Sarala and Vaara (2010) feel that cultural differences can facilitate information transfer. A more dynamic social environment is a result of cultural integration, the authors claim.

This research examines the ethnic and cultural diversity of the workforce, which includes individuals from a number of countries, origins, and religions. Multiculturalism, according to Cox (1991), enhances workplace variety and pluralism, hence making the workplace more inclusive. He asserts that multiculturalism creates workplace diversity and pluralism, both of which he views as positive.

This entire concept of diversity, and cultural and racial distinctions, is inextricably linked to the role of immigrants in the workforce and society, and it is critical to remember that we require diversity now more than ever. To prosper in today's increasingly competitive economic world, fostering ways for immigrants to contribute to this need for cultural diversity in the workplace benefits, not only companies but also society as a whole.

1.2. Immigrant Cross-Cultural Adjustment Challenges

As Beutin et al. (2006) point out it is difficult to define what constitutes a migrant. This is because there is no such thing as a 'migrant'. Many migrants come to establish a permanent residence, while others come temporarily to work or attend education, indicating that their reasons are varied. Almost all migratory movements are now defined by European Union policy, from labour migration to family reunification, refugees, asylum seekers, and retiree emigration (OECD, 2018 and De Haas

et al., 2018). The argument is that regardless of the motivation for migrating, as is widely acknowledged and written about, acclimating to a new culture after being immersed in one is tough (Hanassab, 1991; Ishiyama and Westwood, 1992; Lee and Westwood, 1996).

Being qualified and experienced does not guarantee that their transition into this new labour market would be painless. Certain broad causes and challenges end up affecting the cross-cultural assimilation of all arrivals to the country (Boekestljn, 1998, cited in Lee and Westwood, 1996). According to relevant studies, immigrants in almost every country face those similar difficulties: while the most serious are related to a lack of employment and insufficient access to health care and legal services, another group of difficulties is related to a lack of language proficiency, bureaucracy barriers, and adjusting to new surroundings (Theodosiou and Aspioti, 2016).

O'Connell and McGinnity (2008), who are particularly concerned with the Irish issue, also provide useful material. They reveal that non-Irish nationals are three times more likely than Irish nationals to face workplace discrimination. They also draw attention to the fact that immigrants in Ireland face the same obstacles in finding work as those in other parts of the world. With this in mind, it is vital to discuss some of these challenges in further depth.

1.2.1. Language Barriers

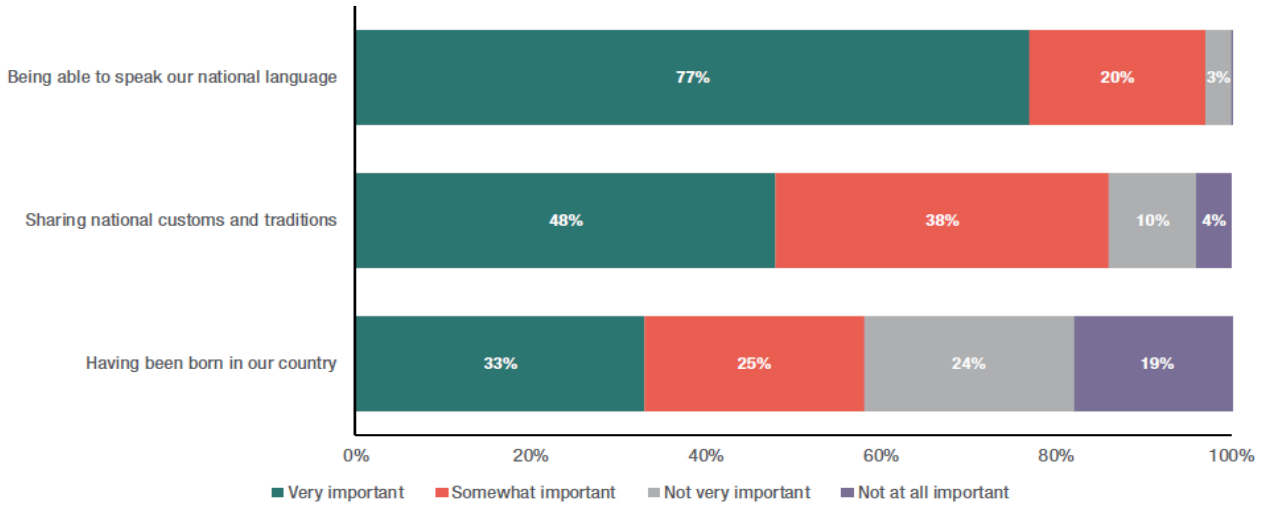
Language has an important but difficult role in decisions about migration, assimilation, integration and the impact of migrants on host societies (Wang et al., 2018). Some researchers think that knowledge of the receiving country's language influences an immigrant's capacity to find work and contribute to the society that they intend to be part of (Esser, 2006; Isphordin, and Otten, 2014; Petrova, 2016). In Europe, for example, language is seen as a vital component of the integration process, with the EU's fourth Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy (2004, p. 18) emphasising it: *"Basic understanding of the host society's language, history, and institutions is*

important to integration; allowing immigrants to acquire this basic information is critical to successful integration".

Language helps us express who we are and desire to be. Our personalities, roles, and relationships, as well as our social identities, are reflected in our unique communication styles. Language influences status, impressions, and group divisions. A lack of awareness of the host country's language may lead to misinterpretation of everyday events (Petrova, 2016). That is why knowing the country's native language, as well as understanding the country's social, cultural, and linguistic challenges, is critical.

Dempster and Hargrave (2017) show that refugee and migrant integration 'success' is predicted by language proficiency, citing a study in which three-quarters of respondents from ten European countries rated the ability to speak one's native tongue as the most important factor in a nation's collective identity (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Determinants of national identity



Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey Q85e-d, cited in Dempster and Hargrave, 2017.

Along with cultural diversity, Esser (2006) asserts that language diversity can foster creativity and intercultural exchanges, as well as communication and coordination issues in the context of work, business, or social connections. Thus, linguistic diversity generates an enduring demand for a universal language, which is frequently satisfied by instruction in and learning of the state language (or a universally accepted official language, as English has already become). What matters is that linguistic competence satisfies both formal and informal requirements of ordinary places and functions, such as schools, training, and the labour market. However, in many cases, migrants' verbal and written communications are severely constrained, contributing to feelings of social isolation, insecurity, and helplessness (Petrova, 2016).

When applied to the labour market, the language issue has a profound effect on job opportunities, since a lack of language abilities significantly affects one's chances of employment and promotion. A recent study on the inclusion of a diverse workforce in the United Kingdom discovered that a lack of English proficiency can result in exclusion from English-speaking workplaces (Hopkins, 2012). This is why, in addition to key educational and professional characteristics, national language skills are critical for immigrants' integration into the labour market and, ultimately, into the host society, because employment also plays a significant role in integration (Esser, 2006; Isphordin and Otten, 2014).

Immigrants with less education (those with only a high school diploma) appear to face more language difficulties (Isphordin and Otten, 2014). As a result, it is widely believed that higher-educated immigrants have a greater need to acquire the host country's language, as their occupations – the occupations they seek – frequently require language abilities in comparison to low-skilled employment (Zorlu, and Hartog, 2018). This may be one of the motivations for highly trained immigrants to acquire the host country's languages, as opposed to those who work in so-called underemployment even in their native countries, where a higher degree is not required.

However, even if they have a decent degree of knowledge of the host country language, which may help integration in the workplace, there is still a possibility that they would perceive the world through the eyes of their own culture, resulting in misunderstandings (Selmer, 2006 and Rajendran et al., 2017).

Inadequate proficiency may also imply that discrimination and difference are favoured. According to Isphord and Otten (2014), native language proficiency may have symbolic consequences on the employment market (for example, concerning accent or uncertainty about the level of qualification in the language). Indeed, employers that fear additional expenditures by over or underestimating candidates' talents may lead to a decline in immigrants' professional status. Consequently, immigrants may avoid seeking employment in the host society's labour market.

Perhaps, for this reason, Petrova (2016) observes that migrants utilise their mother tongue as a "group language" to identify themselves from their surroundings. The mother tongue is rarely spoken outside of the house, in semi-public settings such as bars, cafés, and restaurants, and in public.

Similarly, Ciribuco et al. (2017) discovered that, according to the 2016 Census, 612.018 people in Ireland speak a foreign language at home. The authors reveal that accent and pronunciation are considered as the most difficult components of communicating in Ireland by non-English speakers. Most migrants arrive with some knowledge of English, but few feel prepared to work and flourish in Ireland. He also notes that in Ireland, disparities between the language used in professional environments and language used on the street might be troublesome. Language classes alone do not foster social connection, as classroom exposure to "actual" dialects is limited. There is a great desire to communicate with locals but finding Irish individuals who have the time and energy to converse with non-native speakers is tough.

Teresa Buczkowska of the Ireland Immigrant Council (cited in Ciribuco et al. 2017) acknowledges that language can be exclusive if it is used as a racial insult or harassment on the street or at work, using comments like "you go home", or if the language used in the media to describe migration and migrants pejoratively. It can also happen at work, where language is used to restrict access to rights, such as when an employer uses overly complicated, difficult-to-understand terminology or when employees are forbidden from using their home tongue at work.

Finally, Ciribuco et al. (2017) claim that while migrants wish to connect with Irish society and speak English, they do not want to lose their own culture in the process. They want their culture acknowledged and honoured during integration. To be able to speak one's native mother tongue at work, during leisure, or in public requires maintaining this sense of identity. In the same study on the linguistic environment in Ireland, the authors asked immigrants if their first language was ever forbidden/prevented at work or education, and 22% replied yes. Additional input includes persons who believe that using their first language in the presence of others at work would be apolitical and unacceptable.

1.2.2. People's Attitudes in the Host Country

The opinions of people in the host culture are also a factor that affects immigrants' cross-cultural adjustment. The premise is that public views can have an impact on migrant integration both directly and indirectly. According to studies, open hostility, harassment, and poor media coverage can exacerbate discriminating perceptions and have a detrimental effect on health, well-being, and performance outcomes (McGinnity et al., 2020a). Beutin et al. (2006), for example, reports that the public opinion of migration in the EU is not homogeneous across all Member States; however, the overall conclusion is that public perception of migration in Europe is becoming increasingly negative.

Thus, two aspects are indisputable: first, integration is more difficult in a society that does not welcome or is hostile to immigrants, whereas integration becomes easier in a more welcoming community. Additionally, it operates in the other direction. The public perception of migrants might vary in response to visible attempts by migrants to integrate. Second, and probably more importantly, negative public sentiments are sometimes expressed in institutional and social practices that contribute to migrants' marginalisation.

Discriminatory practises and labour market segmentation are instances of institutionalised stereotypes and bad attitudes. As a result of these behaviours, a vicious cycle of exclusion, marginalisation, and increased discrimination exists, since if migrants have the worst employment and lowest earnings, they may face stigma, which results in unfavourable feelings and additional discrimination. This downward spiral can only be broken by eliminating discriminatory tactics and altering public perception (Beutin et al., 2006).

According to Lee and Westwood, rivalry, territoriality, and interaction fatigue are all major attitudes related to professional immigrants' transition (1996). The authors explain that people of the host culture may see professional immigrants as prospective job competitors. In line with this logic, immigrants are viewed as a threat to resources such as jobs, social services, and housing because natives believe they take jobs, welfare benefits, and housing away from host-country inhabitants. Such obvious threats may affect society as a whole or specific groups within the host country, particularly those who perceive they are already being treated unfairly and competing for scant resources. Due to fear of competition, negative attitudes toward foreigners are likely to be more prevalent in socioeconomically weak and destitute groups, as well as among males, the less educated, and the elderly (Meltzer et al. 2018). Such negative experiences make it even more difficult for immigrant workers to acclimate because certain companies may be concerned that luring immigrants could foster animosity among current staff and for this reason decide not to hire

talented immigrants in order to prevent alienating them.

The view that locals should be favoured for employment persists even in locations where the public supports refugees and migrants whose presence they believe will benefit their country economically (Dempster and Hargrave, 2017 and Dempster, 2020). Employers may also assume that immigrants should not hold positions of power or influence. In a management position, for example, employers may be reticent to promote an immigrant if they feel their colleagues have low esteem for immigrants. It is as if there is an unwritten policy against hiring immigrants, which may contribute to migrants' confusion and displeasure (Lee and Westwood, 1996).

Interestingly, non-EU migrants, according to Ruhs (2017), do not compete directly with native workers in the host country's labour market. Some academics, however, argue that immigrants may pose a problem if they gain access to the host country's aid system (e.g., housing and healthcare services). Furthermore, an increase in the number of low-skilled immigrants – who may also come from EU member states – increases the availability of low-skilled labour, which may lead to low-skilled locals viewing this type of immigration as a threat to their job or wage (Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014; Jean et al. 2010).

Another source of perceived grievance is security concerns. Meltzer et al. (2018) and Beutin et al. (2006) observed that when people experience a decline in their personal safety, doubt other people or political leaders, identify as politically right-wing and believe ethnic minorities constitute a collective threat, they favour ethnic exclusionism more. Immigration, according to this viewpoint, poses a security concern since it is perceived to enhance the chance of violence, crime, or terrorist acts.

Certain writers show that privileged groups, such as the highly educated, are expected to have lower levels of bias since education, particularly third-level education, instils democratic ideals such as

tolerance. A favourable educational effect is less dependent on economic competition and more on diverse cultural and intellectual mechanisms such as tolerance distinctions, ethnocentrism, and sociotropic judgments than on immigrant competitive exposure (McGinnity et al., 2020a; Dempster and Hargrave, 2017).

This can be seen in Ireland, where sentiments toward immigration and ethnic diversity vary according to social class. Individuals with a higher level of education are significantly more optimistic about immigration's influence than those with a lower level of education. McGinnity et al. (2018b) offer a range of explanations for their findings, including the fact that individuals with higher levels of education are typically more financially secure, as well as the potential liberalizing' effect of higher education. Financially distressed individuals expressed more negative opinions, supporting the notion that they are more likely to compete with migrants for jobs and social benefits/services.

Additionally, throughout the first half of the 2000s, perceptions of immigration's impact on the economy, cultural scene, and quality of life increased in Ireland. In 2008, attitudes began to deteriorate and remained so until 2010, when they began to recover again in 2012 and 2014.

Notably, before the recession, Irish sentiments about immigration were more favourable than the average for 10 Western European countries. However, between 2008 and 2014, Irish sentiments slipped below the European average, but the gap is smaller in 2014 than it was in 2010 (McGinnity et al., 2018b), suggesting that a country's economic position has a direct effect on how people see immigration.

1.2.3. Visas, Work Permits, and Illegal Status

When planning to relocate to a new country, immigrants must typically consider and deal with the legal procedures and requirements required to be lawfully present in that country. This obstacle may

become even more difficult to overcome if the new country has additional requirements for obtaining visas or work permits.

Immigrants' language abilities may be evaluated using a points-based system at the time of their application for entry before they left for the host country. At the end of the day, the objective is to identify the most qualified applicants for the labour market. It may be necessary as part of the points system or as one of the prerequisites for an immigrant to fulfil in order to acquire specific rights, frequently those derived from citizenship, and therefore obtain host country nationality, as is the case in Canada and Germany (Bermejo, 2008).

Even immigrants who are seeking asylum or who wish to be considered for refugee status will almost certainly be required to comply with specified requirements that could pose a barrier to their entry into the nation.

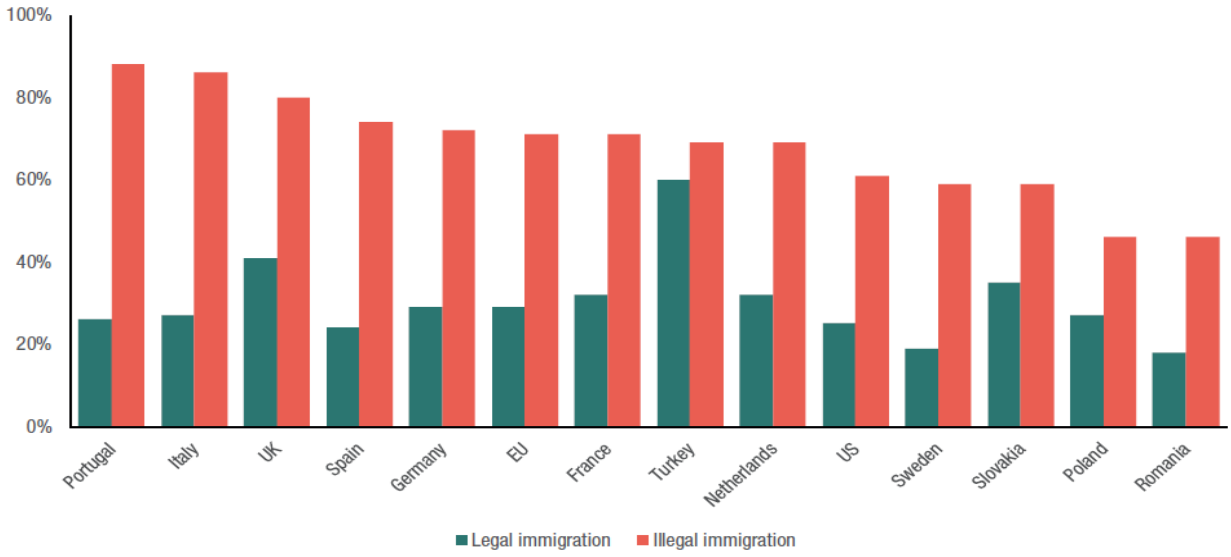
This is when the issue of illegal immigration became a focal point of discussion. Unlawful immigration is dangerous for those involved, generates incentives for illegal conduct, and has a negative impact on public opinion, resulting in about equal numbers of negative attitudes toward legal migrants.

According to Beutin et al. (2006), breaking this cycle requires Europe – but also other countries with high levels of immigration, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia – to take advantage of legal migration opportunities that go beyond the strict conditions associated with family reunion. Individuals seeking asylum or irregular migrants wishing to enter the country legally or on a regular basis may do so using this approved route. To ensure that such an increase of migration alternatives is economically, and politically feasible, careful employment screening of new and existing migrants is essential, while illicit work is restricted.

Dempster and Hargrave (2017) assert that inclinations against people who enter a country illegally

may confound opinions on immigrants and refugees (i.e., crossing without appropriate papers or visas). Surveys conducted in Europe, the United States, and Australia reveal a greater level of anxiety about these 'illegal' immigrants (Figure 2). Throughout the history of Australia, for example, the government's asylum strategy has been presented as a fight against 'illegal' entrants arriving by sea.

Figure 2: The percentage of people worried about 'legal' versus 'illegal' immigration



Source: Transatlantic Trends, 2013. Based on surveys with 1,000 people per country between 3 and 27 June 2013. Cited in Dempster and Hargrave, 2017.

The illegal status also poses risks to the persons engaged, who frequently suffer grave hazards both during and after their journey. The persistence of illegal migration also encourages criminal activities like human trafficking and illegal employment, harming legal migrants almost as much as the persistence of illegal migration (Beutin et al., 2006).

Furthermore, according to Dempster (2020), while applying for visas and work permits, immigrants must analyse and be concerned about the current economic situation. Because economic downturns, such as the one predicted by Covid-19, tend to erode support for immigration, locals prioritise their own access to jobs and social services above that of others. Many governments have used the pandemic to close borders, restrict travel, and portray migrants as disease carriers.

The author adds, however, that certain nations are experiencing a rebirth of respect for the role migrants play in our society, with many of them being recognised as "critical" or "important" workers, referring to this as an "opportunity". Visas have been extended and made less expensive. Because of immigrants' key role in the Covid-19 pandemic epidemic in Ireland, for example, recent changes in the work permit system have allowed nursing homes and other healthcare organisations to hire personnel from outside the European Union (Wall, 2021; Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2021). A window of opportunity may be opening up: an opportunity to press for more migration and increased migrant support, as well as an opportunity to reframe migration discussions in the post-Covid recovery period (Dempster, 2020).

1.2.4. Racism and Discrimination

Race perceptions appear to be critical to understand immigration sentiments. According to McGinnity et al. (2018a), racial views regarding work ethics are associated with lower scores on the 'economic impact' and 'better place' criteria. The test that measures views toward racial differences in intelligence is strongly and negatively related to sentiments toward the 'cultural influence' of immigration.

According to Meltzer et al. (2018), this may explain why some scholars believe that people are more receptive to immigration from ethnically or culturally similar groups than from ethnically or culturally distant ones. Furthermore, highly prominent out-groups are often viewed negatively. Another interesting aspect brought up by the author is that, while skin colour had minimal effect on sentiments about immigration, immigrants from Muslim-majority nations were perceived less favourably.

In contrast to these findings, O'Connell and McGinnity (2008) establish that a fraction of black immigrants face a significant disadvantage in terms of unemployment and subjective assessment of

job-search challenges.

When such impressions are applied to Ireland, it is possible to see how the country has gotten increasingly varied over the last two decades. According to the 2016 Census, Ireland's 535.475 non-Irish nationals came from 200 countries, with 12 countries having more than 10.000 people, including Americans, Brazilians, French, Germans, Indians, Italians, Latvians, Romanians, and Spanish, as well as Polish, Lithuanians, and British (McGinnity et al., 2018b; CSO, 2016).

However, despite this amount of diversity, immigrants face discrimination and racism in Ireland. In their research, McGinnity et al. (2006) found that immigrants were harassed on the street, on public transit, and in public areas; insults or other types of harassment at work were the second most common form of prejudice among those allowed to work. It was also reported that migrants face prejudice in the access to the labour market, and migrants were also mentioned to be poorly treated by healthcare providers. The highly educated, according to the study's findings, are substantially more likely to face discrimination in two domains: work and public settings. Asylum seekers are substantially more likely to encounter prejudice than those with work permits, according to the data.

The Irish Network Against Racism (INAR, 2019) offered data on the position and concerns of civil society in Ireland in their Alternative Report, indicating that while employment discrimination is prohibited under Irish equality legislation, it is a pervasive aspect of the labour market. Ireland continues to operate on a guest-worker model with little legislative protection. Migrant workers (especially women and undocumented immigrants) are disproportionately represented in low-wage and risky jobs. Additionally, concerns have been expressed regarding a rise in racist hate speech directed against Travellers, Roma, refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants, notably on the Internet and social networking platforms. They are particularly concerned about politicians' frequent use of racist hate rhetoric, especially during election campaigns.

1.3. Mediation and Integration

When people from different countries and, as a result, cultures come together, the likelihood of conflict increases. Disparities may be based on race, ethnic origin, or national origin, but they may also be based on generational gaps, socioeconomic factors, gender or sexuality, language, to name a few. Mediation may be effective at this stage.

As mediation becomes more widely used, more mediators will become involved in cross-cultural mediation. Even the most qualified and experienced mediator will encounter new issues during cross-cultural mediation. While only a few mediators are capable of resolving cross-border commercial disputes or international political confrontations, domestic mediators are progressively prone to engage in disputes involving persons of diverse cultural backgrounds (Barkai, 2008).

According to Moore (2014), mediation is a process for resolving conflicts in which a mutually agreeable third party, who lacks the authority to make binding decisions on behalf of the parties in dispute, intervenes in a conflict or dispute in order to assist the parties in improving their relationships and communication through the use of effective problem-solving techniques. Thus, mediation is a flexible and confidential strategy where the parties are ultimately controlling the process to determine the conditions of resolution (Schuller, 2016).In this context, the link between cultural mediation and the social integration of immigrants is crucial.

Beutin et al. (2006) enquire into the nature of this 'integration'. The European Council, they assert, defines integration as a "two-way process" in which immigrants and host societies share rights and obligations. Migrants must be more tenacious in their efforts to integrate, while recipient countries must continue their integration efforts. However, the bidirectional process is visible and understandable in several circumstances. Migrants' structural and social integration (or social inclusion) entails integration into the labour force, access to public services such as education and

healthcare, and financial benefits such as retirement pensions. Social inclusion means granting migrants social rights, whereas social integration entails providing proper health care, education, and housing, among other factors. Segregation in the job, education, and housing can exacerbate unfavourable views (among natives and migrants alike), resulting in discrimination in critical and social services and creating social isolation.

According to Theodosiou and Aspioti (2016), the trajectory of immigrant integration in Europe has closely tracked global improvements in "integration theory and practice". They explain there were three major phases in migrant integration theory that have dictated the role of the state and the development of forms of community/intercultural understanding. There was an assimilation period between 1950 and 1970 where migrants' integration challenges were viewed as a personal shortcoming. Migrants were obliged to learn the host country's language, values, cultures, and traditions. At this phase, the state and host society, in general, have no obligation to promote equal opportunity or provide interpreting/mediation services.

The second phase was dominated by the concept of multiculturalism (1970-1990) where tolerance for cultural diversity, minority protection, and identity issues were crucial.

Incorporation is the third stage of integration theory and practises, described by the perception of interculturality (1990 and thereafter). This viewpoint recognises that heterogeneity is unavoidable, and that migrant integration necessitates reciprocal adaptation on the part of both migrants and host societies. In this setting, interventions become more service-oriented, and immigrants' integration becomes institutionalised and integrated into general services.

While integration across all sectors of a society is important, Beutin et al. (2006) emphasise the importance of labour market integration for a number of reasons. To begin, employment is an essential component of any community integration process and, in many cases, one of the

fundamental requirements for social inclusion. To some extent, labour market integration incorporates extra integration components such as improved language skills as a result of successful labour market integration. Second, significant migrant unemployment can devastate society in ways that native unemployment cannot. If migrants are unable to find work, they may resort to working in the informal sector, thus compounding their circumstances. Moreover, migrant unemployment negatively affects the public perception of migrants, impeding the integration process. If unemployed, migrants are considered as "welfare scroungers" who do not contribute to society.

Thus, as Bianchini (2015) accurately points out, immigrants require cultural mediators to provide them with a voice and visibility. As previously stated, immigrants frequently face obstacles due to a lack of knowledge of the host country's language, denial of citizenship rights, and social stigma. As a result, mediation should redefine the term "culture"; it should refer to a culture that values its diverse cultural influences, not just a society that welcomes migrants.

To summarise, new institutions are being developed in the middle ground between state policy and citizens in order to create new locations for social integration, where all people, native and immigrant alike, can experience unique sorts of relationships and equal access to rights (Bianchini, 2015). Given this, it is acceptable to state that intercultural mediation is the optimal strategy for ensuring successful information sharing, mutual understanding, conflict resolution, and integration during the immigration process.

1.3.1. Intercultural Mediation

One of the numerous mediation styles is based on the mediators' ability to approach cultures. However, intercultural mediation is far from a novel concept; it dates all the way back to the earliest cultural contacts. Anthropologists coined the term "cultural broker/mediator" after observing that certain individuals served as intermediaries, mediators, negotiators, or brokers between individuals

from diverse cultures, whether through international trade or interactions between colonial governments and the societies they ruled (Souza, 2016).

Intercultural mediators (alternatively referred to as 'community interpreters,' 'cultural linguists,' or 'cross-cultural mediators') facilitate communication among people, families, and community members as part of efforts to encourage and facilitate immigrants' social inclusion and integration, according to Catarci (2016). As a link between immigrants and the society of reception, they work for the removal of cultural and linguistic obstacles, the development of an open, inclusive, and human rights-supporting culture, and adherence to citizenship criteria. They also help to promote awareness about the needs of immigrants, as well as the peculiarities, resources, and limitations of the welfare system.

Six (1990, cited in Marques et al., 2019) emphasises the creative, preventive, renewing, and healing nature of intercultural mediation, as well as other forms of mediation. This is because intercultural mediation fosters new connections between individuals or groups that benefit both parties, while also allowing for the improvement of deteriorated or loosened existing relationships between the mediated parties.

Intercultural mediators are currently widely employed in a variety of European countries and are considered as a strategic instrument for the integration process, enabling dialogue and social cohesion, according to Catarci (2016), as evidenced by a study conducted in six European countries (Italy, France, Germany, Greece, Spain, and the United Kingdom).

Arvanitis (2014) connects intercultural mediation to the inflow of migrants and the challenges social organisations and professionals face in adapting their interventions to the European context. As well as the segregation of socially excluded groups (particularly migrants) and the need to address social disintegration that leads to conflict and violence (domestic, ethnic, etc.).

Intercultural mediation, the author says, brings a broad spectrum of current societal challenges to the forefront in a complex, inclusive, and engaging manner. Assists migrants in settling in their new nation, as well as social actors and institutions, to better understand and interact with migrant settlement demands. However, it is not just a method of settling conflicts or a form of interpersonal communication. Complex, it encourages reflection on diversity in connection to the socio-political situation and power dynamics.

Cohen-Emerique (2007, pp. 11-14) classified intercultural mediation into four main categories:

a) The first category makes it easier for parties to communicate with one another (through giving information, interpreting, or translating). This sort of mediation makes it easier for migrant groups to have access to a variety of public services while also ensuring that social actors understand and respond to their demands.
b) The second type attempts to correct cultural misunderstandings caused by ignorance, prejudice, discrimination, or stereotyping. Intercultural mediation assists both parties in this circumstance by providing culturally relevant information.
c) The third type entails the settlement and management of disputes in a range of areas, including family, justice, education, health, and welfare. In this setting, intercultural mediation enables the establishment of bridges and the formation of new spaces for compromise and agreement.
d) The fourth category refers to the process through which institutional methods, norms, structures, and regulations, as well as individual perspectives, are modified in the framework of mutual understanding, collaboration, and trust. In this scenario, intercultural mediators act as change agents, with both parties acknowledging and valuing their expertise and skill.

What is intriguing is the usage of the word provided in the final type of intercultural mediation: intercultural mediators act as change agents; this is the essence of intercultural mediation.

Intercultural mediation thus requires crossing cultures, meanings, silent languages, words, and collocations. According to Bianchini (2015), the promise of providing an 'educational' function for both locals and foreigners about diversity, as well as the promotion of public recognition and protection of immigrants as human beings, will aid their integration process.

As is possible see intercultural mediation is broad and encompass diverse aspects of the integration process, as well as a means of preventing and resolving conflicts. As such, it is a type of social intervention that may (and should) be used in all contexts of society, because welcoming immigrants is not simple in the majority of communities, needing ongoing mediating activities (Chiofalo et al. 2019). Hence, the point is to acknowledge that intercultural mediation can have a substantial impact on society far beyond settling conflicts and disagreements, simply by facilitating exchange, so why not apply it in the workplace context?

1.3.2. Intervention Fields

Depending on the country and the unique scenario, the duties of intercultural mediators may range from linguistic interpretation to the implementation of awareness-raising initiatives or conflict mediation (TIME, 2016). The intervention fields for the use of intercultural mediation may also vary but is frequently used in the following areas: general healthcare, social services, community development, neighbourhood development, education, migrant reception and legalisation procedures, public administration (including law enforcement), justice, primary and secondary reception centres, and labour (in a public context for the enforcement of labour legislation) (Theodosiou and Aspioti, 2016; TIME, 2016; Catarci, 2016).

In schools, intercultural mediation methods were adopted to strengthen bonds and foster productive relationships between persons from different cultures. In Italy, for example, it has been used to support the participation of immigrant pupils in schools and to strengthen ties between the school

and immigrant families (Chiofalo, 2019; Catarci, 2016). Additionally, Aspioti and Theodosiou (2016) highlight other Italian cultural mediation practises, which include linguistic mediation, facilitation of exchanges between migrant citizens and social workers/services/institutions/local businesses, and intercultural mediation within the migrant community.

Other examples provided by the authors include Greece and Portugal, where intercultural mediation is regularly used in situations where migrants must be addressed and served, such as in health, law, housing, social affairs, and public service delivery. According to them, the use of intercultural mediators who assist immigrant citizens is a critical factor of welcome and proximity, to the extent that the mediators share a common language, are familiar with diverse cultures, and have frequently shared similar migratory experiences.

In Ireland, the Irish healthcare system incorporates mediation and has long recognised the value of the role of cultural mediation. According to the Health Service Executive's 2007-2012 National Intercultural Health Strategy (2008), cultural mediation contributes to the growth of interculturalism within the health system, and special consideration should be given to the most accurate use of cultural mediators at the community level.

Regrettably, the workplace has not been a conducive environment for adopting the benefits of intercultural mediation as a means of improving the integration of already working immigrants. Employers frequently limit the use of mediation to resolve workplace conflicts and disputes. Nonetheless, by drawing on examples from the fields discussed above, intercultural mediation can be used to increase immigrants' involvement and participation in their work environments, which is often overlooked, in order to help them feel more engaged as "part of the team" and thus more welcomed in their new country of residence.

1.3.3. Techniques and skills

In Europe and the United States, an immigrant who has lived in the host nation long enough to comprehend the language and cultural codes, as well as having worked through their own migration experience or belonging to an ethnic minority, has traditionally served as an intercultural mediator (Catarci, 2016; TIME, 2015). This, however, is not a prerequisite for functioning as a professional intercultural mediator. Of course, before a multicultural mediator can begin to act, they must first understand migration.

Because of interethnic conflicts, an intercultural mediator who is a member of the target group may be essential - more so for some groups than others (e.g., Roma). TIME (Train Intercultural Mediators for a Multicultural Europe) states that anyone interested in working in this profession should have the following requirements/skills:

i. Intercultural mediators should be well-rounded. Higher secondary education is frequently recognised as an admission requirement. Intercultural mediators should also receive specialised training in order to practise professionally.
ii. Intercultural mediators share common attitudes and interpersonal skills with most service-oriented professions. They should be compassionate, reliable, respectful, and non-judgmental. They must also be able to operate well as a team and be professional, this includes being on time, keeping professional secrets, being open to learning, being critical of their professional performance, and accepting and growing from feedback.
iii. Intercultural mediators who are themselves migrants or ethnic minorities must be able to recognise and control their emotional impact on performance. Sadly, it appears that handling insults are a must for intercultural mediators to avoid burnout or depression.

iv. Because the different activities occasionally entail difficult communication contexts, an intercultural mediator should have C1 language competency in both the migrant and host languages in order to deliver trustworthy and competent services.

Additionally, Law (2009) and The International Institute of Mediation (O'Shea et al., n.d.) propose other relevant skills for multicultural mediators to develop:

i. Self-awareness: Mediators should be conscious of their own cultural influences, particularly how their culture may influence how they see and interpret others' actions.
ii. Multi-Cultural Viewpoints: a culturally shaped perspective on a participant's behaviour or event. It is vital to be able to recognise and value cultural similarities and differences, as well as any imbalances. Capacity to deal with cultural misunderstandings and blunders.
iii. Communication: The ability to adapt one's own communication style to the preferred styles of participants from various cultures, as well as to help participants create acceptable communication ways.
iv. Mediators must be aware of and well-versed in the entire multicultural mediation process. This includes determining the participants' strategy and conducting extensive pre-mediation study and preparation.
v. Process Management: Plan appropriate interventions that include any settlement and compliance stages and be aware of how cultural problems may affect the mediation process. Because progress and obstacles are less obvious in multicultural mediations, process management is critical. Due to cultural variations, mediators may need to be more directive or more facilitative at times.

Nonetheless, just because an intercultural mediator's role covers more than "classic mediation", this does not mean that traditional mediation resources are not used. Rădulescu and Mitrut (2012), as well as Barkai (2008), advocate for pre-mediation meetings (public or private), mediation caucuses,

and the Socratic method of inquiry. If one of the parties is unaware of the significance of cultural differences, the mediator's inquiries and the parties' responses can educate them. A reality check (by posing what-if) can be beneficial in an intercultural context, as one can adhere to the agenda and find common grounds (Law, 2009).

1.4. Intercultural Competence in the Workplace

According to Taran and Gächter (2003), discrimination and exclusion have risks and costs; nevertheless, efforts to integrate and include people have costs as well. This is due to the fact that modifying organisational procedures, initiating training programmes, and changing internal practises all necessitate the allocation of resources. However, employers who ignore diversity risk losing a competitive advantage in product creation, presentation, services, and marketing. Clearly, if bias is not addressed and equality is not promoted, attacks on individuals perceived as "different" or "outsiders" may damage social inclusion and harmony.

The point is that intercultural interaction in the workplace should not be disregarded. Diversity is a component of creativity, as evidenced by the information economy's epicentres. Through teamwork and employee participation, diverse workforces can give new views. Of fact, organisations may face similar obstacles in executing inclusion and diversity efforts, which may result in them not being prioritised. Furthermore, trainings within a company may incur costs, and the decision to hire a specialised intercultural mediator to serve as a liaison between migrant and native personnel may incur additional expenditures, which can be seen as unworthy. However, the method should be viewed as a stairway, beginning at the bottom and gradually ascending, and the issue then becomes: why not support the development of intercultural competence in the workplace among employees, managers, supervisors, HR, and so on?

McKinsey & Company, in a report created in 2020 (Dixon-Fyle et al.), recommended important

actions that firms should prioritise when trying to focus on diversity and inclusion activities. The most important one is: organisations should hold leaders and managers accountable for inclusive leadership. Immigrants are a good example of persons who should be included in teams where no one else is of the same diversity status. The goal is to foster an environment that appreciates diversity, equality, and inclusion. This includes Global Effectiveness training, which builds managers' and employees' skills in working across countries, cultures, and languages.

In this line of thought, such training might include the development of intercultural competence, which Arvanitis (2014) defines as the ability to negotiate the complete range of variety (one's lifeworld) and otherness (collective ethnic group identities). Intercultural competence is thus a social skill that entails the establishment and maintenance of relationships, efficient communication, and joint outcomes. These talents reveal that a person is capable of seeing and interpreting cultural differences that influence one's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

This intercultural competency is an inherent skill of the profession of intercultural mediators, and it is unquestionably applied through all of the strategies previously addressed in this study. This is not to say that only intercultural mediators can utilise it. It appears plausible to regard it as a first step toward the future application of intercultural mediation in the workplace.

This viewpoint was supported by the Council of Europe's understanding, which declared in the Ministerial Session of Foreign Ministers, that the essential abilities for intercultural interaction are not naturally developed (Council of Europe, 2008). They must be learned, practised, and maintained throughout one's life. The Council of Europe recognises that no area – whether neighbourhood, workplace and labour market, education system and associated institutions, or civil society – should be immune from intercultural discussion and cultural diversity management. They all play important roles in promoting intercultural dialogue.

In the modern workplace, some experts stress intercultural competency, however, they usually focus on the linguistic aspect rather than the implications for immigrants. For example, by focusing on the concept of "intercultural competency" in workplace interactions, Mada and Saftoiu (2012) demonstrate how language impacts workplace identities and relationships. Intercultural competence, therefore, is emphasised, but only from the perspective of translators and interpreters, who must focus on navigating languages and cultures on a daily basis. It does not look at how professional mediators or others might use intercultural competence to promote integration.

M. Guirdham and O. Guirdham (2017), on the other hand, appear to be broader in their discussion of workplace "intercultural communication", focusing on the "barriers" created by languages, cultures, behaviours, and working practises, as well as how to overcome them through the development of "intercultural competence".

Even though these scholars are interested in the intercultural aspects of language, culture, and communication in the workplace, there has not been a consistent pragmatic focus on how intercultural competence can be used to make the workplace more integrated for employees from other cultures. Such a focus is essential to investigate how an employer-employee orientation may manifest in order to create a more inclusive environment. Nonetheless, rather than trying to fit skilled immigrants into host cultures, those studies sought to develop a method for teaching professionals how to analyse intercultural interactions in the workplace in order to mitigate their vulnerability to marginalisation (Holmes et al., 2011, cited by O'Neill, 2020).

A recent study that highlighted areas of action for businesses to increase inclusion and diversity based on data from 1,039 organisations in 15 countries (Dixon-Fyle et al., 2020) is a wonderful example of how corporate trainings can build intercultural competency among staff members. It demonstrates that in their inclusion and diversity efforts, organisations should prioritise core business executives and managers over HR services or employee resource group leaders.

They must also develop inclusive leadership qualities in their managers and executives, as well as hold all leaders more firmly accountable for inclusion and diversity progress. Another critical point is to unequivocally advocate diverse variety in order to foster inclusion. Companies should foster a culture in which all employees feel safe bringing their whole selves to work. Managers must interact with a varied range of people and support employee resource groups in order to develop a sense of community and belonging.

The argument to be observed then is that intercultural mediation should be used in the workplace not only in the context of ADR but also as a means of learning and cooperating in situations where diversity is viewed as a problem or an impediment to overcome. Developing cultural competency and knowledge among company and business specialists is an ideal place to start.

Thus, the initial use of intercultural mediation methods and skill development to support the development of cultural competence, particularly in the management and supervision of employees in the workplace, appears to be the most effective and least abrupt strategy. This may pave the way for a future in which a cultural mediator may be hired on a case-by-case basis or even staff can be internally qualified to function in such a capacity.

Chapter 2 - Research Methodology and Methods

It is important to distinguish between the terms Methodology and Methods. According to Saunders et al. (2016), methodology is the philosophy or theory on which the inquiry is founded. Meanwhile, the term "Method" refers to the procedures or techniques that must be followed in order to collect and analyse data that will support and augment an investigation's findings.

A methodology, according to Dr. Dawson C., is the "concept or guiding principle that will steer your research" (2002, p. 14). The method can also be characterised as the "tools you use to collect data", such as questionnaires, interviews, or surveys. To put it another way, methodology refers to the technique and strategy that will be used to investigate and direct the inquiry on paper, whilst "methods" refers to the procedures that will be utilised to gather and analyse data.

In resume, these two concepts allude to the right application of data gathering procedures, such as the use of "questionnaires, interviews, or surveys", in conjunction with a detailed and scholarly literature evaluation, as stated above (Hart, 1998).

This chapter will introduce and summarise the methodology and methods employed in this dissertation. Moreover, this chapter's objective is to define all of the techniques necessary to accomplish this research and, as a result, collect consistent and satisfactory data.

2.1. Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is a set of beliefs about the nature of the universe under study (Bryman, 2012). According to Saunders et al. (2016), research philosophy takes the researcher's perspective into account. The concept chosen will have a significant impact on the actual operations and methods implemented. Simultaneously, the assumptions about the world that will or may be made serve as the foundation for defining the methods to be used and justifying a strategy. The author observes

that at each stage of the investigation, whether consciously or unconsciously, the researcher must make assumptions that will influence their methodological choices, strategies, data collection techniques, and analysis. These assumptions include those concerning human understanding (epistemological assumptions) and the reality encountered throughout your investigation (ontological assumptions).

This dissertation was based on an epistemological assumption, which Saunders et al. (2016, p.124) referred to as "human knowledge". According to Burrell and Morgan 1979 (cited in Saunders et al., 2016, p. 127), epistemology is made up of *"assumptions about knowing, what constitutes acceptable, genuine, and legitimate experience, and how we might convey knowledge to others"*. Nonetheless, they emphasize that the epistemological premise allows the researcher to make more relevant methodological choices.

Following the selection of the research epistemology, it is required to decide whether the assumption will be based on objectivism or subjectivism. According to Saunders et al. (2016), the researcher must be able to tell them apart. This dissertation is founded on epistemological and objectivist principles, because objectivist researchers are more likely to seek the truth about the social world through their research, employing methods that allow the researcher to observe and measure alleged facts, *"from which law-like generalisations about the universal social reality can be drawn"* (p. 128).

Finally, pragmatism's philosophy will function as the research's cornerstone. A pragmatic study, according to Salkind (2010), is one that concentrates on an individual decision-maker in a real-world situation. The first stage in conducting a pragmatic study is to identify and explore a problem in its broadest sense. This leads to research inquiry, with the goal of improving understanding and, ultimately, resolving the problem. After all, the findings of studies frequently result in legislative proposals, new environmental initiatives, or societal change. Furthermore, pragmatism typically

opposes the emergence and assumption of absolute and uncontroversial truths. It asserts, on the contrary, that concepts are provisional and subject to change as a result of further research (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010).

2.2. Research Approach

A research report might take either a deductive or an inductive approach. The deductive approach requires the researcher to construct a theory or hypothesis (or hypotheses) and then implement a research strategy to validate the assumption (Bell and Waters, 2018).

This research was conducted using an inductive technique, which, according to Saunders et al., involves the researcher "generalising from the specific to the general". Inductive reasoning begins with observations and seeks out patterns. Before drawing conclusions, researchers collect as much information as possible from individuals. Inductive research findings are context-specific and hence cannot be extrapolated to a larger population. The argument is that an inductive method of inquiry acknowledges the possibility of multiple truths.

According to Mills et al. (2010), when conducting research inductively, the theory is designed to develop through data collection and analysis. By allowing theory to emerge from evidence, research in areas where theoretical understanding is insufficient can be conducted. This research does not investigate any theories or hypotheses.

2.3. Research Strategies and Choice

After deciding the approach, it will bring us to the subject of the use of qualitative vs. quantitative research methods in particular. In no case should the technique be dictated by the methodology that is employed (inductive or deductive). It also makes no mention of whether the method should be qualitative or quantitative. Nonetheless, inductive processes are used more frequently in qualitative

research, while deductive approaches are used more frequently in quantitative research (Dahlberg, 2010).

Although an inductive approach implies a qualitative approach, this analysis used a quantitative approach to explain the positions of immigrants and to obtain the maximum number possible in order to account for the role of different nationalities in Ireland, including those working in a variety of occupational environments.

The quantitative approach collects data and investigates the relationship between one set of data and another. Most of the time, they are dealing with numerical data, as well as pre-determined study topics and conceptual frameworks (Punch, 2005 cited in Bell, 2010). Quantitative methodology, according to Saunders M. et al. (2016), is defined as "any data gathering tool" such as a questionnaire, or "a data analysis approach" such as graphs or statistics that act as numerical resource data.

Before anything else, the quantitative research will have as its primary goal the collection of personal perceptions of immigrants working in the Irish workplace environment; specifically, their perceptions of how their different cultural backgrounds affect their integration in the workplace, particularly how are the perceptions that they have concerning the attitude of employer and managerial position towards immigrants. Because this study took place at a single point in time, there was no assessment of how the findings changed over time. Additionally, because it must be done within a set and predetermined timeframe, it is classified as cross-sectional.

2.4. Data Collection

To achieve the research's objectives, data from the target demographic was acquired through an online survey that was administered to the entire population. Since we live in a technologically advanced culture in which the Internet is a significant part of our everyday lives, this research

profited from the use of the Internet to gather the required material. This is why the online survey was given to immigrants of all nationalities via WhatsApp and Facebook groups. A questionnaire allows the entire immigrant population to participate in the study and present a varied range of viewpoints.

Questionnaires are inexpensive (Callegaro et al., 2015) and can provide great dependability because all participants are asked the same items. It is possible to compare respondents' viewpoints based on the questionnaire design. These insights can then be utilised to inform future advances or even modifications. According to Saunders et al. (2016), surveys are the fastest, easiest, and most cost-effective approach to collect primary data quantitatively, which can then be analysed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics. Surveys also allow researchers to quickly and cheaply reach huge numbers of people.

According to Frankfort-Nachmias et al. (2015), online surveys are an appropriate method of data collection because they are convenient and have the potential to increase respondents' responsiveness to "possibly controversial matters", such as workplace interpersonal conflicts and their professional ramifications. In reality, due to the worldwide context of the pandemic, direct contact with participants would be impractical for this study, which was another consideration in the choice to employ a web survey as the primary data collection method.

The survey in this study was administered using SurveyMonkey, which is a valuable tool for accelerating data collecting and analysis because it enables you to send a link to the questionnaire to individuals via social media, email, and WhatsApp groups, and it can be conveniently answered to online. Furthermore, unlike other methods, surveys guarantee respondents' privacy and confidentiality. This was validated when the survey was distributed via SurveyMonkey. None of the responses can be linked to their source.

To avoid confusion or misunderstanding, the questionnaire was designed with the length for a reasonable amount of time to complete, readability, and ease of completion in mind. Respondents were told of the survey's purpose, how the data would be used, and what to do if they had any questions regarding the survey.

2.5. Population and Sampling

The target population of the study was immigrants that have worked or are working in Ireland, having not been established any restrictions regarding gender, workload standard or nationality, besides Irish people and be of legal age (18 or older).

It is critical to emphasise at this point that a non-probability sampling strategy was employed to pick the sampling population since it necessitates a non-random selection based on convenience or other considerations, which facilitates data gathering. Researchers employ the non-probability strategy when random probability sampling is impossible due to time or expense constraints, as is the case with this study, which will focus on a cross-sectional time horizon due to the limited time available. On the other hand, because non-probability sampling involves random selection, each member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen, allowing the researcher to make precise statistical judgments about the entire community but necessitating additional time.

As an instrument for this technique, a survey was administered to immigrants who had worked in Ireland, regardless of the field. The questionnaire contained both closed multiple-choice and open-response questions, which enabled data to be classified into themes and analysed effectively.

Quantitative data must be processed in order to deliver useful information to decision-makers. As a consequence, the questions from the collected questionnaires were categorised according to themes, and the responses were translated to graphics for assessment. By doing so, it would be feasible to

discuss each specific component of the employees' perspectives while simultaneously contrasting them with the scientific literature on the same subjects.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

Aside from these issues, there are legal considerations to be examined. Because this dissertation is based on primary data obtained directly from participants, the participants' dignity must be respected at all times during the study. Maintaining confidentiality throughout the entire research process, including post-study activities, such as research presentations at scientific conferences and publications, is critical. To ensure that data collection is conducted ethically, the study's target respondents must formally participate. To do this, the survey included a Consent Form in which participants were informed about the data collection process and confidentiality provisions (Appendix B).

Because this study included immigrants, an ethics form was sent to be reviewed by the supervisor of this research prior to the release of the questionnaire (see Appendix C). The survey data is kept in password-protected electronic format until the exam board validates the findings of the study. It is also worth noting that the questionnaire was fully anonymous. This study was not judged dangerous in terms of ethics.

The commitment to maintain confidentiality will also be considered if the following research paper is published, and every precaution has been taken to ensure the privacy of the research subjects and the confidentiality of their personal information, including the secure storage of the research document.

2.7. Limitations of Methodology

In terms of survey replies, it was challenging for this researcher to obtain a significant number of

participants. Even though there are a large number of immigrants in Ireland, the level of involvement was low when the poll was distributed online on Facebook and WhatsApp immigrant groups. The survey required to be distributed multiple times in the same group. It was also difficult to obtain the cooperation of Irish institutions that interact with immigrants. Despite the researcher's willingness to answer any questions about the study and to follow the guidelines for distributing the survey through their channels, none of the organisations contacted responded to the inquiry.

Finally, although being particular and relevant to the research topic, some of the survey questions may be deemed insufficient.

Chapter 3 - Presentation of the data

As mentioned previously, the survey strategy was used to gather the information necessary to conduct additional research on this dissertation topic and to produce significant and representative findings for this study. The questionnaire was created using the well-known web survey platform SurveyMonkey, and it is available in full in Appendix A.

Because no contact was made with the participants, and to comply with ethical constraints, the survey included a cover letter. This cover letter was placed at the top of the web survey and was intended to inform the participant about the goal and purpose of the research. It also included a Consent Form (see Appendix B) to inform participants that their participation in the research study was entirely optional and that they might opt out at any time. The process for the confidentiality of the data obtained was also outlined. Concerning confidentiality, participants were assured in the "Concluding Statement" (see Appendix B) that the results would be used purely for research reasons and would only be shared with Independent College Representatives if necessary.

Except for the first question, which allowed participants to write their nationality, in order to identify their real ethnic diversity, the survey used 21 closed-ended questions. Additionally, the majority of questions in this survey were multiple-choice, which meant that participants could only check one box per question, except for those who checked the box 'Other,' which allowed for more accurate responses and also for specific questions about the most common barriers faced by immigrants. Only the questions pertaining to the framing of the requirements for participation in this research's target population, namely nationality, age, and experience in the Irish labour market, was marked as required in the form, implying that the answers to those three specific questions were compulsory in order to submit the form successfully. All questions were concise and checked by the supervisor before forwarding them to the research participants.

The goal of this study was to determine the extent to which intercultural mediation can aid in the process of immigrant integration into the Irish employment environment. Having said that, the survey was designed to elicit responses from immigrants regarding the barriers they encountered as immigrants, the diversity they encountered throughout their employment in Ireland, and the attitude of their employees toward this cultural diversity. Given this, it was critical to outline the participants' demography to select only immigrants. Apart from the requirement of being an immigrant and not being under 18, there were no restrictions on gender, ethnic origin, or hours worked per week.

Question 1was designed to ascertain whether the participants were immigrants and to analyse their ethnic diversity. This question was essential for this research in order to be sure that the responses/points of view in the survey were from immigrants.

The importance of **questions 2-4** was to understand the profile of immigrants in Ireland in terms of education, age, and gender. Additionally, to provide another barrier to excluding participants who did not match the questionnaire's requirements, those questions were pertinent to avoiding minors from participating, since this could have ethical ramifications.

Questions 5 and 6, as well as some of the others described above, are also relevant in selecting respondents who meet the requirements for this study. Due to the research's focus on the process of integrating immigrants into the Irish work environment, it is critical to consider the replies of participants who currently work or have previously worked in Ireland. Moreover, the longer they dwell in Ireland, the more likely they are to have experience in various workplaces, which can provide stronger indicators for this research.

Questions 7-10 are designed to gather information about the difficulties that immigrants face upon arrival in Ireland and subsequent entry into the Irish labour market. As a result, learning about the

typical visas held by participants is important. Furthermore, it is crucial to determine whether participants consider Ireland as welcoming to immigrants in general and also in the workplace, as we are focusing primarily on the presence of immigrants in Ireland and the integration challenges they may face. When it came to perceptions, we solicited their input. This is why, in **question 8**, a Likert scale technique was chosen. A Likert scale question uses a five- to seven-point scale to assess attitudes ranging from extreme to moderate. This method of inquiry is popular because it is excellent for delving deeply into a single subject in order to ascertain (in greater depth) what individuals think about it (SurveyMonkey, n.d.).

Questions 11-13 are designed to elicit information about the workplace's approach to the diverse cultural backgrounds of its immigrant's employees. For this reason, it is necessary to ascertain whether immigrants perceived hostile behaviour in the workplace as a result of their immigrant status, as well as whether the hostile behaviour came from Irish colleagues or other nationalities, in order to compare those data to the information gathered during the literature review.

Q**uestions 14 and 15** may seem out of context when compared to the previous ones. Nevertheless, given that the research focuses on the use of mediation to facilitate the integration process, it is necessary to determine whether immigrants are aware of the use of mediation in the workplace to resolve conflicts, even if that is not the dissertation's specific focus.

Question 16 seeks to discover how immigrants feel about their status once they have begun working in Ireland, i.e., once they have entered the labour force. While the majority of studies have focused on the use of intercultural mediation during the integration process to enable access to the labour market, the goal of this question, as well as this research as a whole, is to look at its use after immigrants have already been hired.

The questionnaire's final five questions were directly related to the goal or benefits that intercultural

mediation can bring when employed by businesses to promote the integration of their immigrant personnel. As a result, **questions 17 and 18** seek to grasp the participants' perspectives on the capabilities and expertise of colleagues, as well as the managerial levels to understand how to interact with people from diverse cultures.

Finally, despite the fact that 117 individuals consented to and finished the questionnaire, four participants' responses were discarded because they declared they had never worked in Ireland, failed to identify their nationality, or claimed to be Irish. Having stated that, only 113 replies were considered for this study and will be analysed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 - Data Analysis and Findings

The main purpose of this chapter is to offer the data analysis based on the responses of the participants. As previously stated, professionals from various cultures and nationalities who work or have worked in Ireland responded to the questionnaire; this resulted in the acquisition of relevant information that will be presented in the form of a themed analysis to provide a better understanding and visualisation of the information. From the various responses, it was possible to analyse how they understand the approach of Irish employees, colleagues, managerial levels, and HR, as well as society, to workplace diversity.

4.1. Demography

The opening four questions of this survey were designed to provide a more accurate demography of our participants, once it has a direct relation to the process of understanding how immigrants are integrated into a new society.

Most of the participants in this study were Brazilians (74), representing 65.49% of the respondents, which demonstrates that the last statics of immigration in Ireland is still relevant. This is because, in the last Census that occurred in 2016 (CSO, 2016), Brazil posed as one of the 12 countries with over 10.000 residents in Ireland. Relevant to highlight that due to the focus on immigrants two answers were excluded since the participants either declared to be Irish or did not provide their nationalities.

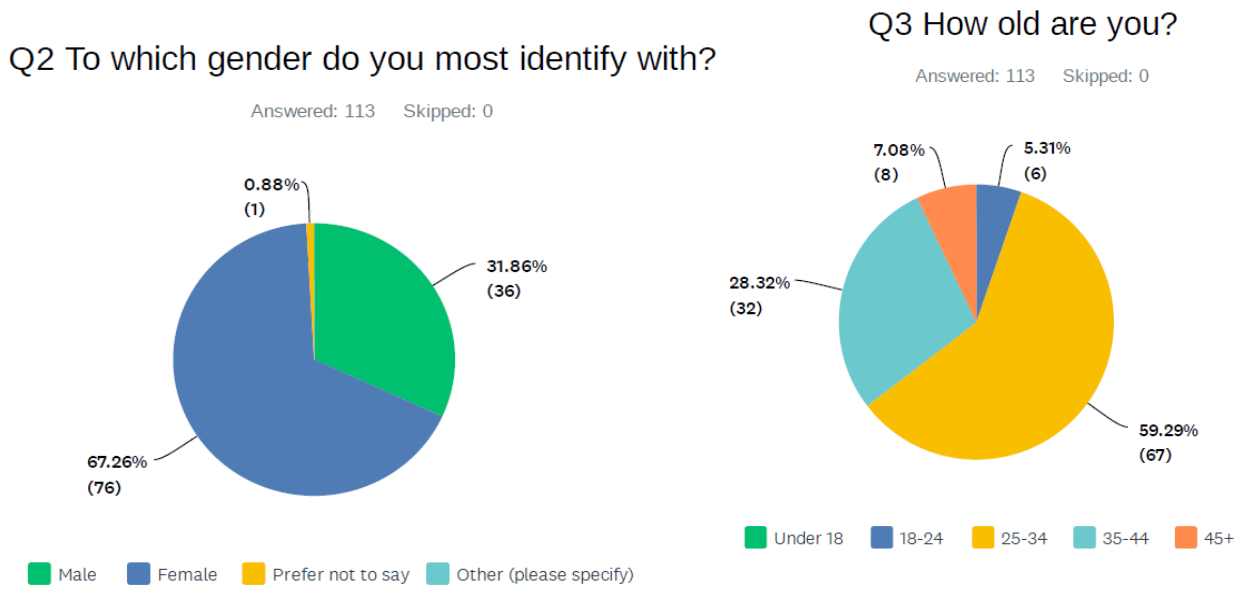
Figure 3: Table of Question 1

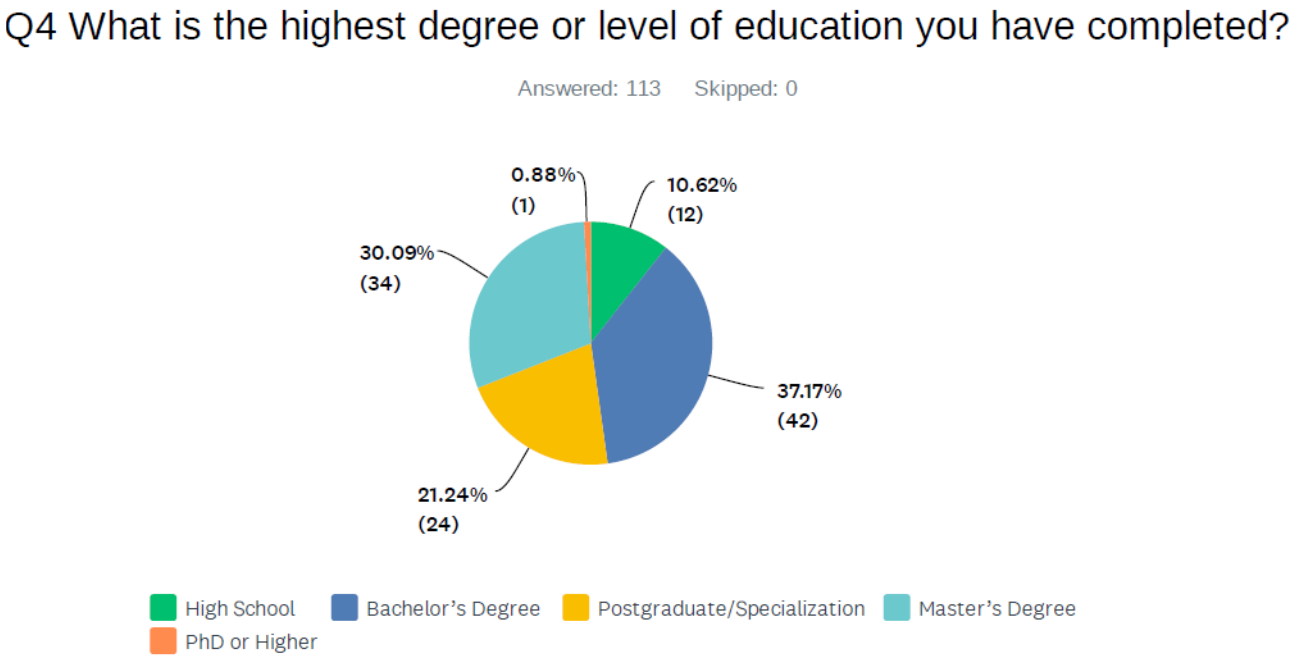
Q1 What is your Nationality?

Nationalities	Responses	%	Nationalities	Responses	%
Brazilian	74	65.49	German	1	0.88
Mexican	6	5.31	Greek	1	0.88
Chilean	4	3.54	Honduran	1	0.88
Dual nationality	3	2.65	Namibian	1	0.88
Indian	3	2.65	Nepalese	1	0.88
Ukrainian	3	2.65	Nigerian	1	0.88
Argentinian	2	1.77	Venezuelan	1	0.88
Croatian	2	1.77	Pakistani	1	0.88
Uruguayan	2	1.77	Portuguese	1	0.88
Zimbabwean	2	1.77	Serbian	1	0.88
Romanian	1	0.88	South African	1	0.88
Total Responses				113	

The majority of respondents were female (67.26%) and between the ages of 25 and 34 (59.29%). This reflects the entire population of non-Irish nationals, which, according to the 2016 Census (CSO, 2016), totalled 267,088 males and 268,387 females. More recently the Central Statics Office informed that the majority of migrants were aged between 25 and 44 and had a 3rd level qualification (CSO, 2021), making them more highly educated than Irish. In the questionnaire 101 (over 89%) hold a bachelor's or higher degree.

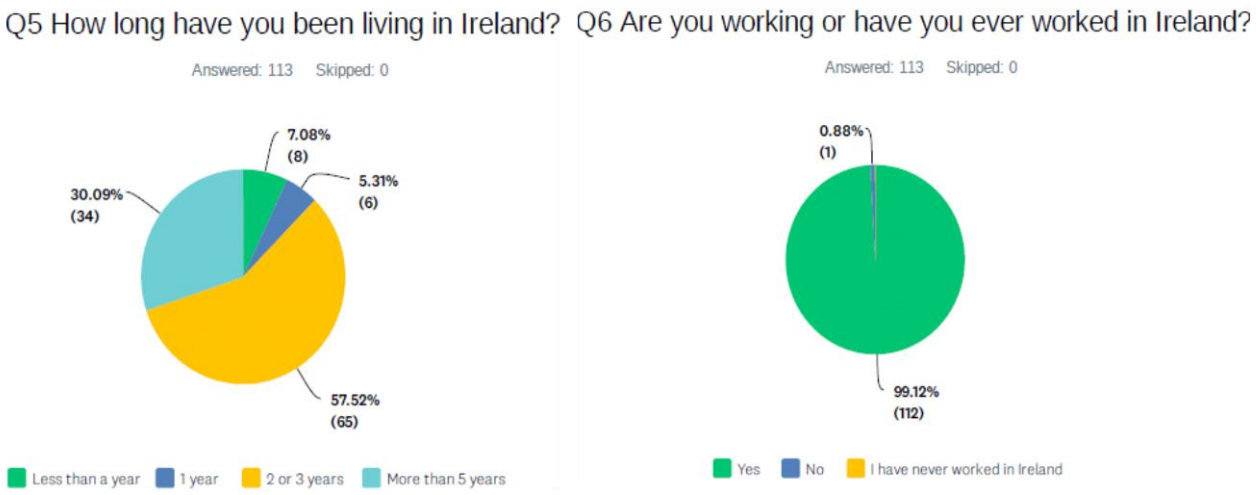
Figure 4: Charts of Questions 2, 3 and 4





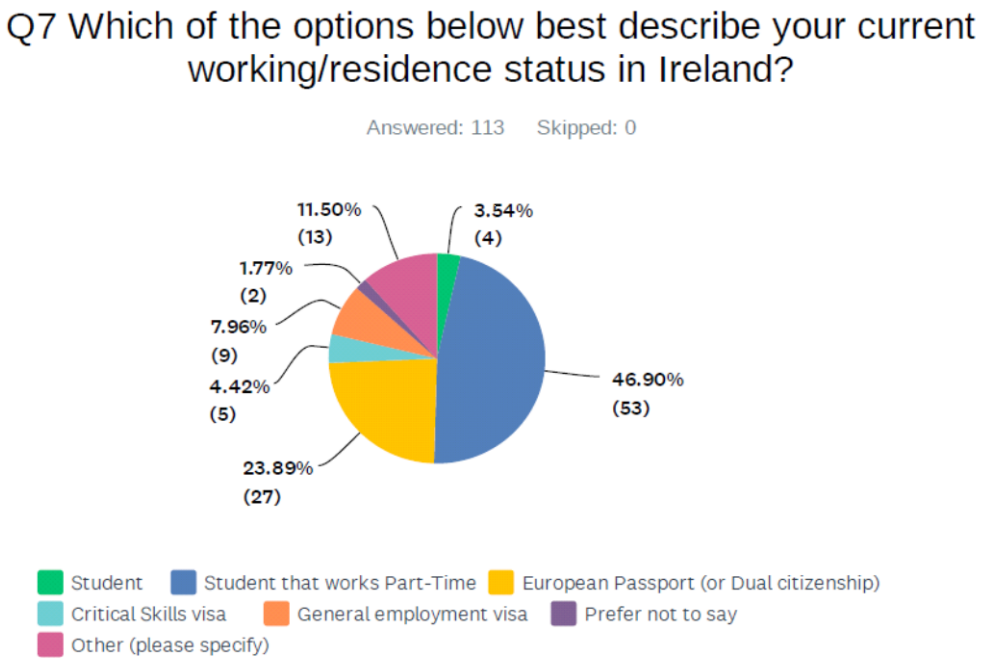
The majority of participants had lived in Ireland for more than two years, with 57.52% (65) staying for two to three years and 30.09% (34) staying for more than five years. Only one member (0.88%) was not currently working in Ireland. It is worth noting that one of the respondents to this question was also omitted from the final analysis because he had never worked in Ireland.

Figure 5: Charts of Questions 5 and 6



Finally, in relation to the type of visa permit, approximately 46.90% (53 participants) hold a student visa, known as Stamp 2, which allow them to work part-time in Ireland. Dual citizenship had also a relevant percentage with 23.89% of responses (27 participants). Notice that despite this when asked about their nationalities only 2.63% (3 participants) declared having dual nationality (see Figure 3 above). Participants may also contribute information on other types of visas that they may hold. Five of the 11.50% (13) who chose that option stated that they hold a 1G stamp visa, indicating that they have completed their Third Level Graduate Programme studies in Ireland and have permission to look for work (INIS, 2020). Only one participant (0.88%) declared to be a refugee/asylum seeker, while two (1.77%) decided not to divulge their immigration status.

Figure 6: Chart/Table of Question7

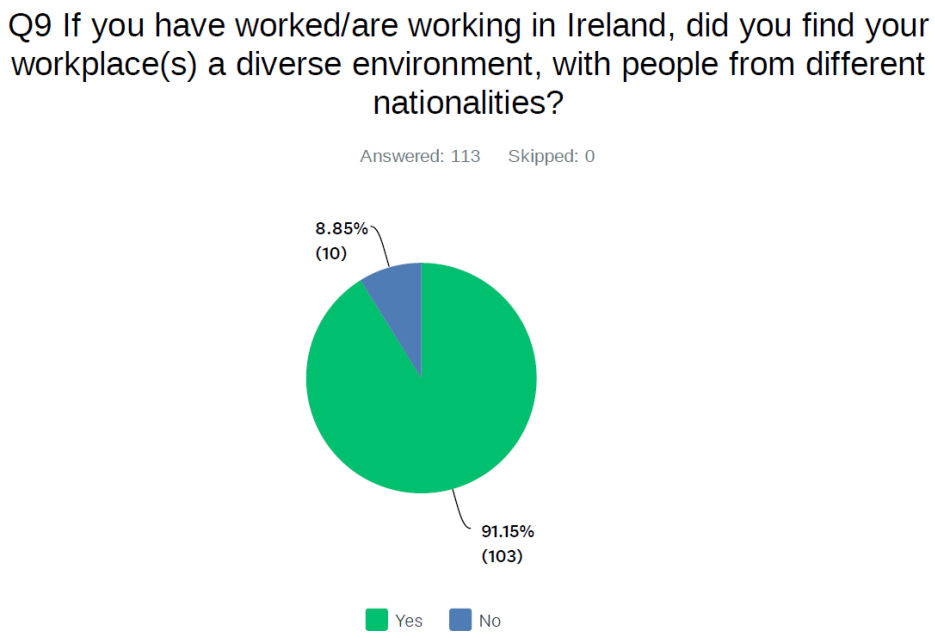


Other (please specify)	Responses	%
1G Visa	5	4.42
Stamp 4	5	4.42
Critical Skill Sp0.300000ose Visa	1	0.88
Refugee/Asylum seeker	1	0.88
Unemplyment	1	0.88
Total	13	11.5

4.2. Cultural Diversity in the Irish Workplace

According to the results, Ireland has a diverse employment environment, as 91.15% (103 participants) stated that their current or previous workplaces in Ireland included persons of other nationalities, compared to 8.85% (10 participants) who did not.

Figure 7: Chart of Question 9



4.3. Barriers to immigrants' integration

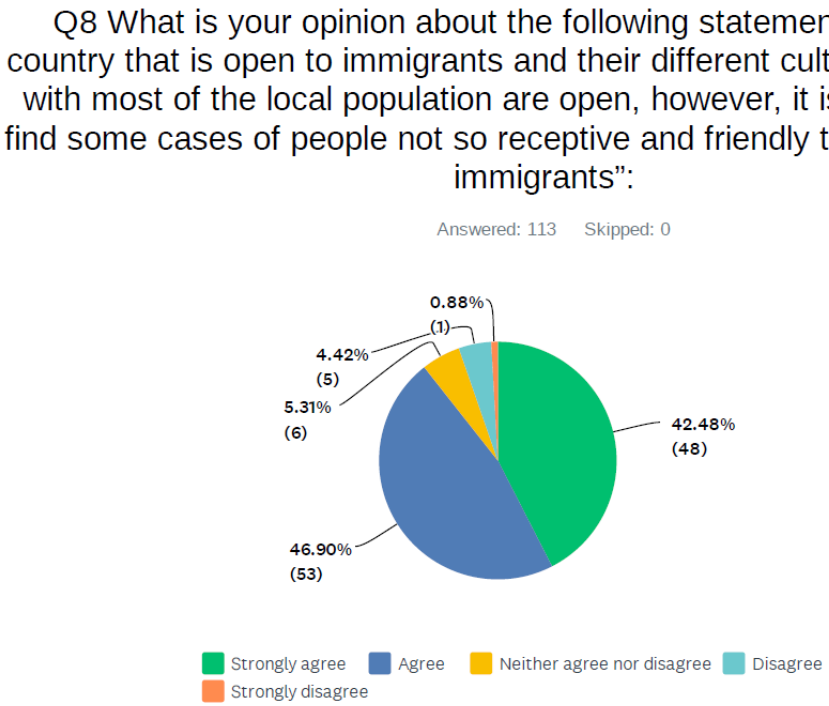
One of the goals of this research was to identify the factors that influence immigrants' integration, particularly in the workplace. This is because relocating to a new country and obtaining a job includes facing a variety of challenges during the relocation process, including but not limited to adjusting to a new culture.

While all new employees experience challenges when starting a new job, freshly arrived migrants may have additional challenges in adapting to new workplace customs and practices. They must adapt to a new way of life, new relationships, a new work environment, new organisational processes, habits, and culture, as well as a new language (Rajendran et al., 2017; Lee, Park, and Ban, 2016; Hopkins, 2012).

It is interesting to note that there is a clear indication that even though participants see Ireland as a country open to them as immigrants and their diverse cultural background, the ones that are not receptive and hostile to this migration flux ended up highlighting it in their perceptions (89.38%

agree or strongly agree).

Figure 8: Chart of Question 8



The biggest problems that the participants faced in this topic were classified as visa requirements (38.24%), finding a job based on their qualifications (38.24%), and language (35.29%). Considering the nationalities of the participants, only 8 are from nations where English is regarded as an official language, implying that the likelihood of those individuals being English native speakers is high.

Challenges related to possible discrimination towards the cultural background of the participants posed as only 12.75% (13) of the answers. Barriers associated with unfriendly native behaviour and racism accounted for a significant part of the total, with 22.55% and 20.59%, respectively. Three individuals (labelled "other" in the graph – 2.94 %) also mentioned difficulties connected to the inability to apply for a specific training plan at work, a lack of patience in teaching a new immigrant employee, and discrimination against other immigrants.

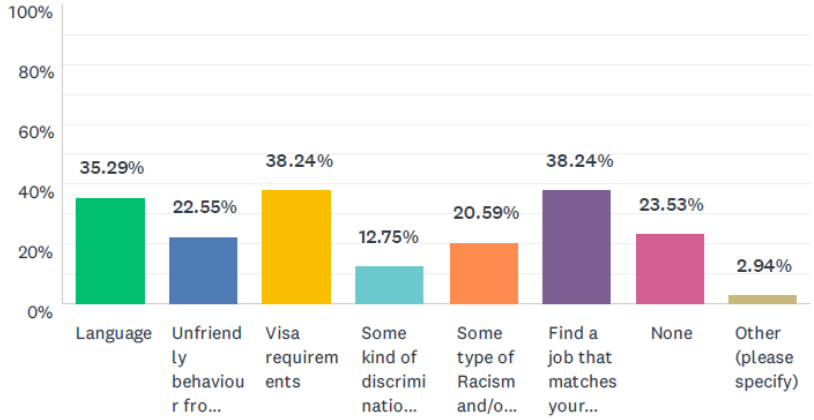
Additionally, 23.53% of respondents stated that they have never encountered any difficulties in

Ireland. This was also the question, out of the three in this case, with the highest number of unanswered responses, with a total of 11 participants.

Figure 9: Graphic of Question 10

Q10 Have you ever faced any challenges to feel integrated into the workplace owing to your nationality and culture while working in Ireland? If yes what type of challenges did you face?

Answered: 102 Skipped: 11



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Language	35.29%	36
Unfriendly behaviour from part of natives (Irish colleagues)	22.55%	23
Visa requirements	38.24%	39
Some kind of discrimination in relation to your cultural background	12.75%	13
Some type of Racism and/orDiscrimination that you experienced or witnessed	20.59%	21
Find a job that matches your previous qualifications	38.24%	39
None	23.53%	24
Other (please specify)	2.94%	3

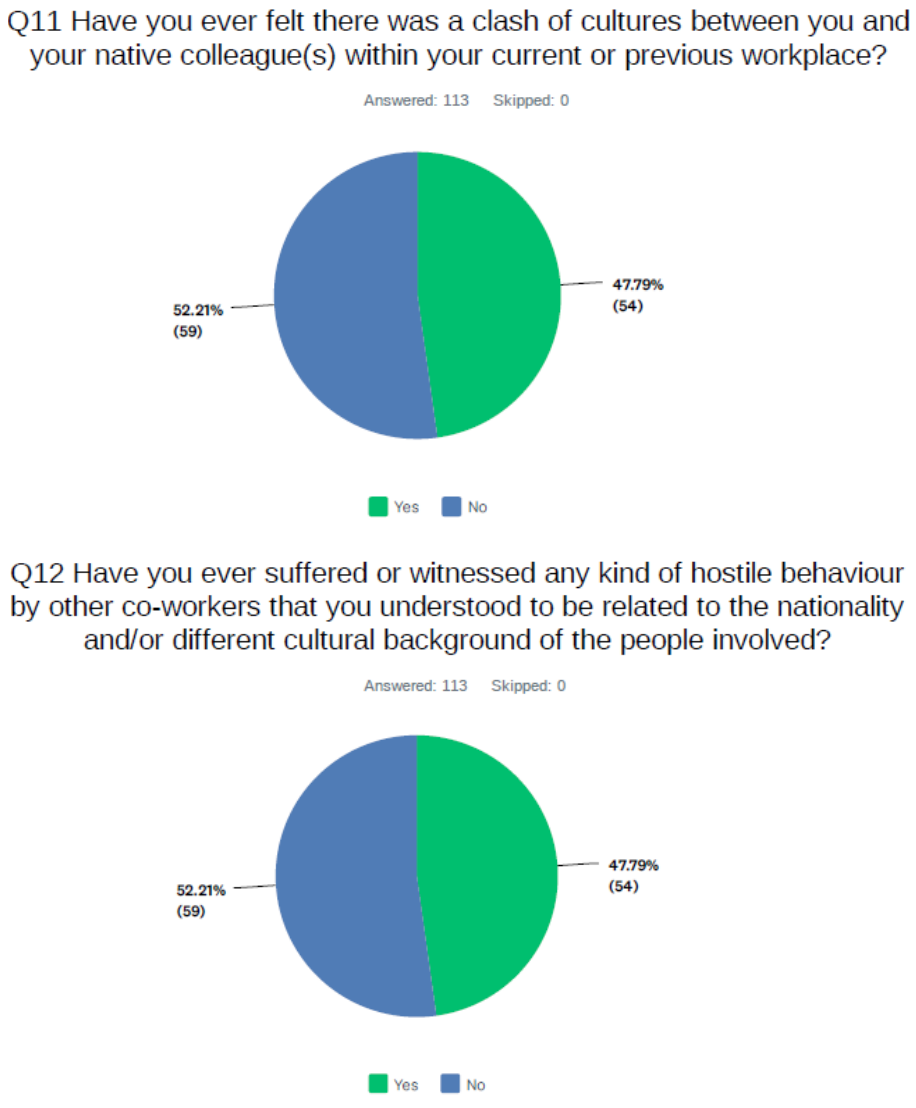
4.4. Use of mediation to promote integration

The second purpose of this research is to determine the relationship between intercultural mediation and integration, more precisely to determine how its strategy and tactics can benefit the process of workplace integration. Scholars recognise that adequate workplace integration, particularly among highly skilled migrants (the case with the majority of immigrants in Ireland), has an influence on both the individual and the organisation, affecting their contribution to the workplace, effectiveness,

and well-being (Rajendran et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2016; Soontiens and Tonder, 2014).

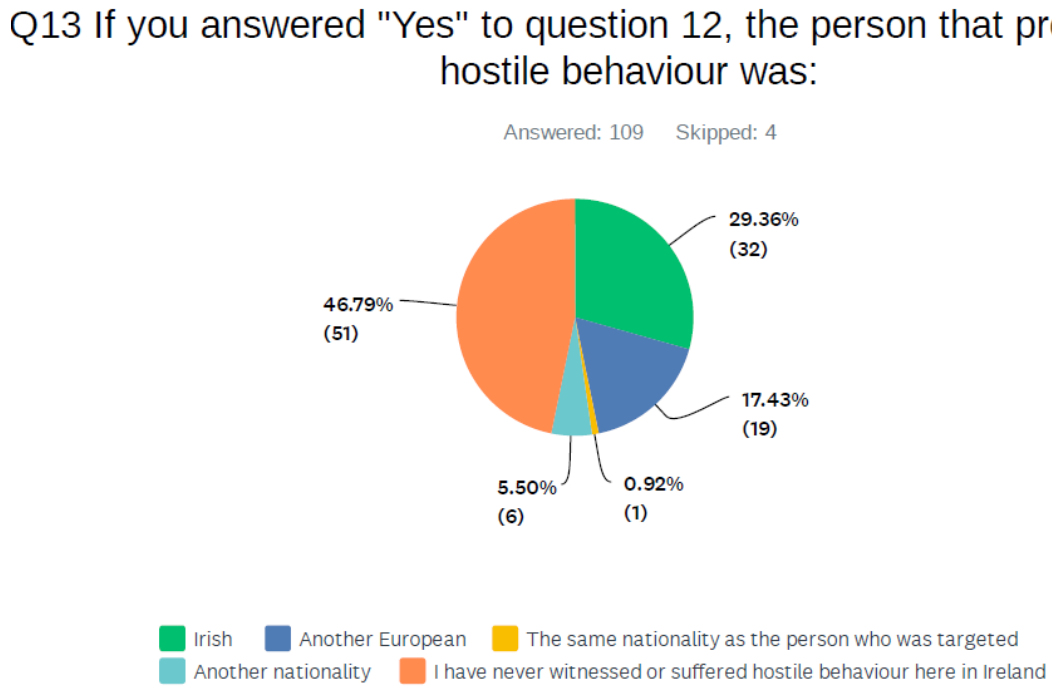
In terms of the experience of the participants of this research, regarding workplace integration, 52.21% (59) have never felt a clash between their culture and their native colleagues, which is positive but still, almost half of them (47.79%) reported having felt that in their previous or current job. Similar numbers occurred regarding participants suffering and/or witnessing hostile behaviour by other co-workers, which they interpreted as being related to nationality/culture. All most half of the respondents (47.79%) answered yes in contrast to the 52.21% that did not experience this type of situation.

Figure 10: Chart of Question 11 and 12



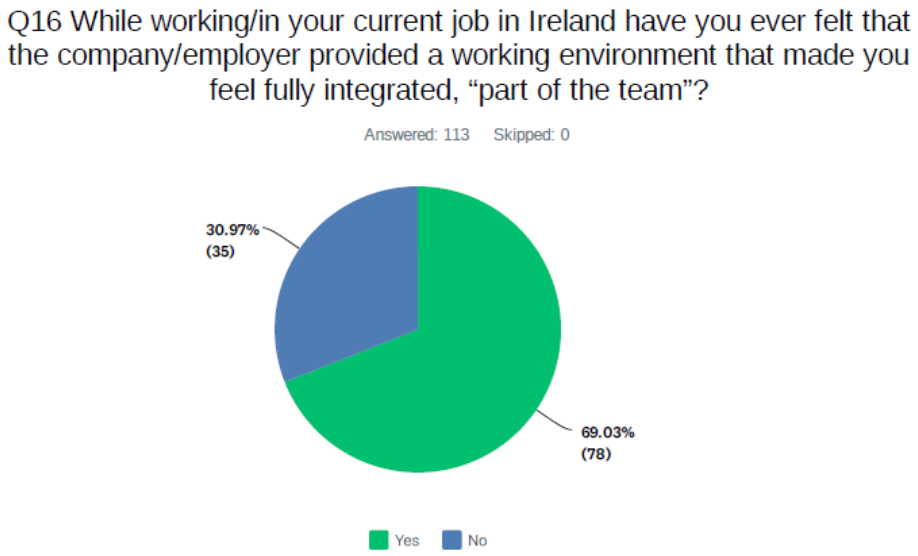
Among those who had experienced or witnessed hostile behaviour, 29.36% said it was exhibited by Irish people, while 17.43% said it was expressed by other Europeans. Only one individual reported that the hostile person was of the victim's nationality. Even though 52.21% previously stated that they had never seen or witnessed this type of incident, only 46.51% verified this information again in this question. It is worth noting that this was the second question skipped by a total of four participants.

Figure 11: Chart of Question 13



Those data are contradicted by the participants' expressed sense of being "part of the team". A total of 78 people (69.03%) said they felt completely integrated at work in this matter.

Figure 12: Chart of Question 16



Finally, given the theme of the study and the use of a specific sort of mediation, it was vital to check the immigrant population's awareness of mediation's use to resolve workplace problems. The use of mediation as an alternative way of dispute resolution was known by more than half of the participants (57.52%). 54.87%, on the other hand, said they had never attended a mediation session. At the same time, 10.62% of individuals who had previously participated thought the strategy was useful in resolving the problem, while only 4.42% did not.

Figure 13: Char of Question 14

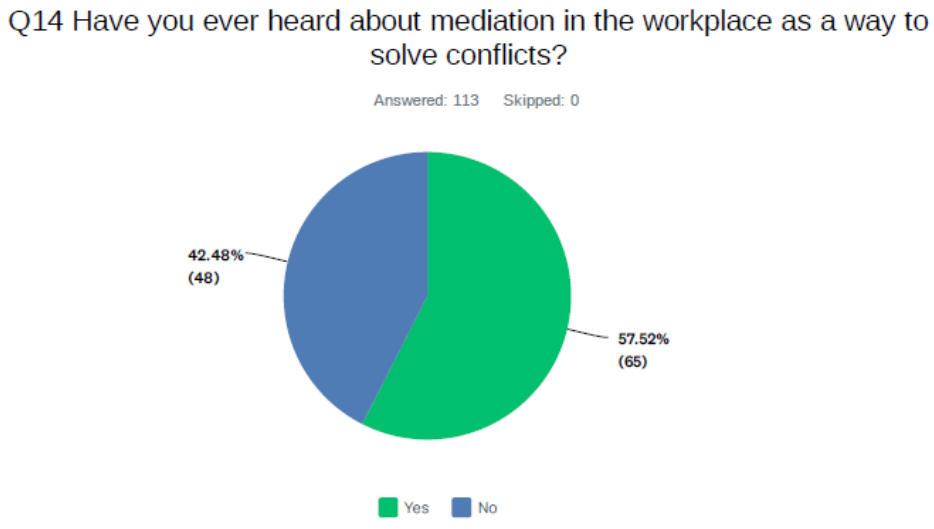
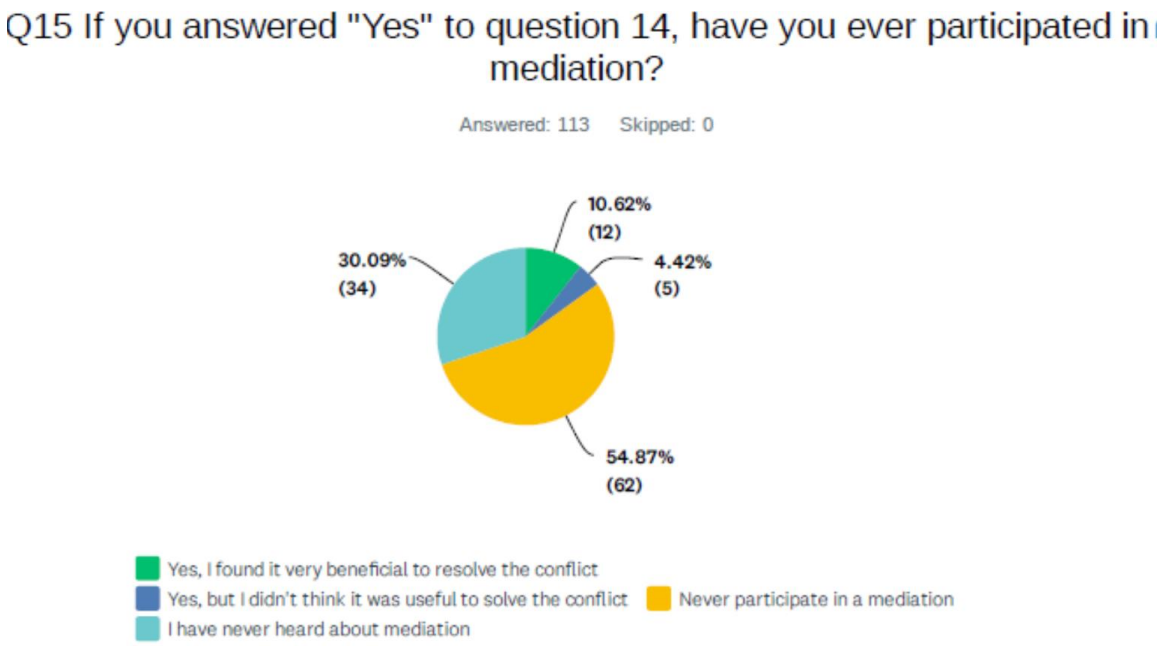


Figure 14: Charts of Question 15



4.5. Intercultural Competence

The last aim of this research is to determine how intercultural mediators' methods and techniques can be employed by Irish firms to improve immigrant workers' integration. In this matter, the participants were asked about the knowledge and approach of colleagues, managerial level and HR in their workplace when talking about their cultural diversity.

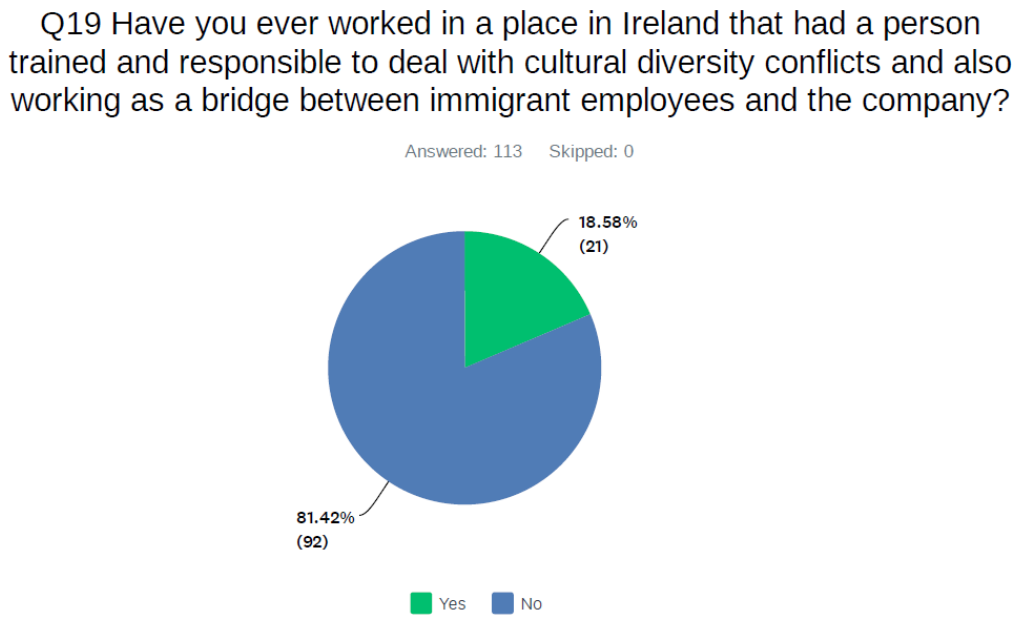
The majority of participants, a total of 56.64% (64), recognise that none of the aforementioned environmental levels is capable of dealing with a multicultural workplace or has cultural awareness, although 43.36% (49) believe they are properly trained.

However, only 35.46% (39) of those polled stated that the previously mentioned workplace groups (colleagues, managerial levels, HR, etc.) are well trained in the following question. Furthermore, among those who consider that further training in these themes is required, the highest number is directed to training for the managerial level (31.82%), followed by HR staff and managerial level/colleagues (13.64%). Notice that we had 3 participants that skipped this question.

Figure 15: Chart of Questions 17 and 18

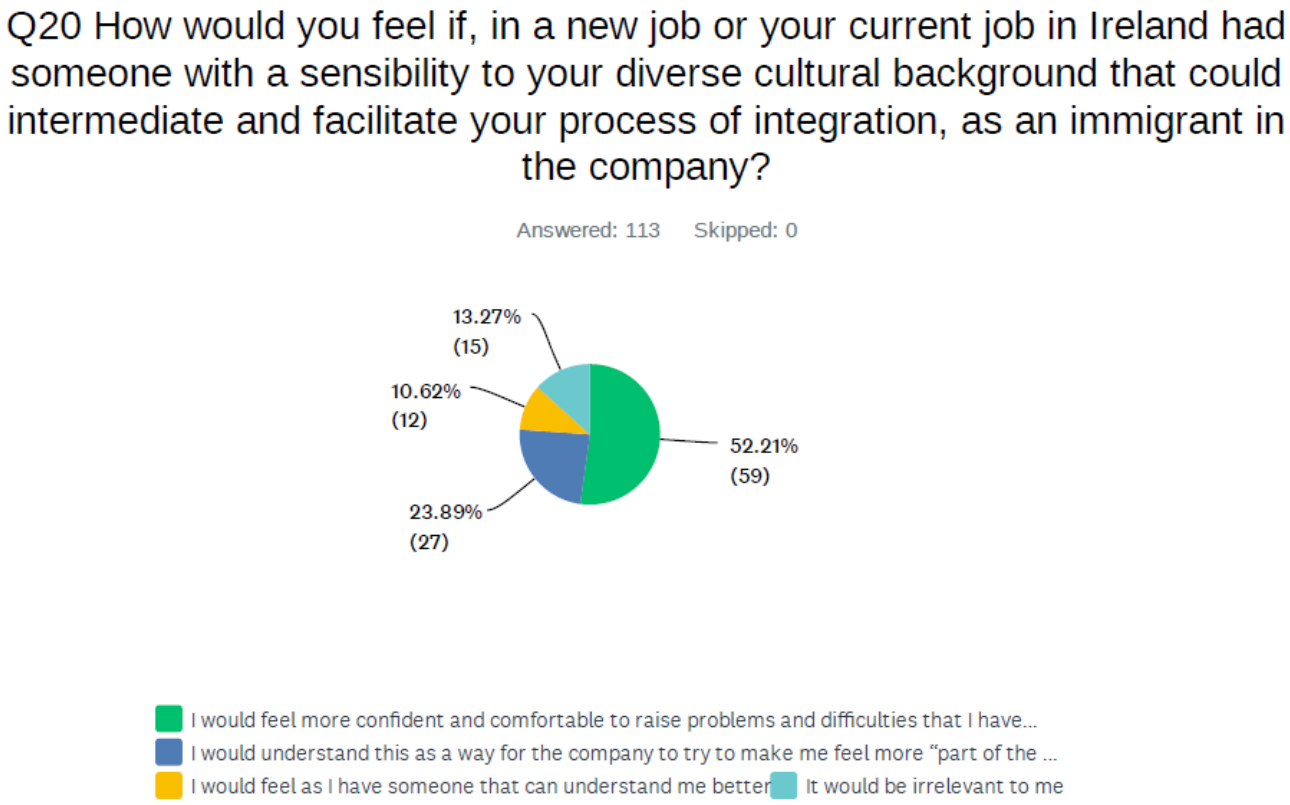
To ascertain whether Irish firms already employ someone specially trained and focused on resolving cultural diversity disputes and assisting immigrants with their integration into the work environment, participants were asked if they had ever worked with this type of expert. 81.42% stated that they had not had this experience in the job, whereas 18.58% stated that they had.

Figure 16: Chart of Question 19



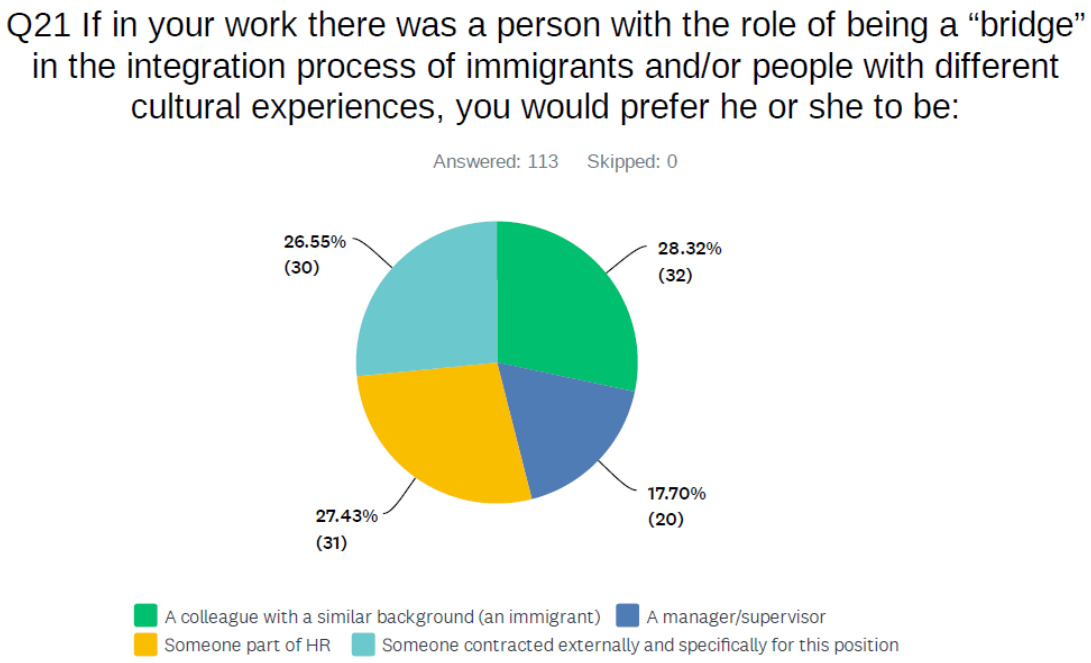
The final two questions seek to ascertain how immigrants see the implementation of not only intercultural mediation techniques in the workplace but also the hiring or training of someone to deal with the cultural diversity of immigrant workers and to assist them in integrating. Over half (52.21%) stated that they would feel comfortable discussing any concerns or difficulties they may have. The remaining replies favoured the implementation of such a component, except for 13.27% who recognised that such an approach would be irrelevant.

Figure 17: Chart of Question 20



To deal with this obligation/responsibility, the majority of respondents (28.32%) believe that the best course of action would be to have a colleague who is also an immigrant. With 17.70%, managers/supervisors were viewed as the final option for this position. However, among all of the options presented, the respondents' responses were very evenly distributed.

Figure 18: Chart of Question 21



Chapter 5 - Discussion

It was abundantly obvious from this research that when an immigrant arrives in a new nation, they will confront numerous obstacles adapting to and creating a new home in a country with a different culture, costumes, and language in many circumstances. The process of moving itself is a significant undertaking that necessitates numerous difficult considerations. Thus, while entering a new culture, the process of integration is critical to the subsequent stages of life. This is why Irish integration procedures, particularly in the workplace, are an important subject to investigate, given the high number of migrant employees in Irish companies and the importance of their integration for performance and well-being.

There are studies on migrant integration in various areas of society, but none of them focused on the integration of immigrants who are already in the labour market, that is, already working, and so none of them was found to be relevant to the study's objectives. However, it was clear that one of the most important indicators of integration, structural and social, is the integration into the labour market since it helps immigrants to establish a base in the host community (McGinnity et al., 2020b; Beutin et al., 2006 and OECD, 2018).

This is why, as described in the previous chapter, this research focuses on determining how intercultural mediation might be used to promote the inclusion and integration of immigrants in the Irish workplace. To investigate this research question, the following objectives were established:

- Determine the factors affecting immigrants' integration, particularly in the workplace;
- Assess the relationship between intercultural mediation and its approaches and techniques and the process of immigrant integration; and
- Determine how intercultural mediators' methods and techniques can be used by Irish businesses to improve immigrant workers' integration.

To begin, the study attempted to comprehend the participants' demographics in order to determine whether it corresponded to data on Irish immigration flow. In this study, the majority of respondents were Brazilian and female, which corresponds to the most recent data on Ireland's immigrant population. This reflects the total population of non-Irish nationalities, which, according to the 2016 Census (CSO, 2016), was 267,088 males and 268,387 females, and proved by 2019 that the largest source of non-Irish immigration came from Brazil (CSO, 2019). The majority of participants held student visas, again corroborating the findings of the most recent census, which showed that 22% (10,401 persons) of non-Irish immigrants who arrived in the year to April 2016 were students. Brazilians, with 2,370 pupils, were the largest group.

In terms of the typical challenges experienced by immigrants, the literature research indicated that traditionally, some of the most common challenges are language barriers, visa requirements and authorization, host country attitudes, and instances of racism/discrimination. Some prior research on the linguistic landscape, for example, found that the most challenging components of speaking in Ireland for non-English speakers are accent and pronunciation (Ciribuco et al., 2017). With over 35% of responses, the participants' remarks verified the literature's concerns about language and visa challenges.

A third point that was strongly mentioned as a challenge was the difficulty of finding work that matched the participants' qualifications. This appears to indicate that many of the participants are highly skilled, and when combined with the language barrier and visa requirements for living and working in Ireland, this could be directly tied to the difficulties of immigrants finding jobs at their level of expertise.

A noteworthy finding from the study's findings was that a sizable proportion of respondents (23.53%) indicated that they had never had any difficulty transitioning to a new culture, in this case, during the process of immigration to Ireland. This is somewhat surprising because while difficulties

are to be expected when we change cities or employment inside our own country, a shift as significant as moving to a foreign country, such issues end up being worse than anticipated, practically inevitable.

It should be mentioned, however, that this was the question with the highest number of persons who skipped it. This could be seen as some immigrants finding it difficult to speak or reflect on the obstacles they confront in the immigration process.

Another striking finding was the majority of respondents' negative responses to the question of whether they had ever been the victim of or witnessed unpleasant behaviour by co-workers as a result of their nationality or cultural background, combined with the majority of respondents' affirmation that they have never encountered a clash of cultures between them and their native colleagues. Given that there are numerous comments about this type of event on social media in immigrant groups and also of the personal experience of this researcher as an immigrant, the denial of more than half of the participants (52.21%) shows that this type of discrimination may not be as widespread or obvious in the workplace.

Despite these barriers, the participants recognise that Ireland has a diverse workplace, which is positive. On the other hand, the majority recognises that, while the Irish country appears to be welcoming of immigrants, a part of the population is nonetheless dissatisfied with their presence. According to 29.36% of respondents in this example, hostile behaviour was more commonly displayed by Irish co-workers.

In terms of the relationship between intercultural mediation and the process of immigrant integration, it appears that this is a method that would require immigrants to be introduced to it, as well as a more thorough explanation of its merits and execution. The respondents' general comprehension of and usage of mediation to resolve workplace problems leads to this conclusion.

Although most immigrants have heard of mediation as a method of resolving disputes, the vast majority have never participated in one mediation session. The number of people who have never heard of it is also significant because even though the response was a little contradictory (42.48% initially said they had never heard of it, but only 30.09% confirmed this lately), it is reasonable to assume that at least 30% had no idea how mediation could be used.

Intercultural mediation is undeniably effective in terms of supporting immigrants in their integration process. It not only allows the mediator to campaign for the removal of many of the barriers that immigrants confront, some of which are discussed in this paper, but it also allows the mediator to develop a culture of transparency, inclusiveness, and human rights advocacy (Catarci, 2016).

Considering that while more than half of respondents stated that their employees created an environment conducive to full integration, the 30.97% who responded negatively to the same question remained relevant when considering the implementation of intercultural mediation in Irish workplaces. Furthermore, approximately 60% of participants understand that employers in all sectors of the workplace (colleagues, managers, supervisors, and even human resources) are unprepared to deal with the multicultural workplace environment that Ireland possesses.

These findings bring us to the final goal of this research and a relevant element of the study's conclusion. Through a review of the literature, it was examined how intercultural mediation is utilised, in which fields it is typically employed, for whom and how training to be an intercultural mediator is provided, and the skills and strategies that are used in this approach. A connection was made to one of the necessary skills for intercultural mediators that businesses might adopt in their workplaces: intercultural awareness, or, as described here, intercultural competence.

The results that more than half of the participants believe there is a lack of cultural competence at various levels of Irish business was important again at this point. This, combined with the fact that

even those who believed that those levels of Irish business are well trained, contributed with suggestions for who they believe should receive training on how to deal with employees of different nationalities/cultural backgrounds, more specifically at the managerial level. This is consistent with the Council of Europe's (2008) observation that the qualities required for intercultural engagement are not naturally acquired and must be studied, practised, and maintained for the rest of one's life.

Thus, based on the findings of this research, the utilisation of methodologies and intrinsic qualities of intercultural mediation can be applied in the Irish workplace to enhance cultural competency across various sectors of the organisation and, more especially, at management levels.

At the same time, while it is preferable to pursue cultural competence development at all levels within Irish businesses, this can be interpreted as an initial step for businesses to have employees focused on resolving cultural misunderstandings that arise when working with employees of different nationalities. Participants felt this is significant, as evidenced by the data they supplied.

As it can be observed, less than 20% of respondents have worked in an environment in Ireland that had someone infused with this responsibility. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of participants indicated optimism about the idea of working in a company that hired someone with this degree of sensitivity to cope with not only the cultural diversity of the work environment but also to support them in their integration process. On the other hand, only 13.27% believe this is would be irrelevant. This indicates that even people who previously reported being fully integrated into the work environment can see the value and importance of this methodology for them as immigrants.

Finally, when asked who they believed might best fulfil the role of "a bridge" in this process of integrating immigrants into Irish businesses, the participants demonstrated that all of the techniques outlined in the literature study could be applied and employed. The participants' slightly higher

proclivity to have a colleague in a similar situation to them reflects the long-standing practice of hiring an immigrant who has worked through their own migration experience (Catarci, 2016; TIME, 2015). However, the other possibilities received a comparable level of support, with 27.43% to allow HR to handle it and 26.55% supporting the prospect of hiring someone externally, like an intercultural mediator, expressly for this position. As a result, it may be reasonable to conclude that the best method to achieve this cultural competence would be to foster it at all levels of an organization while also having someone dedicated to this goal.

Conclusions

This dissertation aimed to understand how intercultural mediation could be useful to facilitate the process of integration of immigrants in the Irish workplace. For this purpose, the following research question was created: *"How intercultural mediation can promote the inclusion and integration of immigrants in the workplace environment in Ireland"*.

To undergo this assessment, three objectives were created to provide a reasonable conclusion: determine the factor that impacts immigrants in their integration, especially in the workplace; assess the relation existent between intercultural mediation and its approaches and techniques and the process of integration of immigrants and determine how intercultural mediators' methods and techniques can be employed by Irish firms to improve immigrant workers' integration.

These objectives were used as a guideline for the selection of themes to be examined in the literature review and, subsequently, to provide sufficient theoretical basis for the elaboration and choices of the base questionnaire for the data collection of this research.

Throughout the survey, it became clear that the obstacles faced by immigrants, in general, corroborate academic assertions. According to previous research and studies (Rajendran et al., 2017; Hopkins, 2012; Lee et al., 2016; and Hargrave and Dempster, 2017), language and visa permits are two of the most significant issues confronting immigrants in Ireland. English proficiency can assist immigrants to adjust and integrate into the workplace. Nonetheless, it does not eliminate the chance of misunderstandings because people will continue to see events via their cultural prism (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017; Selmer, 2006 and Rajendran et al., 2017).

This fact is almost certainly related to another point of agreement among participants: the difficulty in finding jobs that match previous qualifications. It looks logical to suppose that if an immigrant does not learn the host country's language, they will have trouble obtaining work that fits their

qualifications.

These barriers alone have an impact on immigrants' integration not only into the new society as a whole but also into employment. This is precisely why it is vital to support immigrant integration strategies. Integration of migrants into Irish society is already a priority in Ireland, with specific strategies in place to encourage such integration (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017).

However, these measures have not prioritised the integration of these already-employed immigrants, focusing instead on promoting access to jobs and the labour market. While this goal is both essential and necessary, integration does not end after immigrants find work.

If hurdles exist while starting a new job in their own country, starting a job in another country, with a new culture (including the cultures of the companies that may be different from the immigrant's country of origin), and with a new language will be far more difficult.

This is why intercultural mediation has the potential to be crucial in such endeavours. Intercultural mediation has been studied and applied to aid with the integration of immigrants into society. Numerous European countries have implemented this technique in a variety of sectors of society, most notably the public sector. For example, Ireland's health care system has also embraced some of the components of intercultural mediation (Health Service Executive, 2008).

In terms of migrants' perceptions of workplace attitudes toward cultural diversity, it appears that it is more likely to be essential to incentivize the development of cultural competence at all levels of the workplace, but particularly at the managerial level. It is crucial to note that most immigrants in this study feel integrated at work, which may reflect the broader immigrant population but does not negate the fact that there is a noticeable clear lack of cultural awareness in Irish workplaces.

According to the findings of this study, the vast majority of participants felt this method to be

relevant and advantageous, preferring to train and assign this duty to a co-worker who shares their immigrant status. Hiring someone who is already experienced in dealing with similar scenarios was also seen favourably in the findings of this study. As a result, this study continues to support the idea of the importance and relevance of employers and businesses implementing the usage of having personnel trained to deal with cultural challenges in the workplace and to aid in the integration process of immigrant workers.

In summary, the most important findings are compatible with the author's initial assumptions, particularly the benefits of implementing the techniques and skills used by intercultural mediators in the Irish workplace. One of the initial recommendations suggested by this study was the preliminary adoption of cultural competency development inside Irish workplaces, notably among management levels, followed by the establishment of staff specialising in this area within the workplace. However, the findings of this study indicated that both techniques would be seen positively by immigrants, implying that concurrent implementation may be feasible from the viewpoint of immigrant employees.

It is also worth noting that the findings called into question some of the researcher's premises. To begin with, it appears that job discrimination against immigrants is minor, if not non-existent. The author expected this to be highlighted more frequently and regularly during the survey, however, participants did not experience exclusion, discrimination, or unjust behaviour from non-nationals.

Second, the majority of Irish workplaces promote their immigrant employees in feeling integrated into the professional environment, according to the findings of this survey. The author expected to learn that Irish workplaces were not taking steps to integrate migrants.

Based on these findings, the author believes that some recommendations for further research are necessary. They may provide more bases for a possible national implementation of the use of

intercultural mediation in efforts to seek the integration of immigrant workers within the workplace, as well as possible actions that employers in Ireland could already take, namely:

- Developing a new national strategy for immigrant integration that includes an emphasis on labour market integration once immigrants are integrated and employed;
- Development of a new research project focused on Irish companies to ascertain what programmes they now have in place to promote immigrant worker integration and how they may be expanded;
- Continuing to focus on employees, internal surveys in businesses to ascertain what the managerial levels and human resource workers of the companies perceive as cultural competency and how such aptitude is developed;
- Create courses, maybe in collaboration with institutions that currently work with mediation, such as the Mediator's Institute of Ireland (MII), that focus on cultural awareness training for company personnel, followed by the formation of partnerships to promote employer workshops.

Reflection

Being an immigrant requires overcoming numerous barriers and hurdles. The meaning of the word "immigrant", in my opinion, should be included "skilled at transcending obstacles and overcoming challenges". As an immigrant, I had to deal with many of the topics described in this study. Actuality, I encountered problems even during the writing of this study and the decision-making process for pursuing this master's degree. Looking back on the course and the dissertation, the first major impediment was the language itself. Starting to learn a second language barely two years before beginning the master's programme might cause anyone to be disturbed and fearful of failing, of not comprehending the classes, of not being good enough. That is why every line read, and every new piece of writing was a triumph over the language barrier.

This research was also a test of my neutrality. Being objective when dealing with opposing points of view is a skill I have been honing since I was in college while studying for a legal degree. This notion was presented and highlighted as vital once more in this master's degree. One of our professors remarked in one of our mediation lectures that when she went to mediation sessions with her clients, she would place her "I", with its beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes, in a box so that she could operate as a mediator as efficiently as possible.

This strategy, I believe, is equally beneficial when working as a researcher. Despite our desire to be accurate, the goal of the research is to discover where we were mistaken and what we can learn from it. While writing this paper, I was able to hone my impartiality abilities since, while it was necessary to use my viewpoints and personal experiences to analyse studies and data presented in the literature review, I also needed to be objective when dealing with unexpected outcomes.

Out of all I have done and experienced on the Emerald Island in three years, I can say that writing this dissertation was demanding, but being an immigration student was significantly more challenging. As a result, I made the most of every learning opportunity and tried to make the best of every obstacle. This master's degree presented itself as a new assignment worth pursuing. This study, I believe, is the consequence of that process, a reconnection of an immigrant's genuine concerns with the application of theory learned in class. My hope is that my research will help to improve the lives of many others who are in a similar situation to mine.

Bibliography

Anon (n.d.). *What is a Likert scale?*. SurveyMonkey. Available at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/likert-scale/ [Accessed October 4, 2021].

Arvanitis, E. (2014). The Intercultural Mediation: *A Transformative Journey of Learning and Reflexivity* in book: Intercultural Mediation in Europe: Narratives of Professional Transformation. pp.1-16. Common Ground.

Barkai, J. (2008). *What's a Cross-Cultural Mediator to Do? A Low-Context Solution for a High-Context Problem*. Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 10. pp. 43-89.

Bell, J. (2010). *Doing your research project: a guide for first-time researchers in education, health, and social science*. 5th ed. England: Open University Press.

Bell, J. and Waters, S. (2018). Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers. 7th ed. Maidenhead, Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.

Bermejo, R. (2008). *Language and Immigration: An Analysis of the Development of Linguistic Requirements in Immigration Policy (WP)*. Available at: http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_en/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_in/zonas_in/demography+population/dt17-2008. [Accessed 5 July 2021].

Beutin, R., Canoy, M., Horvath, A., Hubert, A., Lerais, F., Smith, P. and Sochacki, M. (2006). *Migration and public perception*. Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA). European Commission. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/e-library/documents/policies/legal-migration/pdf/general/bepa_migration_2006_en.pdf. [Accessed 5 July 2021].

Bianchini, E. (2015). *The intercultural mediation: facilitate relations between immigrants and native-born citizens*. Rivista di Criminologia, Vittimologia e Sicurezza. Vol. IX – N. 1. Gennaio. Doi: 10.14664/rcvs/157.

Bryman, A. (2012). Social Research Methods. 4th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Catarci, M. (2016). *Intercultural Mediation as a strategy to facilitate relations between the School and Immigrant Families.*Revista Electrónica Interuniversitaria de Formación del Profesorado, 19 (1), pp. 127-140. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.6018/reifop.19.1.244161

Chiofalo, T. A., Fernández-Martínez, M. del M., Luque-de la Rosa, A., Carrión-Martínez, J. J. (2019). *The Role of L2 and Cultural Mediation in the Inclusion of Immigrant Students in Italian Schools*. Education Sciences, 9(4), 283. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/educsci9040283. [Accessed 11 July 2021].

Ciribuco, A., Naughton, A. and O'Connor, A., (2017). *Language and Migration in Ireland*. Dublin: Immigrant Council of Ireland. Available at: https://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/sites/default/files/files/Language%20and%20Migration%20in%20Ireland.pdf. [Accessed 5 July 2021].

Cohen-Emerique, M. (2007). Intercultural Mediators: Bridges of Identities. *InterCulture, 153*, 7-22.

Council of Europe (2008). White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue: *"Living Together as Equals in Dignity"*. Ministers of Foreign Affairs. 118th Ministerial Session. Available at: https://en.unesco.org/interculturaldialogue/resources/300. [Accessed 20 July 2021].

Council of the European Union (2004). *Conclusions of the Council and Representatives of the Governments of Member States on Common Basic Principles on Integration*. Justice and Home Affairs Meeting, Brussels, 19/XI/2004.

Cox Jr., T. and Blake, (1991) 'S. Managing diversity: implications for organizational competitiveness. Academy of Management Executive', v. 5, n. 3.7.

CSO (2016). All non-Irish nationals in Ireland. Central Statistics Office. Available at: https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp7md/p7md/p7anii/. [Accessed 7 October 2021].

CSO (2021). All non-Irish nationals in Ireland. Central Statistics Office. Available at: https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp7md/p7md/p7anii/ [Accessed 7 October 2021].

Dahlberg, L. and McCaig, C. (2010). *Introduction to research and evaluation basics*. In Practical research and evaluation: A start-to-finish guide for practitioners (pp. 13-28). SAGE Publications Ltd, https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781446268346

Dawson, C. (2002). *Practical Research Methods*. New Delhi: UBSPD Pub.

De Haas, H., Vezzoli, S., Szczepanikiva A., Van Criekinge, T. (2018). *European Migrations: Dynamics, Drivers, and the Role of Policies*. European Commission. Available at: https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC109783/kjna29060enn.pdf [Accessed 15 October 2021].

Dempster, H. and Hargrave, K. (2017). *Understanding public attitudes towards refugees and migrants.* Available at: https://odi.org/en/publications/understanding-public-attitudes-towards-refugees-and-migrants/. [Accessed 5 July 2021].

Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (2019) Employment permits statistical tables and company listings. Available at: https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/What-We-Do/Workplace-and-Skills/Employment-Permits/Statistics/ [Accessed 15 October 2021].

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (2021). Minister Damien English announces changes to the employment permits system. [online] Available at: https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/ab8d7-minister-damien-english-announces-changes-to-the-employment-permits-system/ [Accessed 11 July 2021].

Department of Justice and Equality (2017). The migrant integration strategy: A blueprint for the future. Available at: http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Migrant_Integration_Strategy_English.pdf/Files/Migrant_Integration_Strategy_English.pdf [Accessed 13 October 2021].

Dixon-Fyle, S., Dolan, K., Hunt, V., and Prince, S. (2020). *Diversity wins: How inclusion matters*. McKinsey & Company. Available at: https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters [Accessed 25 August 2021].

Esser, H. (2006). *Migration, Language and Integration.* AKI Research Review 4. Programme on Intercultural Conflicts and Societal Integration (AKI). Social Science Research. Center Berlin. Available at: https://bibliothek.wzb.eu/pdf/2006/iv06-akibilanz4b.pdf. [Accessed 5 July 2021].

Frankfort-Nachmias, C., Nachmias, D., & Dewaard, J. (2015). *Research methods in the social sciences*. New York: Worth Publishers, a Macmillan Education Company.

Guirdham, M. and Guirdham, O. (2017). *Communicating across cultures at work*. 4th Edition. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hainmueller, J. and Hopkins, D. J. (2014). *"Public Attitudes Toward Immigration"*, Annual Review of Political Science. Vol. 17. pp. 225-249. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-102512-194818.

Hanassab, S. (1991). *Acculturation and Young Iranian Women: Attitudes Toward Sex Roles and Intimate Relationships.* Journal of Multicultural Counselling and Development. DOI:

10.1002/j.2161-1912.1991.tb00453.x. PMID: 12348521.

Hart, C. (1998). *Doing a literature review*. London: Sage Publications.

Health Service Executive (2008). National Intercultural Health Strategy 2007-2012. Available at: https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/socialinclusion/national-intercultural-health-strategy-2007---2012.pdf. [Accessed July 14, 2021].

Holmes, J., Joe, A., Marra, M., Newton, J., Riddiford, N., & Vine, B. (2011). Applying linguistic research to real world problems: The social meaning of talk in workplace interaction. In C. N. Candlin & S. Sarangi (Eds.), *Handbook of communication in organisations and professions* (pp. 533–550). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Hopkins, B. (2012). 'Inclusion of a diverse workforce in the UK: The case of the EU expansion', Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, 31(4), pp. 379–390, Emerald Insight. DOI: 10.1108/02610151211223058.

INAR (2019). *Alternative Report on Racial Discrimination in Ireland.*The Irish Network Against Racism, INAR (formerly ENAR Ireland). Available at: https://inar.ie/our-work/research-and-data-on-racism-in-ireland/. [Accessed 11 July 2021].

INIS (2020). Permission, stamps & conditions. Department of Justice. Available at: http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/inis/pages/registration-stamps Accessed 8 October 2021 [Accessed 7 October 2021].

Irish labour market. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Frances_Mcginnity/publication/329809942_Ethnicity_and_Nationality_in_the_Irish_Labour_Market/links/5c1ba317458515a4c7ebb0c7/Ethnicityand-Nationality-in-the-Irish-Labour-Market.pdf [Accessed 15 October 2021].

Ishiyama, F. I. and Westwood, M. J. (1992). *Enhancing Client-Validating Communication: Helping Discouraged Clients in Cross-Cultural Adjustment*. Journal of Multicultural Counselling and Development.

Isphording, I. E. and Otten, S. (2014): Linguistic Barriers in the Destination Language Acquisition of Immigrants, IZA Discussion Papers, No. 8090, Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA), Bonn

Jean, S., Causa, O., Jimenez, M. and Wanner, I. (2010). *Migration and labour market outcomes in OECD countries*. OECD Journal: Economic Studies, OECD Publishing, vol. 2010 (1), pages 1-34. Available at: https://www.oecd.org/education/labour/49850080.pdf [Accessed 3 May 2021].

Law, S. F. (2009). *Culturally sensitive mediation: the importance of culture in mediation accreditation*. Australasian Dispute Resolution Journal, 20 (3). pp. 162-171. ISSN 1441-7847.

LeBaron, M. (2003). *"Culture and Conflict"*. Beyond Intractability. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: July 2003.

Lee, G., and Westwood, M. J. (1996). *Cross-cultural adjustment issues faced by immigrant professionals*. Journal of Employment Counselling 33(1): 29–42. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1920.1996.tb00431.x [Accessed 30 April 2021].

Lee, G., Park, J. and Ban, L. (2016). *Understanding workplace adaptation as an acculturation process: A qualitative examination of South Korean highly skilled workers in Japan.* International Journal of Psychological Studies, 8(4), pp. 107-120, Researchgate. DOI: 10.5539/ijps.v8n4p107

Lucey, C. (2019). *Economic Outlook: Asylum abuse and racism take shine off Ireland's immigration success story*. The Sunday Times, Business and Money. Available at: https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/economic-outlook-asylum-abuse-and-racism-take-shine-off-irelands-immigration-success-story-vcn6tljdj [Accessed 15 October 2021].

Mada, S., and Saftoiu, R. (2012). *Professional communication across languages and cultures*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Marques, J. C. J., Vieira, A. and Vieira, R. (2019). *Migration and Integration Processes in Portugal: The Role of Intercultural Mediation.* Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences 2 (2019 12) 187-205. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331489045_Migration_and_Integration_Processes_in_Portugal_The_Role_of_Intercultural_Mediation [Accessed 3 May 2021].

McGinnity, F., Creighton, M. and Fahey, É. (2020a). *Hidden Versus Revealed Attitudes: A List Experiment on Support for Minorities in Ireland*. Dublin: ESRI and Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC). DOI: https://doi.org/10.26504/bkmnext372.

McGinnity, F., Enright, S., Quinn, E., Maître, B., Privalko, I., Darmody, M. and Polakowski, M. (2020b). *Monitoring report on integration 2020*. ESRI and Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Available at: https://www.esri.ie/publications/monitoring-report-on-integration-2020. [Accessed 29 April 2021].

McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Groarke, S. and Coughlan, S. (2018a) Ethnicity and nationality in the

McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Russell, H. and Fahey, É. (2018b*). Attitudes to Diversity in Ireland*. Dublin: ESRI and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission. Available at: https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2018/03/Attitudes-to-diversity-in-Ireland.pdf. [Accessed 11 July 2021].

McGinnity, F., O'Connell, P. J., Quinn, E. and Williams, J. (2006). *Migrants' Experience of Racism and Discrimination in Ireland: Survey Report*. The Economic and Social Research Institute. Available at: https://emn.ie/files/p_20100827104055Frances%20McGinnity-

%20Migrants%20experience%20of%20racism%20and%20discrimination%20in%20Ireland.pdf. [Accessed 11 July 2021].

McLean, G. F. and Kromkowski, J. (1991). *Relations between Cultures*. Washington, D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.

Meltzer, C. E., Eberl, J-B., Theorin, N**.,** Lind, F., Schemer, C. Strömbäck, J., Boomgaarden, H. and Heidenreich, T. (2018). *Perceptions of the Impact of Immigration and Attitudes Towards Free Movement Within the EU: A Cross-National Study*. REMINDER project. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/documents/downloadPublic?documentIds=080166e5ba453a74&appId=PPGMS. [Accessed 5 July 2021].

Mills, A. J., Durepos, G., and Wiebe, E. (2010). *Encyclopedia of case study research*. SAGE Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks, CA. doi: 10.4135/9781412957397. [Accessed 16 August 2021].

Moon, D. G. (1996). *Concepts of* "Culture": *Implications for intercultural Communication Research*. Communication Quarterly. Vol. 44, No. 1, 70 - 84.

Moore, C. W. (2014). The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict. 4th ed. New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

O'Connell, J. P. and McGinnity, F. (2008). *Immigrants at Work: Ethnicity and Nationality in the Irish Labour Market*. Dublin: The Equality Authority and The Economic and Social Research Institute. Available at: www.equality.ie/research [Accessed 3 May 2021].

O'Neill, F. (2020). The Intercultural Professional. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan (Communicating in Professions and Organizations). Available at: https://booksc.eu/book/83442752/d62e74. [Accessed 20 July 2021].

O'Shea, R., Skillen, L. and Diggs, E. G. (n.d.). *Criteria for QAP Intercultural Competence. International Mediation Institute*. Available at: https://imimediation.org/en/orgs/cag-icc/. [Accessed July 14, 2021].

OECD (2018). Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees. OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264085350-en. [Accessed 29 April 2021].

Petrova, J. A. (2016). *Cultural and language problems faced by migrants as the members of a certain ethnic community*. Materials of international scientific and practical conference. Regional Problems of Modern Migration. At: Rostov-on-Don. Volume: 1. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334644126_CULTURAL_AND_LANGUAGE_PROBLEMS_FACED_BY_MIGRANTS_AS_THE_MEMBERS_OF_A_CERTAIN_ETHNIC_COMMUNITY. [Accessed 5 July 2021].

Rădulescu, M. D. and Mitrut, D. (2012). *Intercultural Mediation*. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences. Vol. 2, No. 11, pp. 344-350. Available at: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/25799203.pdf [Accessed: May 6, 2021].

Rajendran, D., Farquharson, K. and Hewege, C. (2017). *Workplace integration: The lived experiences of highly skilled migrants in Australia*. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, 36(5), pp. 437–456, Emerald Insight. DOI: 10.1108/EDI-11-2016-0094.

Romero, C.G. (2010). *Interculturalidade e Mediação*. Lisboa: Alto Comissariado para a Imigração e Diálogo Intercultural.

Ruhs, M. (2017), *Free Movement in the European Union: National Institutions vs Common Policies?*. International Migration Vol. 55 (S1). pp. 22-38. https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12398.

Salkind, N. J. (2010) *Encyclopedia of research design.* vol. 0, SAGE Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks, CA, [Accessed 28 June 2021], DOI: 10.4135/9781412961288.

Sarala R., M. and Vaara, E. (2010) "Cultural differences, convergence, and crossvergence as explanations of knowledge transfer in international acquisitions". Journal of International Business Studies. Vol. 41.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2016). *Research Methods for Business Students*. 7th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Schuller, S. (2016). *Intercultural Mediation at Work*. Bookboon.com. Available at: https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/1c74f035/files/uploaded/Intercultural%20mediation%20at%20work.pdf [Accessed 11 July 2021].

Soontiens, W. and Tonder, C.V. (2014). 'Human Capital and Workplace Integration: A Reflection of South African Migrants in Australia', Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences, 143, pp. 1031–1040, ScienceDirect. DOI: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.549.

Souza, I. E. T. de V. (2016). *Intercultural Mediation in Healthcare: From the Professional Medical Interpreters' Perspective*. Epub. Xlibris. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/38103991/Intercultural_Mediation_epub. [Accessed 14 July 2021].

Taran, P. and Gächter, A. (2003). Achieving Equality in Intercultural Workplaces. An Agenda for Action. Equality Authority, Ireland. Available at: https://www.ihrec.ie/documents/achieving-equality-in-intercultural-workplaces/. [Accessed 20 July 2021].

Tashakkori, A., and Teddlie, C. (2010). SAGE handbook of mixed methods in social &behavioural research (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc. https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781506335193

Theodosiou, A. and Aspioti, M. (2016). *Research Report on Intercultural Mediation for Immigrants in Europe*. TIME project partnership, 2015, 2016 - Train Intercultural Mediators for a Multicultural Europe. Available at: http://www.mediation-time.eu/images/TIME_O1_Research_Report_v.2016.pdf. [Accessed 11 July 2021].

TIME (2015). *Intercultural Mediator Profile and Related Learning Outcomes*. Train Intercultural Mediator for a Multicultural Europe. TIME project partnership. Olympic Training and Consulting Ltd. Available at: http://www.mediation-time.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=122&lang=en. [Accessed July 14, 2021].

TIME (2016). Self-study Course for Trainers of Intercultural Mediators – Module 7: Resources on intercultural mediation. Train Intercultural Mediator for a Multicultural Europe. TIME project partnership. Olympic Training and Consulting Ltd. Available at: http://www.mediation-time.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=122&lang=en [Accessed July 14, 2021].

Triandis, H. C., Kurowski, L. L., & Gelfand, M. J (2002). *Workplace diversity*: In H. C. Triandis, M. Dunnette, & L. M. Hough (Eds.), Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press. 1994.

Wall, M. (2021). *Changes to work-permit system announced by Government*. [online] The Irish Times. Available at: https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/changes-to-work-permit-system-announced-by-government-1.4592996. [Accessed 11 July 2021].

Wang, Z., Graaff, T. and Nijkamp, P. (2018). Barriers of Culture, Networks, and Language in International Migration: A Review. REGION. 5. 73-89. 10.18335/region.v5i1.203.

Zorlu, A. and Hartog, J. (2018). *The Impact of Language on Socioeconomic Integration of Immigrants.* Discussion Paper Series. Germany: IZA – Institute of Labor Economics. IZA DP No. 11485.

Appendix A - Online Questionnaire

1. What is your nationality:

SPECIFY

2. To which gender do you most identify with?

a) Male
b) Female
c) Prefer not to say
d) Other

3. How old are you?

a) Under 18
b) 18-24
c) 25-34
d) 35-44
e) 45 or above

4. What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?

a) High School
b) Bachelor's Degree
c) Postgraduate/Specialization
d) Master's Degree
e) PhD or Higher

5. How long have you been living in Ireland?

a) Less than a year
b) 1 year
c) 2 or 3 years
d) More than 5 years

6. Are you working or have you ever worked in Ireland?

a) Yes

b) No

7. Which of the options below best describe your current working/residence status in Ireland?

a) Student

b) Student that works Part-Time

c) European Passport (or Dual citizenship)

d) Critical Skills visa

e) General employment visa

f) Prefer not to say

g) Other (specify)

8. What is your opinion about the following statement: "Ireland is a country that is open to immigrants and their different cultural backgrounds with most of the local population are open, however, it is still possible to find some cases of people not so receptive and friendly to the presence of immigrants"?

a) I strongly agree

b) I agree

c) I disagree

d) I strongly disagree

e) I have no opinion

9. If you have worked/are working in Ireland, did find your workplace(s) a diverse environment, with people from different nationalities?

a) Yes

b) No

10. Have you ever faced any challenges to feel integrated into the workplace owing to your nationality and culture while working in Ireland? If yes what type of challenges did you face?

a) Language

b) Unfriendly behaviour from part of natives (Irish colleagues)

c) Visa requirements

d) Some kind of discrimination in relation to your cultural background

e) Some type of Racism and/or Discrimination that you experienced or witnessed

f) Find a job that matches your previous qualifications

g) None

h) Other (Specify)

11. Have you ever felt there was a clash of cultures between you and your native colleague(s) within your current or previous workplace?

a) Yes

b) No

12. Have you ever suffered or witnessed any kind of hostile behaviour by other co-workers that you understood to be related to the nationality and/or different cultural background of the people involved?

a) Yes

b) No

13. If you answered "yes" to question 12, the person that presented the unfriendly behaviour was:

a) Irish

b) Another European

c) The same nationality as the person who was targeted

d) Another nationality

14. Have you ever heard about mediation in the workplace as a way to solve conflicts?

a) Yes

b) No

15. If you answered yes to question 14, have you ever participated in mediation?

a) Yes, I found it very beneficial to resolve the conflict

b) Yes, but I didn't think it was useful to solve the conflict

c) Never participate in a mediation

d) I have never heard about mediation

16. While working/in your current jobs in Ireland have you ever felt that the company/employer provided a working environment that made you feel fully integrated, "part of the team"?

a) Yes
b) No

17. Do you believe that employers, colleagues, managerial level (managers, supervisors, etc) and HR are well trained to deal with a multicultural and diverse environment at work or at least have a cultural consciousness?

a) Yes
b) No

18. If you answered "no" to question 17, who do you think should, most urgently, receive training to learn to deal with employees of different nationalities and different cultures?

a) Manager, supervisors and others at the managerial level
b) HR staff
c) Colleagues
d) Managerial level and colleagues
e) They are well trained

19. Have you ever worked in a place in Ireland that had a person trained and responsible to deal with cultural diversity conflicts and also working as a bridge between immigrant employees and the company?

a) Yes
b) No

20. How would you feel if in a new job/your current job in Ireland had someone with a sensibility to your diverse cultural background that could intermediate and facilitate your process of integration, as an immigrant in the company?

a) I would feel more confident and comfortable to raise problems and difficulties that I have/may have

b) I would understand this as a way of the company try to make me feel more "part of the team"

c) I would feel as I have someone that can understand me better

d) It would be irrelevant to me

21. If in your work there was a person with the role of being a "bridge" in the integration process of immigrants and/or people with different cultural experiences, you would prefer he/she to be:

a) A colleague with a similar background (an immigrant)

b) A manager/supervisor

c) Someone part of HR

d) Someone externally hired for this role

Appendix B - Consent Form and Concluding Statement

Research Purpose:

Dear Participant,

You are being invited to take part in this research study that aims to gain an understanding of how Employers/Businesses can use intercultural mediation and/or its techniques and skills to promote the integration of immigrant workers in Ireland.

This research is being carried out by Luciene Pereira dos Santos as a partial requirement of a Master's Degree in Dispute Resolution at Independent College Dublin.

You are invited to participate in this research project as an immigrant living in Ireland with experience in the Irish labour market in order to understand immigrants' perspectives on diversity and the cultural landscape of the workplace in Ireland in order to assess how it is possible to use intercultural mediation and/or apply its techniques and skills to promote better integration of immigrants in the workplace environment in Ireland.

Consent Form:

Your participation in this research study is voluntary and you may choose not to participate.

If you agree to participate in this research survey, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences of any kind. The procedure involves filling an online survey that will take approximately 5 minutes.

The survey questions will be about your experience working in Ireland and your opinion concerning the approach to cultural diversity in the workplace.

All information you provide for this study will be treated confidentially and to help protect your confidentiality, the surveys will not contain information that will personally identify you, therefore, we do not collect identifying information such as your name, email address or IP address.

You will not benefit directly from participating in this research, but your participation will have an importance in the development and further understanding of the topic

The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only and may be shared with Independent College representatives and all data will be stored on a password-controlled external survey application (SurveyMonkey).

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 and for assisting me in the completion of my master's degree.

Concluding statement:

Thank you for completing the survey. Your opinions matter a lot and will help me to achieve the aims of this study. If you have any doubts or concerns in relation to this research, you are welcome to contact the research supervisor, Ms Alison Walker (Alison.Walker@independentcolleges.ie) and the research candidate Ms Luciene Pereira dos Santos (lucienepereira321@gmail.com), who is a registered student at Independent College Dublin undertaking the degree of Master of Arts in Dispute Resolutions.

In case you feel that this research has not been able to maintain ethical principles, please contact Independent College Dublin at the contacts below:

Independent College Dublin at Block B, The Steelworks, Foley St, Dublin 1, or by email: info@independentcolleges.ie

Appendix C - Research and Ethics Form

Form A: Application for Ethical Approval

Undergraduate/Taught Postgraduate Research

This form should be submitted to the module leader for the relevant initial proposal and/or the relevant supervisor is the proposal has already been accepted.

Please save this file as *STUDENT NUMBER_AEA_FormA.docx*

Title of Project	Intercultural mediation as an instrument for the promotion of inclusion and integration of immigrants in the workplace environment in Ireland
Name of Learner	Luciene Pereira dos Santos
Student Number	51710048
Name of Supervisor/Tutor	Alison Walker

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

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

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

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

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

I consider that this project has **no** significant ethical implications to be brought before the relevant Research & Ethics Committee. I have read and understood the specific guidelines for completion of Ethics Application Forms. I am familiar with the codes of professional ethics relevant to my discipline (and have discussed them with my supervisor).	x
Name of Learner	Luciene Pereira dos Santos
Student Number	51710048
Date	01/09/2021
I have discussed this project with the learner in question, and I agree that it has no significant ethical implications to be brought before the Research & Ethics Committee.	x
Name of Supervisor/Lecturer	Alison Walker
Date	01/09/2021