# Independent College Dublin

## Assessment Cover Page

| | Student A | Student B | Student C | Student D | Student E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student Number(s): | 51710901 | | | | # here |

**Student Name(s):**
*(In the same order as student numbers above)*

Tatiana Gomes Reis

**Lecturer's Name(s):** David Smyth

**Module Name:** *Dissertation*

**Assignment Title:** Disguised Bullying. Can the mediation help to identify hidden bullying behaviour in the workplace?

**Due Date:** 05/11/2021

**Date of Submission:** 05/11/2021

**Requested Word Length:** 15.000 to 18.0000

**Actual Word Length (excluding list of references):** 17360

Check you have used the following file name convention:  ☒ **Checked**
*surname_student ID_.doc or .docx*

**eg:** *durant_51600001.doc,* **or** *durant_51600001_bird_51600002_ james_51600003.doc*

**INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY STATEMENT**

By checking the box below: I/we (if submitting on behalf of a group) certify that this assignment is my/our own work and is free from plagiarism. I/we understand that the assignment 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. The assignment has not previously been submitted for assessment in any other module or to any other institution.

☒ **Agree**

Date: 05/11/2021

# Disguised Bullying.

# Can the mediation help to identify hidden bullying behaviour in the workplace?

By

TATIANA GOMES REIS

Student Registration No: 51710901

A dissertation presented to the

FACULTY OF LAW

INDEPENDENT COLLEGE DUBLIN

*MA in Dispute Resolution*

*November 2021*

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

The Master of Dispute Resolution program was an incredible experience; it not only made me a better professional but also a better person. I understand more about myself than when I started, and this knowledge will undoubtedly help me in my future steps.

During this period, I have had the pleasure of meeting and learning from fantastic people. I want to thank all of my lecturers who have guided and taught me along this path, especially Sharon Morrissey, who has made me feel welcome with her wisdom and kindness. Also, my colleagues, who, on numerous occasions, reached out to assist a desperate student who was full of concerns.

I would like to thank my supervisor, David Smith, who was always willing to listen my ideas, give me advice, for his availability whenever requested, and for sharing his knowledge and motivating me throughout the dissertation process.

Thank you to all of my friends here and in Brazil who encouraged me and understood my absence due to intense study.

I would also like to thank my family for being there for me every day, especially my mum, Dirce, who guides and protects me from heaven, my stepmother Flor, who helps with her prayers and positive thoughts, and especially my father Luis, my base, my idol; if I can be half of what he is I will be a wonderful person.

I consider myself fortunate to have completed this project, which appeared to be unachievable at first. I thank God for another dream realized.

"The greatest discovery of all time is that a person can change his future by merely changing his attitude." (Oprah Winfrey).

**ABSTRACT.**

The economy has converged to become a global market, and this has increased organizations' competitiveness. The workplace is getting more stressful as a consequence of rising productivity and customer satisfaction demands. Additionally, companies have personnel from diverse origins, opinions, values, and job expectations, contributing to workplace conflicts.

Often, these conflicts are helpful to businesses and individuals in various ways, but when they go in a different direction, both parties may lose.

This dissertation proposes to investigate one of these conflicts, workplace bullying, which, tragically and shockingly, is exceedingly frequent and may be harmful to employees' physical and mental health, as well as to businesses, resulting in financial losses.

The aim of this investigation is to explore how a lack of understanding of the definition of bullying can corroborate disguised bullying cases, thus clarifying the necessity for one in-depth definition of bullying. An additional aim is to investigate if mediation as a method of dispute resolution can help to identify  hidden cases of bullying in the workplace.

To accomplish this objective, a survey was conducted to assess employees' awareness of workplace bullying, how they deal with workplace conflicts, and their use of mediation. To collect the essential data for this study, a survey was created using Google Forms containing sixteen closed and open questions. This study included a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, as well as descriptive and transversal techniques and processes.

As a result, it was discovered that the majority of participants have dealt with workplace bullying, but most do not have a clear definition of what bullying is, that employees use various methods to try to solve conflicts, and that, despite the fact that the majority are aware of mediation, it is not frequently used as a method of conflict resolution, as well as other types of ADR's.

**Keywords**: bullying, conflict, mediation, workplace.

## LIST OF FIGURES AND CHARTS.

**List of Figures.**

**List of Charts**

**ACRONYMS**

ADR - Alternative Dispute Resolution.

EI – Emotional Intelligence.

HR - Human resource.

HRD - Human resource development.

HRMs - Human resource managers.

SMEs - Small to medium-sized enterprise, a company with no more than 500 employees.

WRC – Workplace Relations Commission.

**INTRODUCTION**

Bullying has become one of the most talked-about subjects in the past 20 years due to an increasing desire to protect victims and make it understandable that bullying is serious and not a laughing matter. Many people are likely to associate bullying with their childhood and school disputes (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011). On the other hand, bullying is an issue that can occur not just in childhood and schools but also at home and in the workplace, something which has received increased attention in recent years.

Given the frequency of bullying and its potentially harmful impact on employee and organizational well-being, this workplace issue has piqued the interest of studies all over the world since the early 1990s. Several types of research have been undertaken in the last decade to help us better comprehend this complex interpersonal behaviour (Saunders, et al., 2007).

However, the fight against bullying is a constant job because bullying is not immutable; it is constantly changing because it is based on human behaviour.

The present concept of bullying does not fully explain what constitutes "inappropriate behaviour." In addition, the absence of a legal definition in Ireland suggests a carelessness about the subject and, consequently, a reduction in the number of reported occurrences. As a result, the victim is often unaware that they are being bullied because it is hidden by different behaviours or incomprehensibility about the theme.

Given the importance of the questions presented, there was a willingness to do research on workplace bullying, focusing on how the definition and the method can help or not deal with this conflict as the subject of study.

This dissertation reviews the relevant literature on workplace bullying and investigates, through a survey of workers in Ireland, how to find answers to the study's objectives, which are to comprehend the current definition of workplace bullying in Ireland, whether it is clear enough to be understandable and recognized for all employees who suffer or perpetrate bullying, the need for one in-depth

definition of bullying in the workplace, and whether mediation can assist employees in identifying suspected cases of hidden bullying due to the lack definition about what characterizes bullying in the workplace. There is a wealth of material about workplace bullying in the current literature. When discussing bullying in the workplace or at school, it is possible to find disguised bullying when speaking about bullying hidden behind jokes. Bullying that was hidden due to the definition not being fully understood was not found in the literature review.

In chapter 1, a detailed literature review is presented, including the researchers' views on a workplace bullying definition and the repercussions of a weak or strong definition for employees and employers. The viewpoints of the law in Ireland and around the world are also considered and the reasons why employees do not report bullying situations. The characteristics of the dispute and behaviours that can raise or diminish bullying situations are discussed in depth in order to analyse the foundations that cause the breakup of these relationships. Finally, mediation is investigated to determine how it can or cannot aid in the bullying conflict.

The research methodology is discussed in chapter 2, describing the methodologies, and demonstrating which are most appropriate for this study.

Chapter 3 presents the study's data collection. A survey generated on the Google Forms platform was used to collect information from the chosen sample about their professional experience and how they deal with workplace conflict.

After acquiring data, it must be structured to be analysed and processed to answer the study objectives established, presented in Chapter 4.

In chapter 5, the survey results and the literature are compared and contrasted in order to clarify the study's aims. In addition, the study's conclusion and reflection are offered.

This study used legal reports, legal text, journal articles, books, and mediation newspapers.

**Chapter 1 - LITERATURE REVIEW.**

## 1.1. Understandability of the bullying definition in the workplace.

### 1.1.1. What is bullying?

Bullying is an intentional, repeated behaviour with words or actions from a person or group, intended to cause suffering. Usually, these actions are taken by those in powerful positions or who want to show their superiority, making others feel diminished  (The Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d.). Bullying is a "new word" for an older behaviour that has always been present in different places such as schools, home, workplace, social areas, including using internet devices (cyberbullying), and can target adults and children.

The bully is referred to as the initiator, while the individual being bullied is referred to as the target (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011).

Bullying in the workplace is labelled differently depending on where it is discussed, making it difficult to acquire a grasp of the problem and its prevalence. While 'bullying' is the most often used term in the UK and Australia, similar behaviour is referred to as 'mobbing' in Scandinavia and German-speaking nations. Furthermore, in the United States, a comparable issue has been labelled as "workplace harassment", "mistreatment", and, most recently, "emotional abuse" (Hoel, et al., 2001; Einarsen, 1999).

Leymann, (1996), in his work, points out that bullying has been revealed as a workplace-related psychological condition, and this topic has received insufficient attention. He says that this sort of dispute is more complex. The victim is subjected to a systematic and stigmatizing process rather than a single incident, resulting in a violation of their civil rights.

According to Grimm (2015), the USA's current estimates show that between 35 and 50 percent of American workers may be victims or witnesses of workplace bullying, with approximately 20 percent of this bullying crossing the line into workplace harassment.

Bullying does not affect just the person who is bullying, but people around can also be negatively

affected. According to Rocaboy, (2006), the effects of bullying behaviour at work may spread amongst co-workers and other witnesses. Nonetheless, persons who witnessed episodes of bullying showed stronger mental stress reactions than those who did not see such behaviour in the workplace. Another point raised for them is that the witnesses may suffer as a result of their real or perceived failure to assist the victim of bullying.

### 1.1.2. Definition of bullying in the workplace.

For Bartlett & Bartlett, (2011), there is no formal definition of bullying, particularly workplace bullying, in the literature. According to Saunders, et al., (2007), the researchers and practitioners have difficulty agreeing on one definition of bullying in the workplace, resulting in there currently being several definitions worldwide. The definitional differences and inclusion or exclusion of distinct definitional components of persistence and frequency in earlier studies of workplace bullying have limited the capacity to draw firm conclusions about the research outcomes. This issue with the definition of bullying is also mentioned in Greco & Batagol, (2017) attempting to define workplace bullying and give a homogeneous description for all countries.

Einarsen, et al., (2003) describe how bullying and harassment are characterized in the workplace as situations in which employees or even supervisors are consistently mistreated and abused by team members or management through aggressive acts having a negative meaning. Leymann, (1996) and Bartlett & Bartlett, (2011) affirm that workplace bullying can be described as an incident or condition in which a worker is subjected to unwelcome behaviour on a frequent basis, with a contentious and combative connotation.

Four criteria typically define bullying: (1) the negative impact of the behaviour on the target, (2) the frequency, (3) the persistence of the act, and (4) the power imbalance that an attitude must establish before it is considered bullying. (Saunders, et al., 2007).

In Ireland, one of the most accepted definitions is given by the Workplace Relation Commission

(2001):

> Workplace Bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity at work but, as a once off incident, is not considered to be bullying.

According to Bartlett & Bartlett, (2011), the important phrases that occur in bullying definitions in the literature include 'negative deeds', 'unwelcome', 'source of power', 'the target has trouble defending oneself' and 'having the aim to damage the target'. It is suggested that workplace bullying be defined as repeated inappropriate negative acts (physical, verbal, or psychological intimidation). That can include criticism and humiliation from one or more individuals in any source of authority. The target of bullying having difficulty defending himself or herself can be used to induce fear, anguish, or harm to the target.

Bullying can be carried out with a range of different forms, as related by the Citizen Information, (2021):

- Social exclusion and isolation.

- Verbal abuse and insults.

- Experiencing unfavourable treatment in comparison with colleagues in the same position.

- Underestimating a person's opinion.

- Spreading malicious rumours, gossip, or innuendo.

- Intrusion - pestering, spying, or stalking.

- Coercion and aggressive interactions.

- Excessive monitoring of work.

- Not giving the necessary information to a person to execute their job correctly.

- Frequently manipulating the person's contents and targets.

- Attributing blame to a person for things that were not in their control.

- Using aggressive or obscene language.

- Other menacing behaviour.

There are many ways to distress someone with bullying. Nowadays, cyberbullying, mentioned in the text above, is one of these ways. Due to the recent increase in home working and the use of internet devices to conduct work meetings and distribute tasks, cyberbullying has become a more prevalent way to bully in work relationships.

### 1.1.3. The harm of one weak definition of bullying in the workplace.

A weak definition of bullying in the workplace can:

- Inhibit employees from raising complaints in the first place.

- Create misunderstanding amongst employees as to what bullying actions actually are.

- Lead to employers not treating complaints seriously because they do not recognize them as bullying actions.

Malley, (2020) argues that while harassment is legally defined, bullying does not have this benefit. She agrees in her study that it may not be as simple as categorizing some specific actions and behaviours as bullying, even though some severe actions and behaviours may be easy to label as such. As a result, some behaviours may be labelled as bullying based on the perspective of a single individual. However, from another person's point of view, the conduct may not be considered bullying. In other words, some behaviours may or may not be considered bullying; this is determined by the victim's perspective, who may or may not be aware that the action was bullying.

A lack of knowledge and response to potential bullying incidents can intensify the conflict and promote employee unhappiness, resulting in losses for the business and employees. Einarsen, et al., (2003) and Hogh, et al., (2011), confirm that in their works that if a conflict is not addressed and treated promptly, it can easily escalate and develop into an "office war," causing severe damage to the victims' health and well-being, as well as the organizations.

Due to bullying, harm such as stress, somatic symptoms, depression, anxiety, and suicide can be caused to an individual, and, additionally, an organisation can suffer due to effects such as absenteeism, high turnover, negative influence on productivity, sickness costs, legal actions and loss of public image (DCU, n.d.; Eizen & Desivilya, 2005; McConnon & McConnon, 2008; Podro & Suff, 2013).

Niedl, (1996), in his study of 368 employees in an Austrian hospital, found that victims of bullying had a significant increase in the levels of psychological health complaints which are related to anxiety and irritation when compared to employees who had not been bullied. As shown in a survey done with Norwegian assistant nurses, 3% of the participants claimed that they had faced bullying behaviours at work, with the majority of them suffering from slander. As a result, it was discovered that assistant nurses who were bullied at work experienced higher levels of burnout[1] than those who were not. It was further emphasized that the bullied employees had psychological problems (irritability, anxiety, and depression). Similarly, Einarsen, (2000) indicates in his work that bullying behaviours were accountable for difficulties such as musculoskeletal concerns (6%), psychosomatic issues (6%), and psychological complaints (13%) in both white and blue-collar workers. In their study with Norwegian nurses, Matthiesen, et al., (1989) observed that 10% of the participants reported bullying and exhibited indications of psychological disorders, burnout, and somatic health problems. The study included 99 nurses. Bowling & Beehr, 2006, inform in their article that bullying behaviours can increase the amount of complaints about burnout and physical health.

O'Moore & Crowley, (2011) have presented a study conducted by a psychologist at Trinity College Dublin's Anti Bullying Research and Resource Centre. The study included 100 workers and evaluated their physical and psychological well-being. Participants who report bullying incidents have a high level of health and psychological issues. The findings revealed that 91% experienced a lack of energy,

---

[1] Burnout is a state of mental and physical exhaustion. It can happen when a person is under long-term stress at work or has worked in a physically or emotionally taxing role for a long time. The World Health Organization (WHO) recognized 'burnout' as an 'occupational problem' in 2019 (YouGov Plc, 2020).

93% reported a loss of self-esteem, 95% reported sleep difficulties, 98% expressed anxiety, and 57% had suicidal thoughts.

On the other hand, the lack of clarity can cause "fake" complaints and obscure the focus on combating bullying in the workplace. According to Jenkins (2011), all organizations must define bullying and clarify what it is in their anti-bullying policies and complaint processes. However, they must also acknowledge that employees refer to a wide range of acts as bullying, including those that do not fit conventional categories. Employee experiences of bullying frequently indicate unfavourable organizational interactions that are not strictly personal connections but are poor relationships with the company and interpersonal conflicts that do not fulfil established standards. Jenkins, (2011), when quoting the research by Liefooghe & Davey, (2010), said that employees do not have a precise understanding of the bullying definition. As a result, it is frequently mistaken for workplace discontentment.

Fox & Miles, (2001) understand that this ambiguous definition of bullying has repercussions when complaints are made by employees who are unhappy with management objectives and company strategic practices. They think they are being bullied and are being exposed to repeated unfavourable actions or behaviours by someone or something with more power than them. Notifying a complainant that his or her allegation does not qualify as bullying and failing to offer redress is likely to provoke animosity and a sense of injustice toward the organization. This inequity might result in reactive and unproductive workplace behaviour.

Saunders, et al., (2007), said it had been a goal of both researchers and practitioners to develop a uniform definition that includes an acceptable standard of the frequency and persistence with which behaviour must be perpetrated before it qualifies as bullying.


### 1.1.4. The benefits of one in-depth definition of bullying in the workplace.

A clear bullying definition in the workplace can:

- Empower employees to recognise and communicate bullying actions in the early stages.

- Give employers the correct understanding to identify and act in cases of bullying.

- Increase the number of bullying cases being addressed, and improve anti-bullying policies so that these events can be prevented more efficiently.

- Reduce the cost of preventing bullying actions, if compared with the cost of dealing with bullying cases

An in-depth definition can promote an early action in bullying cases. For example, work in the initial stages of the bullying process can prevent bullying, stop bullying, and minimize the effects (Keashky & Nowell, 2003).

Formulating a unified definition of workplace bullying will help create methods to address this critical and indispensable workplace issue. Similarly, from a legal standpoint, the adoption of a uniform definition of workplace bullying will clarify criteria to aid in assessing particular incidents of workplace bullying. The development of a consistent definition will provide considerable benefits to organizations (Saunders, et al., 2007).

The cost benefits to companies are substantial; it has been estimated that an individual case of bullying costs an organization around US$30,000 - $100.000 (Rayner, 2000). According to Grimm (2015), some research informs that these expenses in the USA are projected to reach more than $250 million per year in health care, litigation, staff turnover, and retraining. Likewise, if the losses attributed to increased absenteeism and employee turnover as a result of bullying are considered, the overall yearly cost of bullying in organizations throughout the UK is roughly 1,880 billion pounds (Hoel, et al., 2001). On the other hand, because the cost of preventing workplace bullying is far less than the significant expenses associated with workplace bullying, it is in the best interests of companies to implement workplace bullying management solutions. Additionally, a better place to work, well-being, and a healthy work-life for the employees can be accomplished using simple concepts such as the one illustrated by Malley, (2020) regarding the information that employers should include in their

bullying and harassment policies and the importance of making this information available to all employees:

- Bullying and harassment examples: a list of some actions and behaviours that can be classified as falling into this category.

- The methods used by the organization to prevent bullying or harassment.

- Procedures for filing a complaint about bullying or harassment.

- The duties of persons in positions of authority, such as managers, supervisors, and team leaders.

- Which disciplinary procedures are applicable.

- The procedure for implementing, reviewing, and managing the policy.

In conjunction with the establishment of workplace policies, training programs can contribute to a more in-depth understanding of workplace bullying.

Saunders, et al., (2007), when quoting Adams & Bray, (1992), says that a standardized definition of workplace bullying will protect organizations by ensuring that they define bullying in the same manner that their employees do, lowering the danger of breaking the psychological contract they have with their employees.

### 1.1.5. Bullying in the workplace and the law perspective.

Understanding workplace bullying and identifying how it negatively effects individuals and organizations is one of the primary concerns for human resource development (HRD) experts. By having a clear understanding of bullying and protocols connected to it, they can work strategically with an organization to address this problem (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011).

The Swedish National Board of Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, which was passed in 1994, was the first anti-bullying statute (2007). Sweden was the first country to adopt an anti-bullying law, and other Scandinavian countries have followed these steps. In North America, Canada was the

first to do so in 2004 (Saunders, et al., 2007; Batur & WistrÖm, 2012).

Although a legal definition of bullying is absent in Irish legislation, the Law Society of Ireland, (n.d.) and Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, (2005) recognise the employer's duty in applying preventive policies to avoid bullying and create procedures to deal with complaints of bullying in the workplace and deal with the complaints immediately.

It is mention in Safety, Health, and Welfare at work Act 2005, section 8 (2) (b):

> managing and conducting work activities in such a way as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, any improper conduct or behaviour likely to put the safety, health or welfare at work of his or her employees at risk.

Likewise, section 13 (1) (e) of the same 2005 act says:

> An employee shall, while at work - not engage in improper conduct or other behaviour that is likely to endanger his or her own safety, health and welfare at work or that of any other person.

However, these codes of practice are not legally enforceable. Hodgins et al. (2020) also hold this view in their research. They describe Ireland as a country with an intermediate focus on prevention and a very restrictive and ineffective legal structure. As a result, employees must believe in limited mechanisms and impractical codes with no context.

According to a recent survey conducted by (Russell, et al., 2019), the proportion of Irish workers who feel work-related stress has climbed from 8% in 2010 to 17% in 2015. Bullying, harassment, or other forms of abuse were found to be the third most significant predictor of job stress in the study.

**1.1.6. Reasons that lead the employees not to report cases of bullying in the workplace.**

The majority of cases of workplace bullying are not reported. There are many reasons that an employee might not want to report the bullying. Some examples are given from HR Daily Advisor, (n.d.):

- The person might feel that they should have done something to stop the bully.

- The person thinks that they not will be believed. This conclusion could arise from culture or when a previous investigation was not conducted correctly or accepted.

- The person does not know how to report it and to who it should be reported to.

- The organisation's culture may not support the victim, and the behaviour seems normal.

- The employee may have been afraid of punishment if they report the case.

- To report the case is to live the bullying again.

- The employee may assume that the process will not be confidential and is afraid to make the situation worse.

- The person does not want to be seen as not part of the team.

- The person may not be sure if they are suffering bullying or not and therefore not feel right to report it.

Bullying is far more likely to occur if the bully believes that the organizational climate allows them to bully, according to Harvey, et al., (2007). In their work, Andersson & Pearson (1999) says that the bullying that occurs as a result of organizational leaders' unwillingness or incapacity to adequately address this phenomenon can result in incivility spirals that contribute to toxic workplace culture.

Furthermore, the majority of employees who are subjected to regular and chronic bullying do not classify themselves as bullied (Jennifer, et al., 2003; Salin, 2001). Salin, (2001) reported that whereas 24.1% of participants were classed as "bullied" according to an objective measure, only 8.8% of these individuals self-identified as bullied. Likewise, Jennifer, et al., (2003) observed that the participants who self-reported as bullied (21.1%) are much fewer than participants that were objectively categorized as bullied (33.7%) in their analysis of bullying in workplaces in Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. These numbers are reflected in the amount of cases labelled as bullying, making efforts to address this issue more challenging.

The authors find a range of possibilities for the gap between the objective experience of bullying and the subjective recognition of one's own victimization. One possible explanation is that targets may be

hesitant to apply the name "bullied" to themselves because it connotes victimization and failure (Salin, 2001). Likewise, targets may be hesitant to attach this label to their experiences because they connect the term bullying with childhood, school-yard bullying, which often involves physical action (Ireland & Ireland, 2000) and is not recognized as bullying because the majority of workplace bullying involves non-physical abuse (Keashly, 2001). Several studies of bullying revealed that even if participants are provided with a workplace bullying definition, they still do not recognize themselves as bullied because their individual perception of bullying does not coincide with the bullying interaction in the workplace (Salin, 2001; Einarsen & Raknes, 1997). Also, the bullying act's personal perceived severity influences labelling the bullying cases (Keashly, et al., 1994; Malley, 2020).

## 1.2 – Bullying in the Workplace Behaviour.

### 1.2.1 – The relevance of Power in the Workplace Bullying.

Power is examined in the social, political, managerial, and physical sciences. In a social environment, it is often described as one person imposing their will on another, but power in organizations is far more multifaceted. It can be utilized benignly and malevolently, and it can be handled by an individual or a group, with or without their presence (Hodgins, et al., 2020).

Power can be utilized for personal gain, for aspiration, to reduce worker opposition and to secure compliance with dominant beliefs (Kearins, 1996).

While there is no widely recognized definition of workplace bullying, most definitions include a power imbalance between the players (Einarsen, et al., 2011). Some argue that the cause of this power disparity is a "tit for tat" cycle of escalating interpersonal conflict (Einarsen, 1999). Bullying cannot be understood unless the notion of power is considered (Hutchinson, et al., 2010).

Hodgins, et al., (2020) related a study which identified five types of power in organizations: power based on position (legitimate), power based on individual skills and charisma (referent), power based

on technical knowledge (expert), power based on the ability to compensate those who follow (reward), and power based on an intention to use negative influence (coercive).

Einarsen et al., 2003, in their study provided evidence that supervisors and managers are more prone to be bullies than peers. Also, the same study found that bullies are more likely to be male than female, indicating a possible power relationship through cultural sexism, where men are overrepresented in positions of authority in organizations[2]. Some victims alleged that the bully's rise to a position of authority was related to the bullying.

Furthermore, Hodgins, et al., (2020) divided the power used in workplace bullying into three different faces:

- First face of power - Power is wielded openly and transparently in order for "A," a person, to subordinate "B," a person. It was the most recognizable face of bullying when perpetrators shouted, publicly ridiculed, undermined, and physically threatened employees.

- Second face of power - It is used in such a way that the odds are stacked in favour of the organization. It is hidden, not always visible in its application, and is discreet, implicitly shaping the settings that influence how issues such as workplace bullying are addressed. It is for those who have a benefit in organizations because of their control of resources and an advantage in power relations and use this to "outflank" others.

- Third face of power – it is described as latent or unseen. It is defined as using power to implant interests in peoples' brains that are opposite to their own and is regarded as the most insidious use of power. There will be no confrontation or challenge to authority because the powerful have succeeded in convincing the powerless to accept their impotence. As a result, it is difficult to detect and, when there, implies significant bias in the system. In the case of workplace bullying, this might be

---

[2] Despite accounting for about half of the total workforce throughout the EU, women held slightly more than a third of management roles in enterprises employing 10 or more employees in 2014 (RTE, 2017). According to the study, 18% of Irish firms in 2020 would still have no women in senior leadership positions, increase from 8% in 2019, and 17% will have only one woman in a senior management capacity (Irish Tech News, 2020).

demonstrated by targets mindlessly accepting bullying and internalizing the negative signals or characterisations sent to them by the bully (e.g., incompetent, stupid, worthless) or by the organization (troublemaker, whinger, weak).

In their work Hutchinson, et al., (2010) overlap the Clegg's[3] circuits of power framework on their model (figure 1), to evaluate the power implications of workplace bullying. Networks of informal organizational partnerships are depicted in figure 1 as favoured locations in power circuits. The organizational aspects of tolerance and reward, the abuse of authority, processes, and procedures, and the normalization of bullying in work teams are shown as aspects of the system integration and social integration power circuits. Per the understanding of organizational power dynamics, bullying may be performed through facilitative power circuits that help to regulate activities and set rules. Power fluxes exist inside this organizational circuitry and serve to allow and justify bullying.
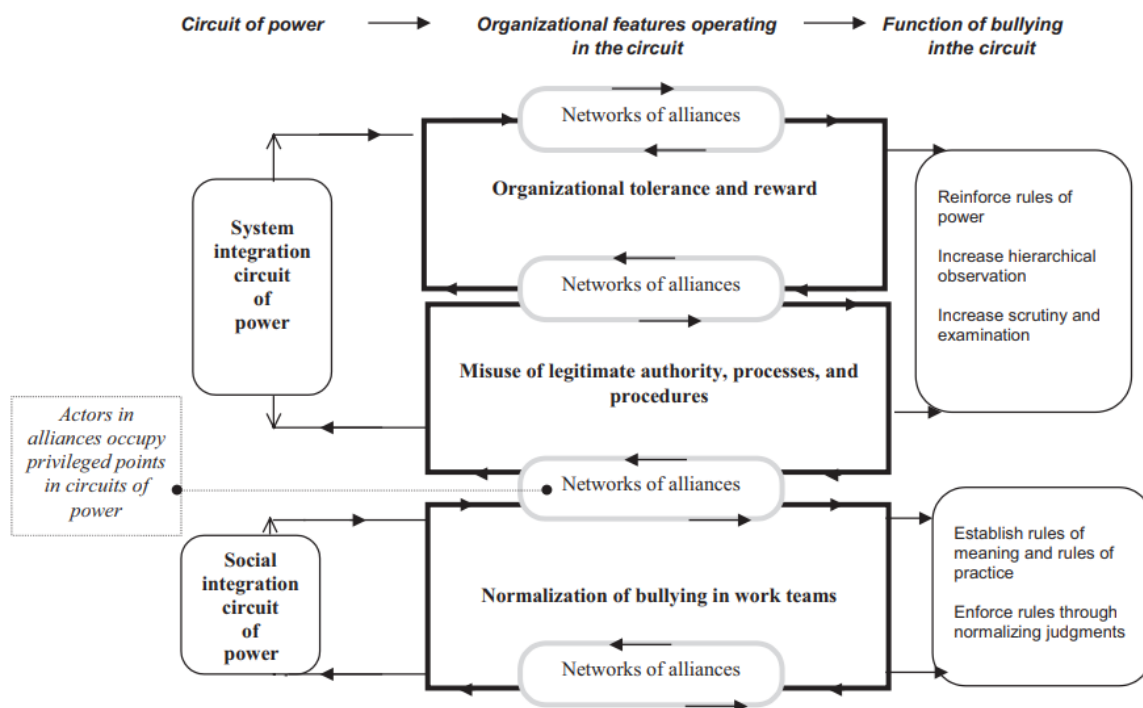


Figure 1 - Workplace Bullying Interpreted Through the "Circuits of Power" Framework. (Hutchinson, et al., 2010)

---

[3] Stewart R. Clegg, Emeritus Professor of Management and Organization Studies at the University of Technology Sydney. He has authored several articles in prominent management, organizational, and political publications (University of Technology, Sydney, n.d.).

According to Lewis, (2006), the key reason bullies retain their influence is that they are able to push their interpretation of the situation on the target, either directly or through HR. There is evidence that HRMs or managers "shape" the incidents or problems presented to them by personality challenges (Ferris, 2004; Hutchinson, et al., 2010; Vickers, 2012), interpersonal conflict (Jenkins, 2011; Klein & Martin, 2011), or defensive responses to managers questioning their efficiency (Crimp, 2017; Harrington, et al., 2015), but not as bullying.

## 1.2.2 – Conflict and Conflict Escalation.

The economic world is convergent on a single, global market. Nonetheless, economic globalisation has intensified business competitiveness. Organizations, for their part, are under increasing pressure to be productive and provide clients with high-quality services, putting additional strain on everyone at work. (Cooper & Jackson, 1997). Modern organizations are dynamic and multifaceted, comprised of people with increasingly diverse origins, perspectives, values, and job expectations. Many organizations are undergoing constant change, which can lead to conflict (Podro & Suff, 2013).

Conflict is an inevitable component of the working relationship (Cosier & Ruble, 1981; Podro & Suff, 2013; Einarsen, 2000). The intra-group conflict has been shown to boost individual and team innovation, decision quality, and individual participation. (Dreu, 1997; Tjosvold, 1997; Podro & Suff, 2013; Hussein & Mamary, 2019). Furthermore, constructive conflict tends to enhance the connections between parties once they have confronted their differences (Rubin & Levinger, 1995). In certain cases, the social environment at work becomes more than unpleasant, resulting in disagreements that can grow into brutal personal battles and office wars, which can be highly damaging and destructive on both an individual and organizational level, with the ultimate objective of the parties being absolute destruction of the opponent (Einarsen, 2000).

The conflict escalation model of Glasl[4], according to Einarsen, et al., (2011), has been suggested as a model suited for explaining how disputes can develop into bullying. The model distinguishes between three phases and nine stages (figure 2). According to Jordan, (2000), Glasl's escalation model is also effective for diagnosing and sensitizing people to the mechanics of conflict escalation. This kind of sensitization may increase awareness of the measures to avoid if one wants to keep a dispute under control. It also presents a theory of conflict escalation that stresses situational pressures acting on participants. An inherent logic to conflict relationships arising from the failure of "benign" ways of addressing opposing interests and viewpoints is emphasized rather than seeking reasons in persons. Conscious efforts are required to oppose the escalation processes, which appear to have their own momentum.

In the initial stages of a dispute (the first until the third stage), the parties are still interested in a reasonable resolution over duties or concerns (Einarsen, et al., 2011). The communication between the parties is still founded on mutuality: the basic position of the individuals engaged as responsible human beings is acknowledged, and one attempts to be fair in the relationships (Jordan, 2000). Even though they may experience and acknowledge interpersonal conflict, they are primarily concerned with working together to address issues in a controlled and reasonable manner. However, when interpersonal tensions rise, this becomes more difficult. The second phase (fourth until the sixth stage) is characterized by the fading of the initial issue, while the parties' strained connection becomes the crux of the issue. Now the question is "who is the problem?" rather than "what is the problem?". The sides stop communicating and seek allies and support (Einarsen, et al., 2011). The restricted potential of actual verbal communication adds to the sensation of being barred. The parties begin to regard themselves as victims of uncontrollable external forces. So, they prefer to reject responsibility for occurrences. Their activities are increasingly seen as essential responses to the opposing side's actions

---

[4] Dr. Friedrich Glasl is a conflict resolution expert, with doctorate in conflict resolution and peacebuilding (Hawthorn Press, 2013). He developed the Friedrich Glasl's model of conflict escalation (Domendos, n.d.).

(Jordan, 2000). They develop moral wrath against their opponents, viewing them as immoral, lacking in personality, or just plain dumb. Eventually, contempt, distrust, and hatred emerge. In the end, the encounter is dominated by threat and outright hostility. The conflicts get progressively destructive in the succeeding phase (seventh until the ninth stage) until the sides' primary goal is to get rid of the adversary. In this conflict, both parties are prepared to sacrifice their own well-being, even their "life," in order to eliminate the opponent (Einarsen, et al., 2011).

Bullying may evolve at the edge between phases two and three, demonstrating that, while perceptions of bullying, conflict, and aggression tend to coincide when the issues are low intensity, at some point of intensity and escalation, people tend to see bullying as something other than an escalated conflict (Einarsen, et al., 2011).
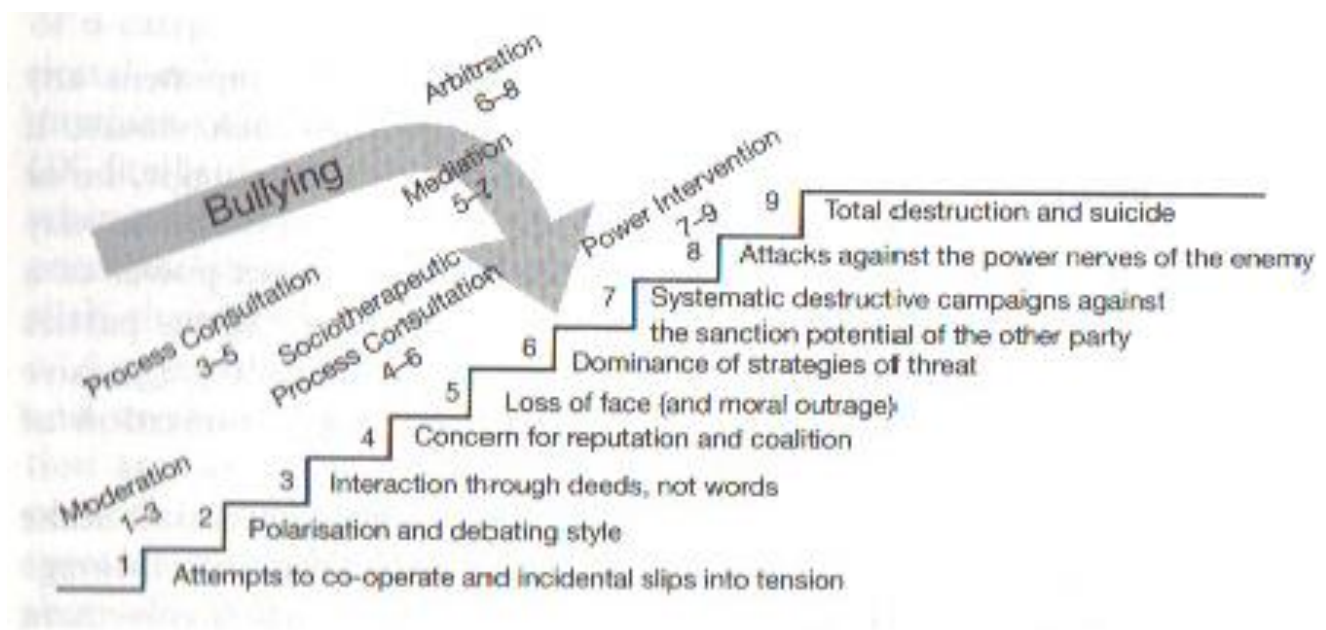


Figure 2 - The conflict escalation model of Glasl (1994), (Einarsen, et al., 2011).

### 1.2.3. – Emotional Intelligence in the workplace bullying.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a person's capacity to successfully comprehend and regulate their own emotions and the emotions of others (Kumar, et al., 2018; Financier Worldwide, 2021). Emotions play a crucial part in conflict resolution because disagreements are emotionally charged. The method

in which an individual conceptualizes a conflict, an individual's decision-making capacity in disputes, choices made, and actions to implement such decisions are all impacted (Kumar, et al., 2018). Moreover, EI is an essential component that may evaluate individuals' performance in their professional life beyond their daily lives, boost or reduce their success, contribute to the measurement of management characteristics, and improve organizational communication and interaction. Furthermore, emotional intelligence plays an important part in the efficient management of disputes and the selection of techniques used to cope with conflicts in professional life (Basogul & Ozgür, 2016; Al-Hamdan, et al., 2019).

Conflict resolution and management incorporate intellectual and emotional processes, with the latter taking precedence and playing an essential role. There is evidence that persons who are highly dependent on emotions have difficulties resolving a dispute successfully, whereas strong negative emotions impair the capacity to manage and settle a disagreement and promote competitive behaviours. In any instance, inappropriate or improper emotions or behaviours may have a bad impact on the efficacy of dispute resolution (Skordoulis, et al., 2020).

The multidimensional EI construct, which focuses on empathy and emotional management, is in charge of correcting damaging behaviours such as bullying on the part of managers or supervisors, which might be driven by a lack of intrapersonal and interpersonal competence (Danarson, 2014).

According to Hutchinson, (2012), workers with low EI can be influenced to engage in unethical activity. The bullies persuade the workgroup to rationalize the conduct and tolerate or encourage bullying. Deshpande & Joseph, (2008) establish the link between EI, leadership, and workplace bullying decreases. EI and ethical conduct among co-workers have been demonstrated to influence ethical behaviour.

Higher EI is connected to better work environments and is a mediator between workplace conflict and reactions to conflict. EI's self-awareness and self-management components have both been linked to successful leadership and the ability to create healthy work environments and cultures (Hutchinson

& Hurley, 2012; Jerus, 2019; Reece, n.d.). EI appears to play a key role in bullying conduct and bullying victimization; given that EI has been shown to be flexible, EI education might significantly enhance bullying prevention and intervention programs (Mckenna & Webb, 2013).

**1.2.4– Theory X x Theory Y.**

Douglas McGregor[5] developed Theory X and Theory Y in his 1960 book, The Human Side of Enterprise. He considered that managers' fundamental ideas had a powerful effect on how organizations are governed (Chartered Management Institute, 2015). Managers' beliefs about people's behaviour are critical to this. In his study, he proposed two elements of human behaviour in the workplace, or two distinct perspectives on employee motivation (Lumen Organizational Behavior and Human Relations, n.d.; Juneja, n.d.).

Theory X understands that the major source of employee incentive is monetary, with security coming in a close second. Theory X allows for either a harsh or soft approach to achieving goals. The hard method to motivation is based on coercion, implicit threats, micromanagement, and tight restrictions – effectively a command-and-control atmosphere (Lumen Organizational Behavior and Human Relations, n.d.; Hattangadi, 2015). The severe approach of Theory X is comparable to various forms of bullying, such as forceful confrontations and invasive monitoring of work. A manager who operates under these assumptions will use authoritarian controls, which can lead to mistrust and resentment among those they supervise (Chartered Management Institute, 2015). The Theory X soft approach, on the other hand, is to be lenient and promote harmony in the expectation that workers would comply when requested (Lumen Organizational Behavior and Human Relations, n.d.). A lack of supervision may result in a power imbalance and peers seeking advantages in power relations and

---

[5] Douglas Murray McGregor (September 1906 – October 1, 1964) was an American management professor at the MIT Sloan School of Management and the president of Antioch College from 1948 to 1954. His Theory X and Theory Y, as outlined in his book The Human Side of Enterprise, had a major impact on educational procedures (MIT Institute for Work and Employment Research, n.d.).

getting benefits from the organization. At the same time, other employees experience unfavourable treatment in comparison to colleagues in the same position.

On the other hand, Theory Y is a participatory management approach that thinks individuals will self-direct and self-control to achieve corporate goals. It implies workers are dedicated to the company's goals. In such a structure, management must mould workers and maximize devotion. Theory Y leaders are participatory leaders, also known as democratic leaders, and are considered the most effective corporate executives today. Democratic leaders guide their subordinates while allowing them to participate in the group. They value group members' opinions and ideas. Theory Y leaders promote group participation but retain final decision-making authority. Group members feel more committed and creative. In this way, management becomes more respectful (Hattangadi, 2015; Juneja, n.d.). McGregor noted that some people may not have achieved the degree of maturity required by Theory Y and may necessitate more substantial restrictions at first, which may be loosened as the person matures (Lumen Organizational Behavior and Human Relations, n.d.; Mind Tools, n.d).

### 1.2.5 – Workplace Bullying Behavioural Study.

Einarsen (2000) proposes a theoretical framework for future research on workplace bullying and harassment (figure 3). Even though the focus of this study is workplace bullying, the two topics exhibit comparable behavioural patterns, where bullying is frequently presented as a type of harassment (Hasa, 2016; Swartz Swidler, LLC, 2019; University of Southampton, n.d.; Bassman, 1992; McLay, 2009), and therefore the framework proposed was recognized to be acceptable when given together.

According to Einarsen, (2000), the framework highlights the primary types of factors that should be included in complete theoretical models of bullying. First, the causative variables and antecedents underpinning the incidence of workplace harassment. Second, the numerous bullying behaviours that

different offenders may display in various sorts of organizational contexts, as well as the antecedents of various forms of harassive behaviours. Different organizational variables are connected to the experience of various types of bullying behaviours. Third, the victim's views and experiences of being subjected to various types of harassing conduct and the victims' immediate reactions to this treatment. Finally, the individual, societal, and work-related consequences of bullying and harassment. The model's latter half definitely has an individual, subjective, and, most importantly, reactive focus. Violence and vulnerability may be viewed as opposing forces. Any attempt to describe and quantify violence, aggressiveness and harassment must thus consider the victim's judgement of the gravity of the occurrence. Harassment at work is, to some extent, a subjectively perceived interaction in which the meaning ascribed to an occurrence varies based on both the people involved and the circumstances. Employees are most likely not equally prone or immune to workplace bullying and harassment.
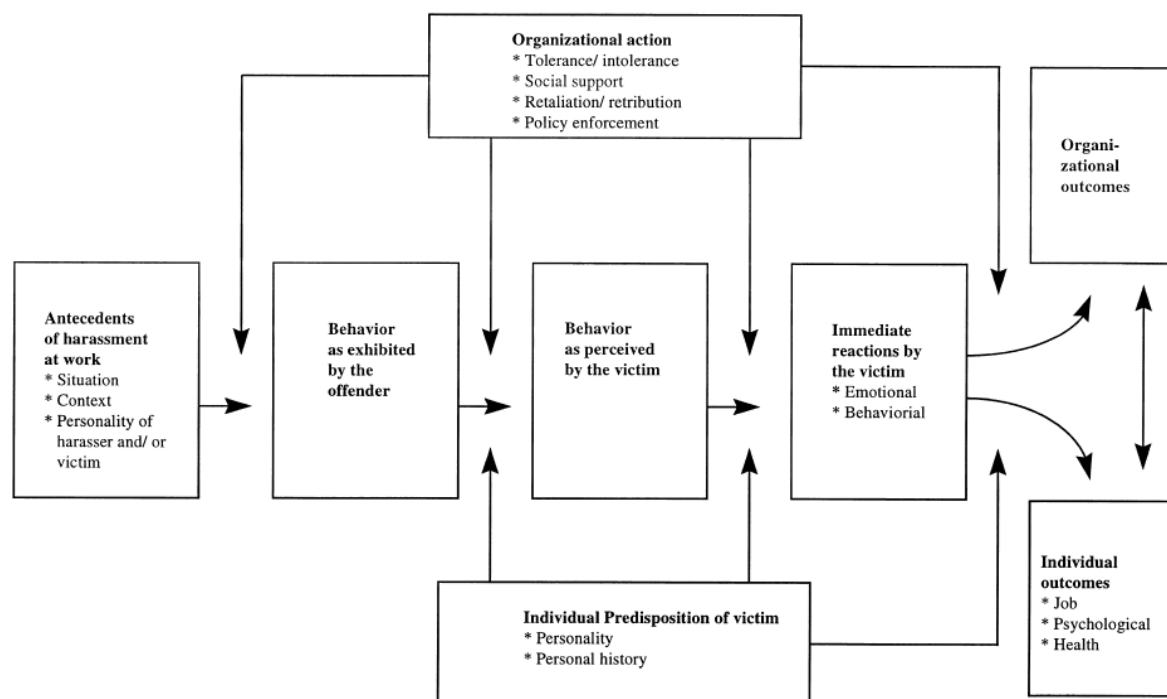


Figure 3 - A Theoretical Framework for the Study of Bullying and Harassment at Work. (Einarsen, 2000)

**1.3 – Mediation in workplace bullying.**

**1.3.1 – What is Mediation.**

Mediation is a method of settling disputes in which a mediator facilitates a dialogue between disputing parties in order for them to mutually resolve their differences (Beer & Packard, 2012; Oberman, 2005). Any agreement is reached by those involved in the issue, not by the mediator. The mediator is not there to make judgements, declare one person is correct and the other is incorrect, or advise people involved in the mediation on what to do. The mediator is responsible for the process of attempting to solve the problem but not for the solution (Podro & Suff, 2013; Hopt & Steffek, 2013).

Mediation is often used when opposing parties are unable to begin constructive conversations on their own or if they have begun negotiations but have hit an impasse (Moore, 2014; Georgiou, 2021; Borisoff & Victor, 1998). The mediation process is distinguished by three basic elements: impartiality, mutual acceptance, and the presence of a neutral third party.

Mediators may be personnel who have been trained and accredited by an external mediation organization[6] and who act as internal mediators in addition to their regular jobs. They could even be from an outside mediation provider. They can work alone or in pairs as co-mediators (Podro & Suff, 2013).

Mediation differs from other approaches to conflict resolution in several ways (Podro & Suff, 2013):

- Less formal.

- Flexible.

- Voluntary.

- Morally binding but usually without legal effect.

- Confidential.

- Unaccompanied (typically).

---

[6] Since 1992, the Mediators' Institute of Ireland (MII) has served as Ireland's professional organisation for mediators (The Mediators' Institue of Ireland, 2021).

- Held by the parties.

According to Podro & Suff, (2013), mediation can be used to handle a variety of difficulties such as relationship breakdowns, personality clashes, communication difficulty, bullying, and harassment.

**1.3.2 – The techniques that the mediator can use to help to identify the hidden bullying.**

Mediation aims to give an informal and quick resolution to a workplace dispute, and it can be employed at any stage of the conflict cycle. The type of mediation involved determines the manner in which a mediator conducts the mediation process. There are several models available (facilitative, evaluative, transformative, transactional, and directive approaches), and it is typical for mediators to use more than one (Podro & Suff, 2013).

Mediators employ a variety of tools, strategies, aims, and behaviours, which vary considerably depending on the setting, the type of issue, what is at stake, the parties, whether they have solicitors, and their various requirements (Menkel-Meadow, 2018).

The process provides a safe and confidential environment for individuals to seek their own answers. It performs this in a variety of ways, including (Podro & Suff, 2013; Ott, 1972):

- Exploring the problems, feelings, and worries of all participants and restoring connections via collaborative problem-solving.

- Allowing people concerned to comprehend and empathize with the experiences of others.

- Providing participants with knowledge about their own behaviour, and that of others, as well as opening up opportunities for development.

- Assisting participants in facing future workplace issues through improving their problem-solving skills.

- Promoting communication and assisting the persons involved in order to discover a solution that is acceptable to both parties.

- Channelling the negative energy generated by conflict in a constructive way, a technique for

moving things forward.

To handle bullying, mediators may need to collaborate closely with human resources experts, organizational psychologists, and other workplace conflict management specialists (Jenkins, 2011).

### 1.3.3 – Advantages and disadvantages of mediation in the workplace bullying

According to Podro & Suff, (2013), even though each scenario must be decided on its own merits, mediation is appropriate in bullying cases.

Even in highly emotional circumstances with substantial animosity, mediation may be successful because it addresses the interpersonal difficulties, high levels of emotions, and perceived threats and develops a problem-solving approach to the issues addressed (Jenkins, 2011).

In his work, Irvine (2014) suggests that consensual methods such as mediation be used prior to formal, adversarial inquiry. More data can arise as a result of these activities. A skilled mediator may assist individuals in broadening their understanding by eliminating the necessity of maintaining a legally watertight stance and adding situational and dispositional variables to each side's perspective. The mediator respects each individual's account of the incident. One important aspect of mediation that is usually neglected is its ability to help the parties hear their own thoughts more clearly.

According to Buon & Buon, (2007), there are predatory individuals who aim to purposefully harm the person or persons targeted by their poor behaviour. However, the majority of bullying is accidental, according to their experience as practitioners investigating and resolving workplace disputes. The bully is unaware of the consequences of their acts and does not want to harm the victim. Because mediation brings all of the parties to the dispute together in an attempt to find a resolution, it is possible to create a space in which both parties can explore their perceptions and understandings with each other, increasing the chances of developing a shared and mutual understanding about what has occurred and how to move forward.

Podro & Suff (2013) informed that there were numerous potential benefits to adopting mediation

according to the HR manager's point of view:

- Employees have an opportunity to talk openly and honestly about their experiences and feelings.

- Participants are enabled to deal with conflict quickly, which helps prevent internalization.

- It is especially important when dealing with the breakdown of relationships between co-workers and between an employee and their manager.

- Offers a confidential method of dealing with conflict.

- Enables parties to completely comprehend the viewpoints of others.

- Enables parties to create a future path.

- It is well-suited to the small, informal environment of an SME where problems can emerge fast.

- Eliminates the negative impact that formal procedures can have on an individual's career.

- Offers parties a sense of control over the outcome of mediation, which improves independence, trust, and accountability.

- Handles conflict based on claims rather than evidence.

On the other hand, the underlying premise of mediation is that the disputing parties are equally competent in negotiating with one another, which is rarely possible in bullying cases (Keashky & Nowell, 2003). McLay, (2009), in his work, mentions that mediation is intended to be an empowering procedure in which the parties have a direct say in settlement of their conflict. The dynamics of workplace bullying may not be favourable to productive issue resolution due to the imbalance of power and the fact that power and its abuse are essential to workplace bullying. Mediation is not appropriate for workplace bullying, especially when the alleged bully is the employer or the company insists on the bully being present.

Mediation focuses on current and future relationships rather than addressing or punishing previous behaviours; yet, in workplace bullying, the damage to the target is frequently cumulative, with one

person obviously the victim. Due to this, mediation may do a little to address their concerns for justice and acknowledgement for the harm done (Keashky & Nowell, 2003).

Furthermore, the confidential[7] character does not contribute to establishing communal standards of behaviour, and because it deals with difficulties on an individual level, it does not resolve social concerns. Dealing with workplace bullying concerns through mediation minimizes increasing public knowledge of the scope of the problem and, as a result, lowers the probability of any policy being established in response. Mediation removes issues from their society framework and addresses them as individual disputes or difficulties. It might be argued that until there is a wider social response, workplace bullies will continue to wreak havoc and traumatize individual targets. It may be necessary to determine who is 'right' and who is 'wrong' in order to develop an objective, socially accepted criteria for workplace bullying violations that are not based on the parties' interpretations of the facts (McLay, 2009).

A workplace bully may link mediation's congruence value with individual vulnerability, making the procedure vulnerable to manipulation by the bully. While the target may persevere in efforts to settle the issue and find some common ground during the mediation, the bully may perceive it as a "game to be won" rather than "issues to be discussed, resolved, and action jointly agreed upon". Direct involvement in mediation is likely to be challenging for a person who has been the subject of workplace bullying since the target's confidence and self-esteem have already been severely harmed. (McLay, 2009).

In most mediations, all parties are equally impacted by or contributed to the disagreement. However, when it comes to workplace bullying, the focus is all about the bully's bad behaviour. There is only one victim who has to be acknowledged in order to heal and go on. Usually, serious bullying victims

---

[7] According to the Mediation act 2017, section 10 "(1) Subject to subsection (2) and section 17, all communications (including oral statements) and all records and notes relating to the mediation shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed in any proceedings before a court or otherwise" (Mediation Act, 2017). The only exceptions are when a possibly illegal conduct has been performed or when there is a severe risk to health and safety.

don't want a new start with the aggressor. A simple acknowledgement of the bully's inappropriate behaviour and an apology will suffice, at the very least (Segal, 2020).

McLay, (2009) see some of the strategies employed by mediators to help parties settle disputes and make shared decisions raise difficulties for workplace bullying mediations:

- Reframe - The mediator will 'reframe' as needed and utilize impartial, mutual language throughout the mediation. Bullying is not a neutral or shared issue. Thus, the mediator may be tempted to bring up 'relationship' or 'communication' as a discussion point. The parties may assume that the mediator either denies the existence of bullying or dismisses it as a minor issue. From the target's perspective, the bullying has been reduced. The mediator's choice of language can support and embolden the bully.

- Other perspectives - In order to address difficulties during mediation, the mediator may encourage the parties to explore interpersonal issues and their own behaviour and its influence on the other party, especially if the mediator is unfamiliar with workplace bullying dynamics. One of the most common errors is to blame the target for the issue. A workplace disagreement or issue that both parties have contributed to is not workplace bullying.

Mediations, when the accused bully is not present, must be distinguished from mediations where the employer is either the alleged bully or insists on him or her being present. Mediation is less likely to work with a bully present. Workplace bullying may occur because the organization either encourages or ignores it (McLay, 2009).

Determining that mediation is an acceptable solution in most bullying acknowledgement complaints if the organization does not consider the antecedents that may have contributed to the bullying complaint, mediation may do nothing to prevent the dispute from reoccurring (Jenkins, 2011).


## 1.4. Summary of the literature.

The literature study demonstrates the authors' worries regarding the ambiguity of a bullying definition

and how bullying may affect employees and employers. Furthermore, a better description and understanding of workplace bullying assists in the reduction of incidences of bullying through policies and training, particularly in countries where no legal definition exists.

The study of bullying behaviour helps to understand how episodes of bullying begin and escalate. With this information, one has the opportunity to intervene in advance to avoid a negative consequence.

## Chapter 2 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

## 2.1. Introduction.

The research methodology gives the directions on which the research will be based and promotes a precise analysis of the data that helps the researcher and others to compare and understand the different situations about the work.

The methodology will help identify if workers in Ireland understand the definition of bullying and if mediation is beneficial to deal with workplace bullying.

This study employs an inductive empirical approach based on a single observation to reach a general conclusion in terms of epistemology. It is a hybrid of qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The goal was to understand, analyse, and respond to the research topic using a questionnaire prepared exclusively for professionals that are working, or who have worked, in Ireland. Based on the responses to this questionnaire, their views about the topic were examined, and an attempt was made to comprehend how work conflict is dealt with in their daily work lives.

Conflict frequently arises between professionals. The fundamental question is what is the best way to handle a situation when the conflict changes from a regular and constructive difference between two parties to a form of personal aggression, repeated through different or same behaviours that characterize bullying.

The prevention and early treatment of the cases already identified can avoid loss for the employees and employers.

The purpose of this study is to go deeper into the topic of workplace dispute resolution. A questionnaire was utilized to obtain information on such topics as where the respondent lives, the duration of work experience, their knowledge about the definition of bullying, and how mediation handles these types of dispute resolution from different cultural and ethical views. Other sorts of ADR and dispute resolution techniques were also discussed. The questionnaire findings were analysed by the literature discussed in the preceding chapter.

Based on this study case, we can identify the issues involved in how a poor understanding of the definition of bullying can hinder the recognition of bullying in the workplace and if mediation is a standard tool used to take care of these cases and its effectiveness. This chapter will briefly explain how the research was designed and conducted, and how the methodology was implemented, and the data collected, analysed, and discussed.

**2.2. Research Design.**

The research design reflects the method adopted to combine the various components of the study in a cohesive, comprehensible, and logical manner and includes data collecting, measurement, and analysis (Saunders, et al., 2007).

The study was planned along the lines of the research onion model, which was created by Saunders et al. in (2009). This model illustrates the numerous stages that the researcher must go through when developing a practical approach.
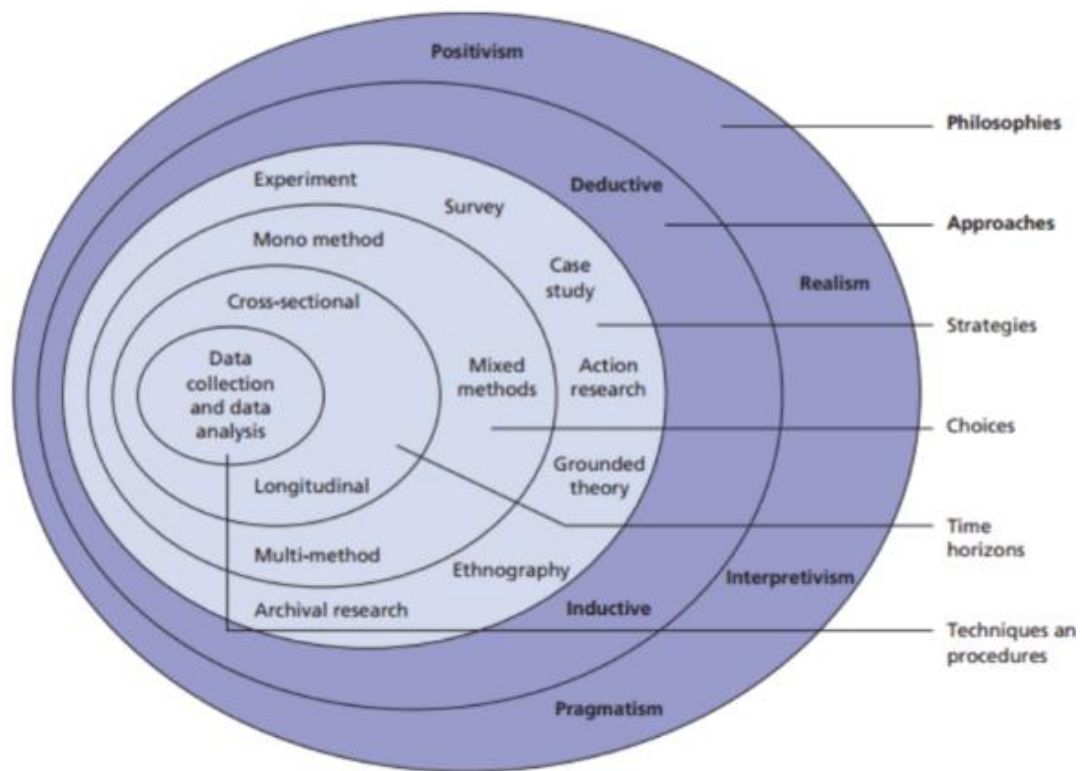


Figure 4 - Research onion model (Saunders, et al., 2007).

The concepts of selection and collecting were created throughout the analysis and reflection process. The diagram below illustrates the research design that was chosen for this work. The following sections detail the philosophy, approach, strategy, choice, time horizon, and data collection methods used to carry out this research.
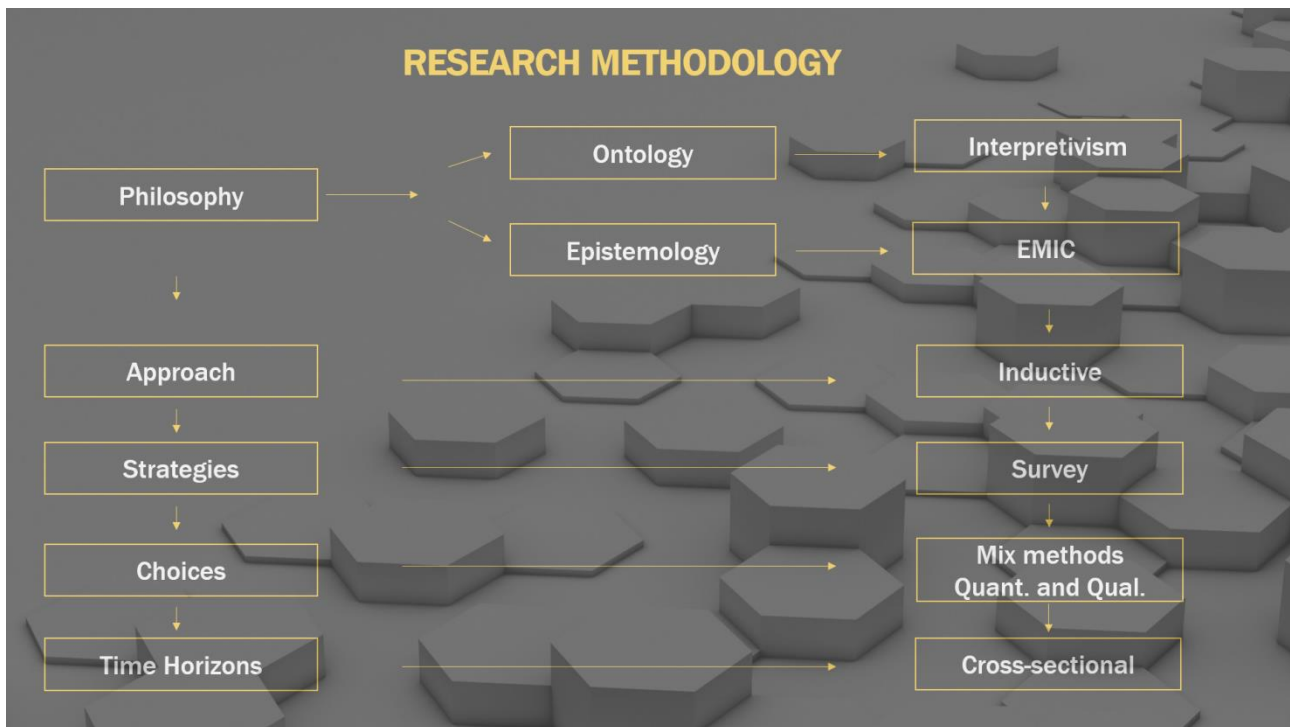


Figure 5 - Research design.

### 2.2.1. Philosophy.

According to (Saunders, et al., 2007), the terminology research philosophy refers to a set of views and assumptions regarding the growth of knowledge.

The ontology shows the nature of reality. The ontology can be studied in four different ways, conform Saunders, et al., (2009) research onion, positivism, realism, pragmatism, and interpretivism.

Positivism is a philosophical approach associated with natural scientists that requires working with observable social reality to develop law-like generalizations (Saunders, et al., 2007). The scientist is an objective analyst who works independently and disassociates themselves from personal ideals (Pranas Žukauskas, 2017).

Realism is founded on positivist and interpretivism research philosophies. Realistic research philosophy is based on assumptions required to comprehend the human's subjective nature (Pranas Žukauskas, 2017). The realism ontology understands that just one truth exists.

Pragmatism research philosophy is concerned with facts. It asserts that the choice of research philosophy is mainly affected by the research issue. The practical outcomes are crucial in this research philosophy (Pranas Žukauskas, 2017).

In interpretivism, many truths are possible because the context molds the research. Thus, according to interpretivism research theory, social reality can be viewed subjectively. The most significant importance is placed here on understanding how people see the social world (Pranas Žukauskas, 2017).

Interpretivism ontology was chosen for this work due to the research's subjective nature, which will be placed in the comprehensibility of the employees about the definition of bullying in the workplace, and how each individual believes or not that mediation is an efficient tool to help to identify and deal with workplace bullying. (William Wiersma, 2008)

The ontological position determines the epistemological position. Therefore, because the interpretivism ontology was the best choice for our study, the EMIC is our epistemological approach. Epistemology is defined by William Wiersma, (2008) as the study of the possibilities of knowing, their boundaries, origin, structure, techniques, and justice, as well as how this knowledge can be attained, validated, and altered. In epistemology, there are two fundamental views, realistic and interpretivism, about how new knowledge should be gained.

The realistic study should be performed in an objective approach, known as the ETIC approach to research. The researcher does not influence the data collected and seeks to measure the research without interfering with the reality being studied.

The Interpretivist study should be performed in a subjective approach, known as EMIC approach research. Interaction with people is required to determine the truth. Our work will be necessary

interaction with employees to assess the possible truth, defining the necessity of EMIC epistemology. The researcher has the ability to influence what is being researched, which is acknowledged.

### 2.2.2 Approach.

A research report might take either a deductive or an inductive approach. In the deductive approach, the researcher must establish a theory or hypothesis (or hypotheses) and launch a research strategy to prove the assumption. A deductive approach typically looks for one truth. In the inductive approach, the data collected and a method is established as a result of data analysis (Bell & Waters, 2018; Saunders, et al., 2009; Walliman, 2016). The inductive approach is based on the data collected study, where the researcher gets as much information as he can from the participants to find a standard. The researcher can find more than one truth.

The approach used was inductive, owing to the information gathered from participants that have been analysed, helping to develop a theory.

### 2.2.3. Strategy.

According to Saunders, et al., (2009) the research onion model strategy is divided into an experiment, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography, archival research, and survey.

The experiment is the most common type of scientific research. Performed as some kind of experimentation, it generally tests the hypothesis that study is deductive in nature. Experiments may allow conclusions regarding cause and effect to be formed, provided the design is appropriate, but large groups are required to control the various variables and ambiguities inherent in human behaviour (Bell & Waters, 2018).

Case studies allow researchers to do in-depth research on a specific problem component based on a homogeneous group of people (Bell & Waters, 2018). Individual units are typically studied in considerable depth. Based on single or multiple examples utilizing the identical study methodology.

Action research is a method that can be used in any situation where an issue involving people, tasks, and procedures begs for a solution, or if some change in feature leads to a more desirable outcome. It initiates with a problem that the researcher desires to solve (Cohen, et al., 2011). The fact that the researcher is engaged in the research is essential. Interaction as a participant, not only as a researcher, is required. This participation may have an impact on the findings and raises concerns about objectivity. It is an incremental activity that usually necessitates several iterations to arrive at a solution (Bell & Waters, 2018).

In grounded theory, in general, researchers do not begin with a set of objectives but rather follow where the research leads them. As data is acquired, hypotheses are developed. Existing literature that has been determined to be relevant is referred to as required literature. The literature inspires additional research, and the research cycle continues between the literature and empirical research until a theory based on the study is established (Bell & Waters, 2018).

Ethnography generally means the study of people or cultures. Researchers utilize a variety of methodologies and strategies to try to understand how culture works. It is origins can be found in anthropology. Participant observation allows researchers to have, as much as possible, the same experiences as the participants in order to understand better why individuals act the way they do.

Archival research is the examination of physical data from files held by organizations or businesses. It involves a wide variety of actions used to help analyse documents and textual materials created by and about organizations. The most traditional definition entails the study of historical records; that is, materials generated at some point in the relatively distant past, giving us access to organizations, individuals, and events that we might not otherwise have (Mohr & Ventresca, 2002).

The survey takes a representative group from the population; all respondents will answer the same questions in, as much as practicable, the same conditions. Personal interviews, telephone interviews, and questionnaires are among the options available. Whatever method of information gathering is chosen, the goal is to obtain responses to the same questions from a large number of people, allowing

the researcher not only to describe, but also to compare, relate characterise, and demonstrate that certain features exist in specific categories (Bell & Waters, 2018).

The strategy used will be a survey using questionnaires completed by a representative selection of a population of the employees in Ireland.

### 2.2.4. Choice.

There are three types of choices for methodology research: the mono method, which uses either the qualitative or quantitative method; the mixed method, which uses both qualitative and quantitative methods; the multi-method, which uses both qualitative and quantitative methods as mixed methods, but the research is implemented separately and after triangulated.

According to Bell & Waters, (2018); Saunders, et al., (2009); Walliman, (2016), qualitative research aims to comprehend a phenomenon by collecting narrative data, studying particularities and individual experiences. The qualitative research approach collects data provided as a story, such as via open questionnaires, interviews, and observations that are not coded in a numerical system—it is used to discover underlying causes, opinions, and motivations.

This type of study gives information about an issue or assists in the development of ideas or hypotheses. Qualitative research is frequently utilized to uncover trends in subjective processes and opinions. On the other hand, the quantitative technique seeks to comprehend a phenomenon through the collection of numerical data, highlighting preferences, behaviours, and other actions of individuals who belong to a given group or culture. Various methods of data collecting, and analysis might be used to address research issues.

The choice that will be used in this research is the mixed methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The qualitative method was used to determine the level of awareness about the definition of bullying and mediation acceptance as a third party intermediating the conflict. The quantitative technique was utilized to indicate the type of dispute, how employees

deal with these conflicts, if they are categorized as bullying, and whether they are aware of and have participated in mediation or other ADR.

## 2.6. Time horizon.

The time horizons define the time-scale in which the research is performed.

The horizon time refers to the time when data is collected during research. The answer may differ depending on the aim, and whether it is a single time interval (once) or numerous time intervals (repeatedly). It is referred to as longitudinal research carried out in an extended time-frame, while the cross-sectional study does it at one point in time (Saunders, et al., 2007). The time horizon will be cross-sectional through a survey with close and open questions due to the project's deadline.

## 2.7. Population and sampling

The population is the universe where the sample is selected. The sample is a fraction of the population chosen for research. Sampling is when a researcher decides the sample for the study (Hozack, n.d.).

The sampling can be shown in two ways, depending on if each element of the research population can be identified (probability sample) or not (non-probability sample).

Probability is where the sample is chosen at random, with each unit in the population having a predefined chance of being selected. The probability can be accurately determined. This combination of characteristics allows for the generation of unbiased estimates of population totals.

Non-probability is where a random selection procedure does not choose the sample. It is suggested that some units in the population are more likely than others to be picked. The probability cannot be accurately determined. It involves selecting elements based on assumptions about the population of interest, which define the selection criteria.

The following figure shows the range of techniques that can be used with probability and non-probability samples.
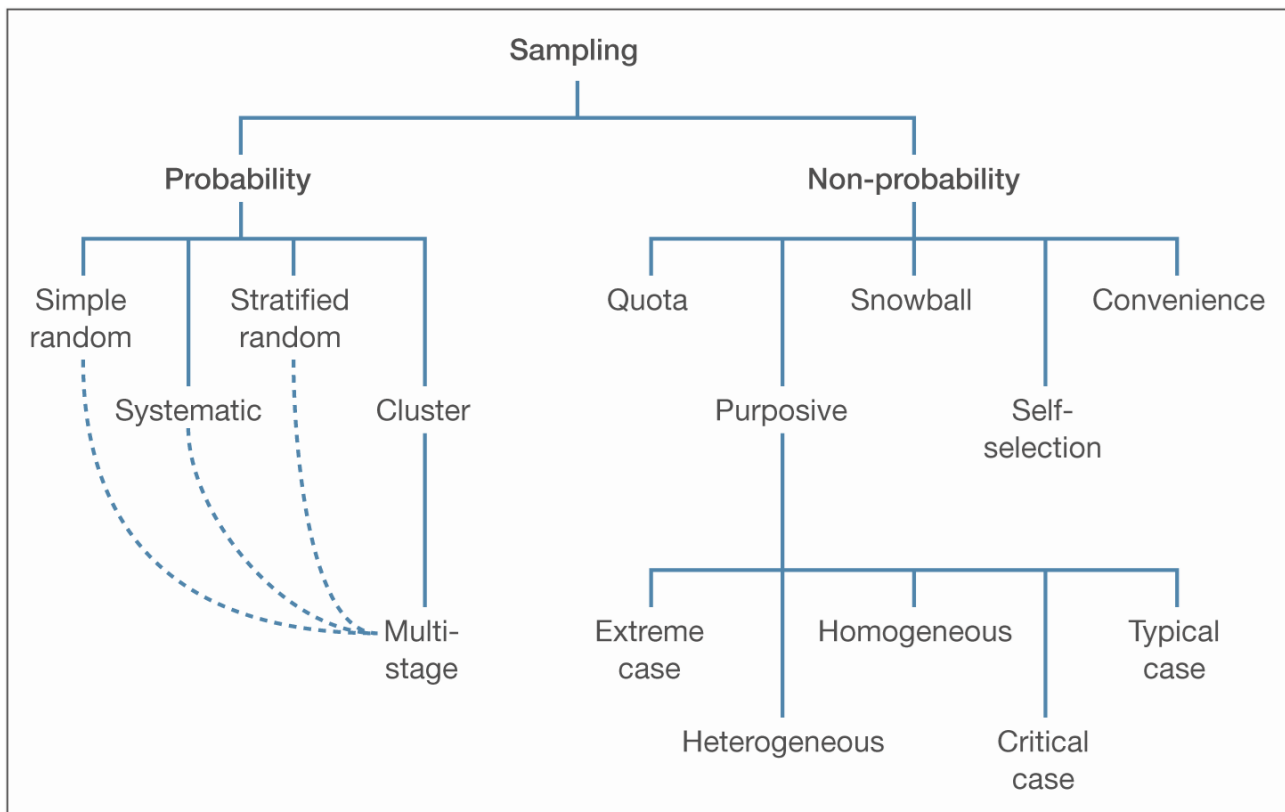
Figure 6 - Sampling techniques (Saunders, et al., 2007).

The population target is focused on Ireland and the sample is the employee's group that works or has worked in Ireland. However, the employee group in Ireland is massive, and it will not be possible to cover every element of the group to use the probability sample. Due to this, non-probability sampling was used, in which the system used to collect the data does not offer a random selection possibility, meaning some individuals of the group have no chance of selection. The sampling technique is self-selection, where the units accept or decline to participate in the sample, either openly or implicitly.

Figure 7 - Population sample.

## 2.8. Data collection technique.

The data collection used is non-probability sampling due to the range of populations of employees in Ireland making it impossible to distribute the questionnaire to all the employee groups.

The self-selection technique methodology will be chosen to fit the type of research, financial resources available, and deadline. For this research, the mixed method will be used, with qualitative and quantitative data created through questionnaires.

The questionnaires will be made with open and closed questions. The open questions are intended to gather the participant's point of view, how they understand what bullying is and what they think about having a third party (mediator) help in the conflict process. The closed questions are intended to show what percentage of the sample population stated that they had experienced conflict in the workplace, what percentage saw this conflict as bullying, and how they dealt with it. These questions do not mention the word bullying in order to understand who had suffered from it, but did not necessarily recognize the actions as bullying.

The questionnaire will be accessed through a website link and sent by e-mail, WhatsApp, and other types of social media. This way of collecting the data makes it possible for people to fill out the questionnaire without personal contact, which should be avoided at the moment due to Covid-19. The questionnaire should be completed only by employees in Ireland.

The data collected will be used for analysis using Microsoft Excel, and the results will be displayed on graphs and charts.

## 2.9. Data analysis.

Data for the study in question was gathered through consistent and grounded information obtained from primary and secondary source material. The data pool and analysis were organized as follows.

This study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methodologies. The analysis examined qualitative data to comprehend the research subject through collecting narrative data, evaluating the specificities of the questionnaire responses, and doing a literature review based on books, papers, and organization websites. Quantitative data was obtained to comprehend the phenomenon through numerical data, pointing out preferences, behaviours, and other activities of individuals belonging to a given group or community (Bell & Waters, 2018; Saunders, et al., 2009; Walliman, 2016).

The qualitative data will be transcribed throughout the study analysis. Additionally, the researcher must become acquainted with the data, transcribe it, and keep sensitive material anonymous to protect the participants' privacy. Data is coded in both qualitative and quantitative analyses. It is accomplished by thoroughly studying the data. Furthermore, this material is organized into predefined categories based on the research objectives. Coding assists the researcher in managing data into separate divisions and transforming raw data into valuable knowledge (Creswell & Creswell., 2017). The data is interpreted following the study objectives, resulting in useful data that can be included in the research.

## 2.10. Research limitations.

Because the topic treated in this study is relatively broad and delicate, referring to work-life and psychological concerns, some pertinent material can be left out or overlooked. In addition, individuals reacted based on their own professional experiences, whether positive or negative, which influenced the survey results. Although all participants had legitimately relevant work experience, they may not be the most representative sample of the population investigated. Since one of the study's primary goals was to examine people from various social backgrounds with varying work experiences, resulting in differing viewpoints on the subject, the sample size of professionals was probably insufficient to be significant. Finally, although being particular and relevant to the research topic, the survey questions may not be enough to clarify the subject. Still, it will give a sampling of the knowledge for future research.

**Chapter 3 – PRESENTATION OF DATA.**

The cross-sectional was defined by observational and behavioural research, with data obtained across time in a subset of a sample population. The cross-sectional investigation collected data from people working across Ireland. The research variables stayed unchanged throughout. The descriptive cross-sectional study included both qualitative and quantitative methods. It was descriptive since it assessed the occurrence and pattern of a topic researched. According to Bhutta, (2012), "Social networking sites and online questionnaires make it possible to do survey research faster, cheaper, and with less assistance than ever before". Due to this, the survey (created on Google Form) has sixteen questions entirely based on the research subject and targeted specifically to professionals who work or have worked in Ireland. It was distributed via social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook, obtaining 102 respondents in total.

All questions were reviewed by the supervisor before being distributed to the research participants. Because of the range of data acquired and the fact that the professionals who participated were from various industries, the quality of the study results and conclusions are consistent with the main research issue. Each participant was given a brief introduction to the research goal as well as important information, such as ethical and moral concerns about data protection. Each participant was only allowed to answer once to eliminate duplication; due to this, participants needed to sign in to Google. The questionnaires were completed and are still available on the Google Form site. The open-ended items provided unrestricted writing space and an indeterminate time limit, allowing all participants to express their feelings, opinions, and personal experiences while replying.

In the first section of the survey, there are some demographic questions regarding current country of residence and work, duration of current work role, profession, age, and so on. The initial questions were designed to ensure that participants had previously worked in Ireland and that respondents that hadn't would be eliminated from the process. The remainder of the questions investigated the participants' possible work life conflicts and how they were dealt with, the types of disputes they had

faced and which options had been utilised to resolve them. The hidden purpose of question 8 is to understand the respondents comprehension of workplace bullying without being given a definition of it. It does this by requesting that the respondent select the type of conflict that they have experienced from a list of three, with only the last option containing examples of workplace bullying behaviour and the others giving examples of general conflict that would not be described as bullying . In question 9, the respondent was questioned to determine if the behaviour in question 8 was repeated and therefore could be classified as bullying according to the Irish definition. In questions 10 and 16, there are two open-ended questions designed to gather information from participants regarding what they define as workplace bullying and how they see mediation as a valuable method for dealing with workplace conflict.

### 3.1. – Questionnaire's Charts.

The following are the 102 answers to the sixteen questions:

The first question in the survey is to identify if the participant lives in Ireland. According to the survey, 101 (99%) participants live in Ireland while 01(1%) do not, as demonstrated in chart 1.
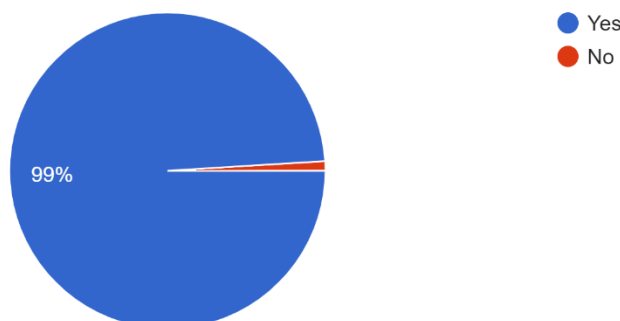


Chart 1 - Residence.

The second question enquires about the participants' time in Ireland. Chart 2 shows 44 employees (43.1%) have been in Ireland for more than 5 years, 30 employees (29.4%) between 1 and 3 years, 25 employees (24.5%) between 3 and 5 years, and 3 employees (2.9%) less than a year.

2. How long have you been a resident of Ireland?
102 responses
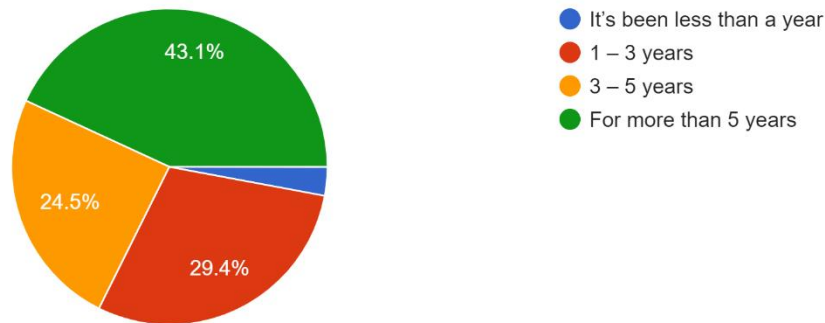


Chart 2 - Time in Ireland.

Participants were also asked to indicate the age group they belonged to. As shown in chart 3, 41 participants (40.2%) are between 35 and 44 years old, 40 participants (39.2%) are between 25 and 34 years old, 9 participants (8.8%) are between 45 and 54, 7 participants (6.9%) are between 18 and 24, and 5 participants (4.9%) are between 55 and 64 years old.

3. What is your age?
102 responses
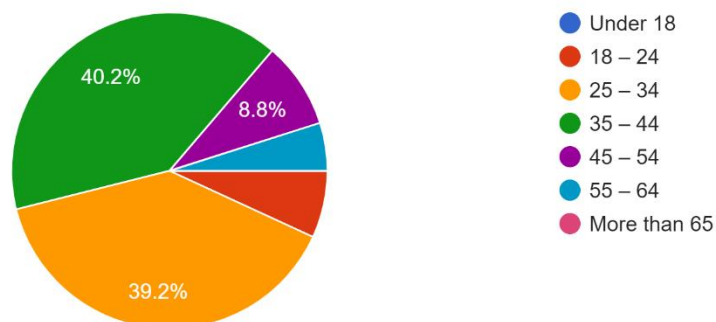


Chart 3 - Age group.

Question 4 inquired as to whether the participant worked in Ireland. Chart 4 shows that 100 participants (98%) work in Ireland, and 2 participants (2%) do not.

4. Do you work in Ireland?
102 responses
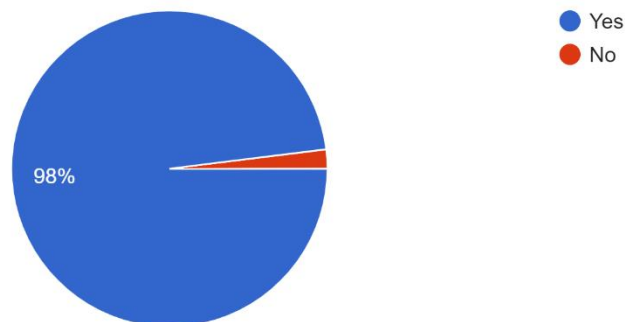


Chart 4 - Where respondents are employed.

Chart 5 shows how long employees participating in the survey have been working in Ireland. It is demonstrated that 41 employees (40.2%) have been working for more than 5 years, 35 employees (34.3%) have been working between 1 and 3 years, 22 employees (21.6%) have been working between 3 and 5 years, and 4 employees have been working less than a year. No one in the group has never worked in Ireland.

5. How long have you been working in Ireland?
102 responses
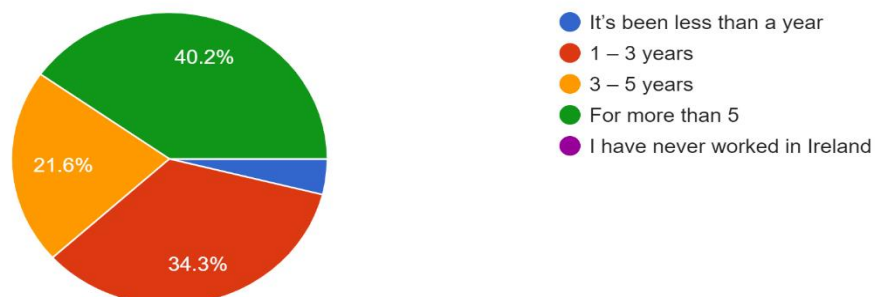


Chart 5 - Length of work experience.

In question 6, the employees were asked about their field of work. Chart 6A and 6B shows a variety of areas where 35 employees (34.3%) are from healthcare, 15 employees (14.7%) do not find the area in the options, 14 employees (13.7%) are from education, 8 employees (7.8%) are from hospitality or events, 7 employees (6.9%) are from accountancy, banking or finance, 7 employees (6.9%) are from retail, 3 employees (2.9%) are from advertising, marketing, or PR, 2 employees (2%) are from arts, culture, design, and entertainment, 2 employees (2%) are engineering or architecture,  2 employees (2%) are students, 1 employee (1%) is from administration, business, or management, 1 employee (1%) is from law and public policy, 1 employee (1%) is from communication, 1 employee (1%) is from the community and social services, 1 employee (1%) is from computing or IT, 1 employee (1%) is from construction, installation, repair and maintenance, 1 employee (1%) is from food delivery or food apps.

6. What is your area of work?
102 responses
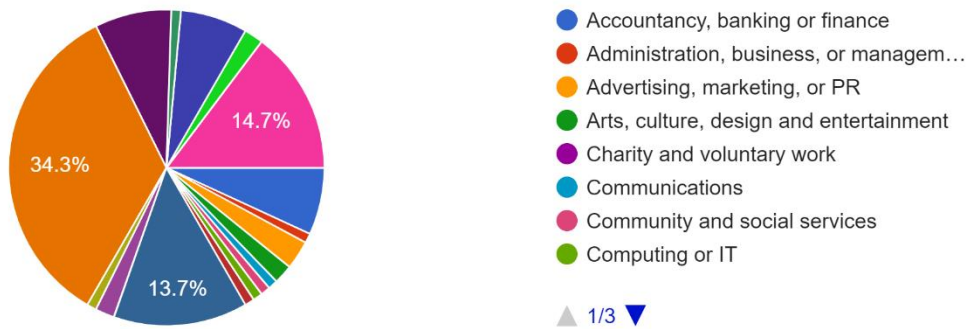


Chart 6A - Area of work.

## 6. What is your area of work?
102 responses



Legend:
- Construction, installation, repair and…
- Education
- Engineering or Architecture
- Farming, fishing and forestry
- Food delivery or food app
- Government
- Healthcare
- HR or recruitment

▲ 2/3 ▼

(Pie chart values visible: 34.3%, 14.7%, 13.7%)
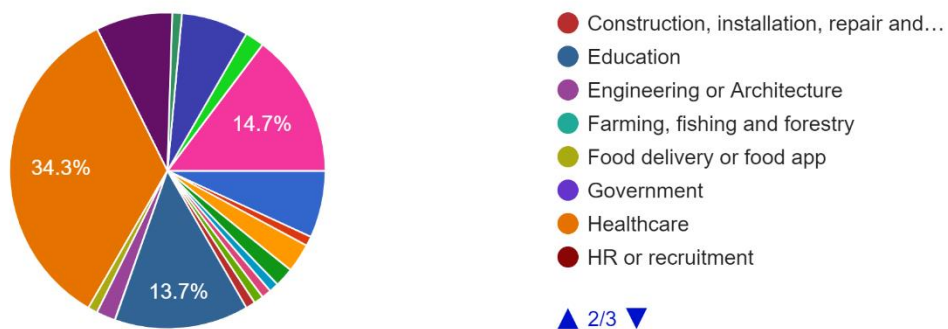
Chart 6B – Area of work.

Chart 7 shows how many participants have ever dealt with a workplace conflict. The majority of the participants, 59 (57.8%), have dealt with conflict in the workplace in Ireland; 43 (42.2%) participants have never dealt with workplace conflict in Ireland.

## 7. Have you ever dealt with a workplace conflict in Ireland?
102 responses



Legend:
- Yes
- No

(Pie chart values visible: 42.2%, 57.8%)
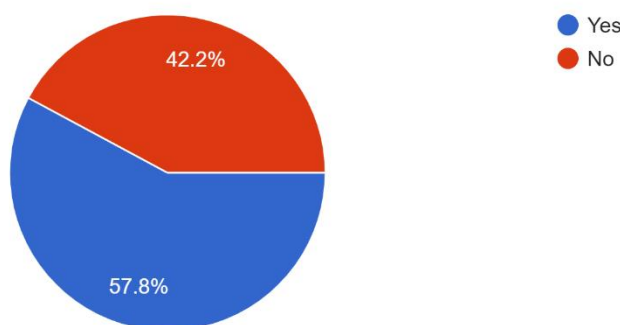
Chart 7 - Workplace conflict in Ireland.

In question 8, participants who answered yes to question 7 are asked to select one or more options for the type of conflict they have experienced. Chart 8 demonstrated that 38 answers (63.3%) had faced conflict interests, 33 answers (55%) have faced conflicts due to the behaviour of colleagues or leaders,

and 22 answers (36.7%) have faced statutory rights conflicts.

8. If your answer were yes to question 7, what type of conflict did you have? More than one answer is possible.
60 responses
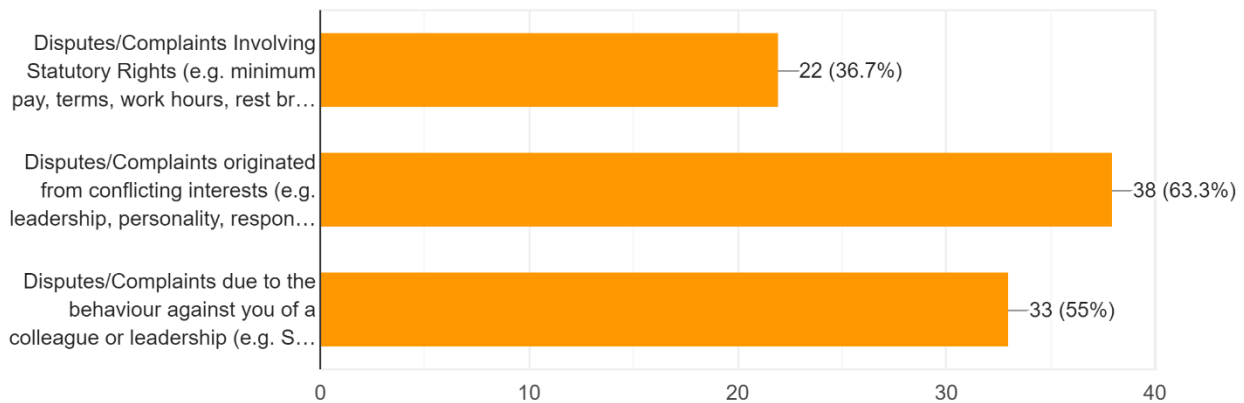


Chart 8 - Type of workplace conflict.

In question 9, participants who selected the last choice in question 8 are asked to choose whether the behaviour they experienced occurred more than once or if it was a mixture of behaviours perpetrated by the same individual or group. Chart 9 shows 33 participants (71.7%) answered yes, and 13 participants (28.3%) answered no.

9. If you choose the last option in question 8, did these behaviours happened more than once or a combination of more than one of them, coming from the same person or group?
46 responses
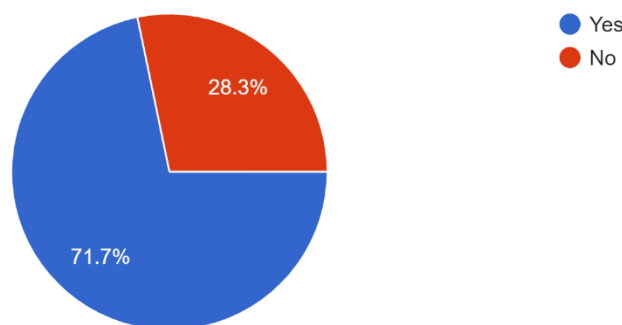


Chart 9 - Frequency of workplace conflict behaviour.

Question 10 is an open question in which participants can share their views on what characterizes workplace bullying. In their responses, the participants exhibit a variety of distinct behaviours, and more than one option is indicated in the answers; due to this, the percentage is not presented. Twenty six answers indicated behaviours such as mistreatment, being treated differently, exclusion, being undermined, feeling isolated or uncomfortable; 19 answers described behaviours against dignity and rights, disrespect, and humiliation; 14 answers indicated jokes and gossip about appearance or dress; 11 answers specifically describe discrimination against race, gender, culture, and religion; 8 answers express excessive pressure, criticism, persecution, disadvantages (by leaders); 3 participants do not know, do not think about, or have never suffered from bullying. Also, 11 answers mentioned verbal abuse, 6 answers mentioned psychological abuse, and 5 answers mentioned physical abuse.

A brief explanation is given about what mediation is, in question 11. The participants were asked if they were aware of mediation as a method for resolving workplace problems. Chart 11 shows 70 participants (68.6%) are aware of mediation as a method to solve conflicts in the workplace, and 32 participants (31.4%) do not.

11. Have you ever heard of mediation as a method of resolving workplace conflicts? Mediation is when a third party (mediator) uses tools to guide t...ut anyone imposing a decision or offer assistance.
102 responses
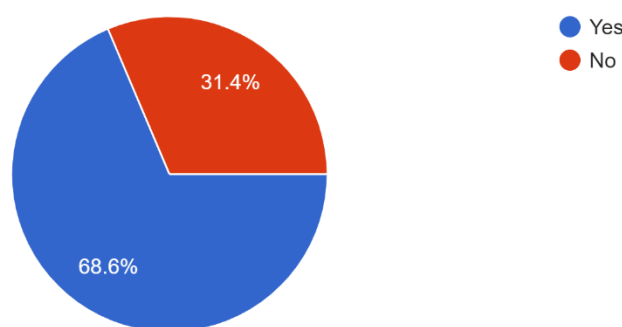


Chart 11 - Awareness of mediation in workplace conflict.

In question 12, participants who answered yes in question 11 are asked if they have ever engaged in mediation and, if so, how it works. Chart 12 indicated 59 participants (71.1%) had never taken part in mediation, 9 participants (10.8%) answered yes but did not believe it had helped to solve the conflict, 8 participants (9.6%) answered yes and believed it had helped to solve the conflict, 7 participants (8.4%) had never heard about mediation.

12. If you answered yes to the question above, have you ever participated in mediation?
83 responses



- Yes, that helped resolve the conflict.
- Yes, but I didn't believe it helped resolve the conflict.
- Never take part in a mediation.
- I'd never heard of mediation.
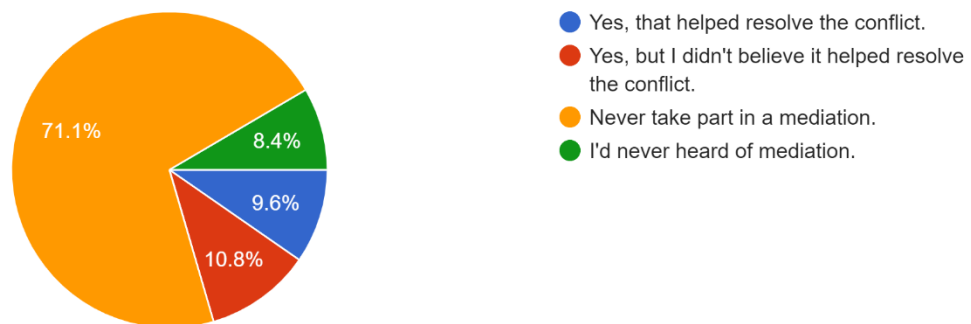
Chart 12 - Participation in workplace mediation.

In question 13, employees are questioned about the use of other kinds of ADR as a method to resolve workplace disputes. A brief description accompanies each ADR technique. Chart 13 indicated that 74 employees (78.7%) had never used ADR in the workplace conflicts, 11 employees (11.7%) had used investigation, 7 employees (7.4%) had used adjudication, 6 employees had used arbitration, and 5 employees (5.3%) had used internal tribunals.

13. If you did not use mediation to resolve the workplace conflict, did you ever have used one of the Alternative Dispute Resolutions? More than one answer is possible.

94 responses
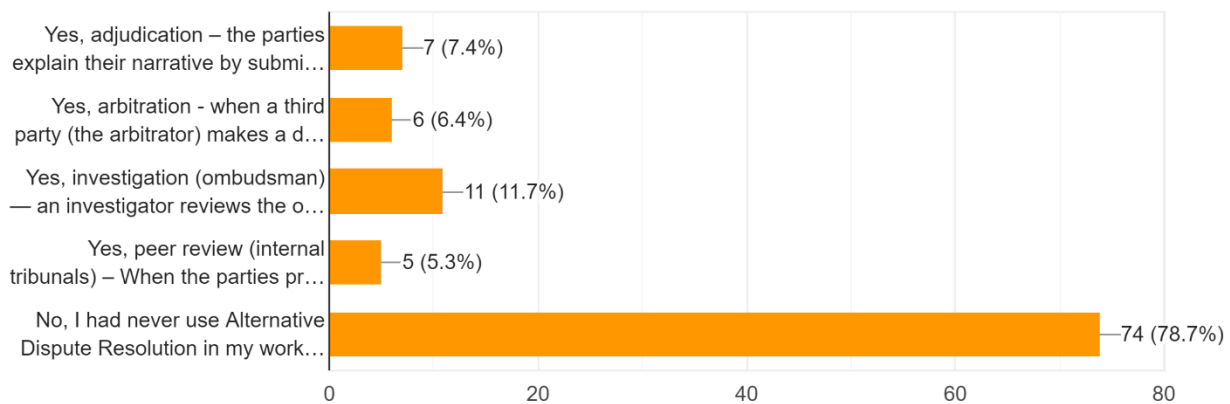


Chart 13 - Use of other ADR in workplace conflict.

Participants who stated in question 13 that they had used alternative ADR to resolve the dispute are asked in question 14 whether it succeeded and made it a better or worse place to work. Chart 14 shows 62 participants (75.6%) had never used ADR to solve workplace conflicts, 10 participants (12.2%) had resolved the conflict, making it is a better place to work, 5 participants (6.1%) had not resolved the conflict, having the opposite effect, 3 participants (3.7%) had not resolved the conflict, making it is a worse place to work, and 2 participants (2.4%) had not resolved the conflict and it was a better place to work.

14. If you used one of the ADR's above to resolve the workplace conflict. Was the dispute resolved? Did it make your workplace a better or worse place to work?

82 responses



- Yes, it was resolved – A better place to work.
- Yes, it was resolved – A worse place to work.
- No, it was not resolved – A better place to work.
- No, it was not resolved – A worse place to work.
- No, I had never use Alternative Dispute Resolution in my workplace conflicts
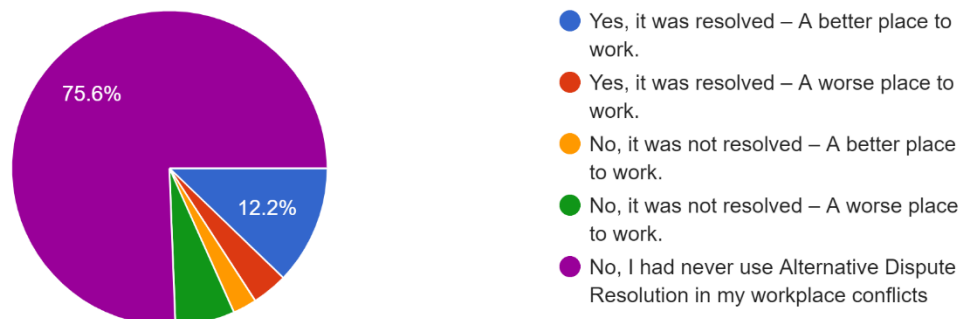
Chart 14 - Participation in workplace ADR's.

Employees who indicated in question 14 that they have never used ADR to resolve workplace disputes are asked in question 15 to describe how they resolve workplace conflicts. Chart 15 shows 54 employees (62.1%) report to the line manager, 41 employees (47,1%) try to fix the problem on their own, 33 employees (37.9%) report it to HR, 18 employees (20.7%) resign from their position, 15 employees (17.2%) do nothing, 7 employees (8%) report it to a trade union, 7 employees (8%) others, 5 employees (5.7%) report it to WRC, and 3 employees (3.4%) go to court.

15. If you answered "No, I had never use Alternative Dispute Resolution in my workplace conflicts", to question 14, how do you generally resolve workplace conflicts? More than one answer is possible.

87 responses
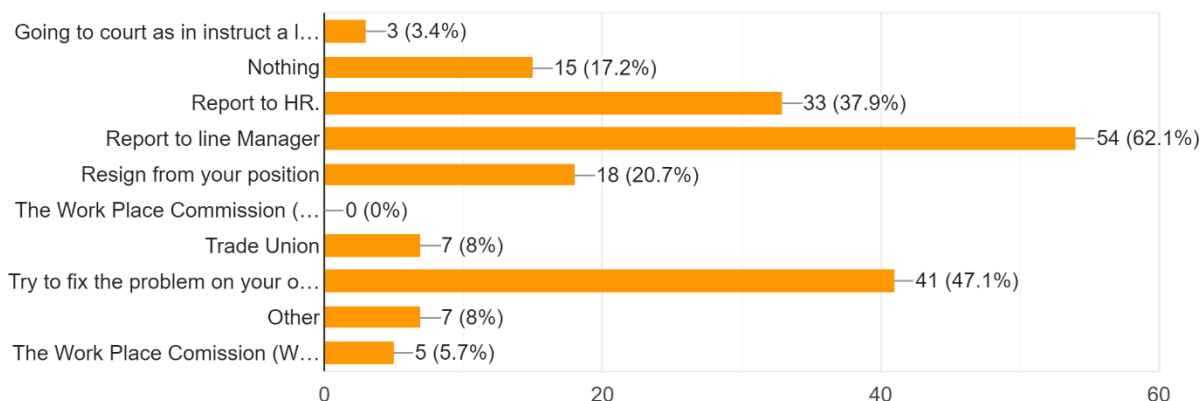


Chart 15 - Other ways to solve workplace conflict.

Question 16 is an open question in which participants can share their views about using mediation in a workplace conflict. In their responses, 50 participants (75.8%) answered yes to using a third party in the conflict; as a benefit they cited different points of view, neutrality, impartiality, facilitation, communication, quality, confidentiality, understandability, less personal, encouraging the outcome, not going to court; 10 participants (15.2%) answered that it depends on the situation, due to the magnitude of the conflict, getting in the way of the conflict, company culture, parties in defensive; 4 participants (6%) answered no, due to the fact that the conflict should be resolved internally, making the situation worse, hierarchy, HR should resolve it, and problems being covered by the contract; 02 participants (3%) never did or did not know.

**Chapter 4 – DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS.**

Following data collection, the material is required to be analysed so that it may be examined and processed to offer answers to the study question. This chapter aims to offer  data analysis based on the answers of the participant's experiences with workplace conflict, what percentage of this conflict was seen as bullying, and how they dealt with it. It also aims to  confirm the participants' understanding of bullying and what they think about having a third party (mediator) assist in the dispute resolution process that they may experience at work.

**4.1. – Demographic questions.**

The questionnaire was completed by 102 employees in Ireland, with nearly all of the participants (101) still residing in Ireland and one stating that they do not at this moment. This one individual does not represent an issue for the study because it focuses on both people who work or have worked in Ireland, irrespective of where they live.

When asked, "How long have you lived in Ireland?", we had two primary groupings of replies with time points that were opposite to each other. The first main group, with 44 participants, has been in Ireland for more than five years, while the second major group, with 30 individuals, has been in Ireland for one to three years. This representation is significant because it demonstrates two unique points of view, the first from those who have been here longer and are likely to have a broader range of job experience, and the second from those who have had fewer experiences and still have a first impression.

The age of the majority sample of participants ranges from 35 to 44 years old, which corresponds to the average age of persons in Ireland, which was 37.4 years old in 2016[8] (Central Statistics Office, 2016). The three minor groups were represented by the "younger workers" (equal or less than 26 years old) and the "older workers" (equal or more than 51 years old) (William Fry, 2016). The group of 65

---

[8] Despite the fact that the information was based on the 2016 census, the growth from 2011 to 2016 was 1.3 years old, indicating that our primary age group from the sample is in line with the average age of individuals in Ireland (Central Statistics Office, 2016).

years old or over had no representation; this group represents persons in their normal retirement age in the contract[9] (Citizens Information Ireland, 2021).

Almost all of the participants (100) are currently working in Ireland. Additionally, two participants are not working at the moment; nonetheless, these two individuals do not cause problems for the survey because we are interested in working experience at any time, not just at present.

For the question, "How long have you working in Ireland?", we had the same pattern as in question two. The two major groups of responses have opposing time periods of job experience. The first large group, consisting of 41 people, has been working for more than five years, while the second major group, consisting of 35 people, has been working for one to three years. This picture supports the initial premise that these groups represent two distinct points of view, the first with a greater range of employment experience and the second with a new perspective.

The area of work had a range of different fields of respondents. The questionnaire was completed by personnel from a variety of cultures and sectors, providing data that was relevant to the study's objectives. The responses demonstrated how they dealt with and managed issues in various conflict scenarios. The largest category, with 35 employees, represents healthcare workers; this significant figure is due to my network of colleagues working in the same sector as I do.

## 4.2. – Workplace conflict and bullying.

More than half of the employees in the sampling (59) reported having dealt with workplace conflict in Ireland. However, 43 workers have stated that they have never faced conflict. This data shows that workplace conflict is a widespread problem, regardless of the field.

From the total number of workers who responded that they have dealt with workplace conflict, 38 reported that a conflict of interests caused these disagreements; this arises due to personal point of

---

[9] Citizens Information Ireland, (2021) retirement age https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/retirement/older_people_and_working/retirement_age_in_ireland.html

view versus organizational norms (Integrityline - University of Central Florida, 2016); Thirty-three answers indicated conflict due to bullying behaviour[10], the term "bullying" was hidden in the question to avoid influencing the employee, and they had the choice to pick based on the pattern of behaviour rather than the definition. Statutory rights conflict was in the last place of choice with 22 answers. Because each participant could select more than one choice, the total number of responses was 93 rather than 59, which was the number of respondents who replied yes to the previous question.

Participants who select the last option in the previous question are asked to identify whether this behaviour occurred more than once or whether a combination of these behaviours occurred. The majority of 33 employees said yes, indicating that they had experienced workplace bullying conforming to the Workplace Relations Commission's, (nd) definition of workplace bullying in Ireland. Nonetheless, 13 workers said that this behaviour occurred just once.

In question 10, participants were given the opportunity to discuss their perceptions about workplace bullying. A range of behaviours was presented, some of the answers such as "It's very complex to pin down exactly, but it involves intimidating or manipulating behaviour against a worker.", demonstrating that there is no definition of the pattern behaviours of bullying. Also, the definition of bullying is confused with harassment in the workplace, according to Citizen Information Ireland, (2021)[11] under the Employment Equality Act, 1998-2015. Some of the options given in the answers were discrimination against race, gender, culture, and religion, such as "Bullying because I'm foreign and because my colour.".

---

[10] The examples that were giving in the third options as behaviour against you of a colleagues or leadership was from Citizen Information Ireland, (2021), bullying in the workplace https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/equality_in_work/bullying_in_the_workplace.html.

[11] Citizen Information Ireland, (2021) Harassment at work https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/equality_in_work/harassment_at_work.html

## 4.2. – Mediation and other ADR's.

When asked if they had ever heard of mediation as a strategy for resolving workplace issues, 70 participants said yes and 32 said no after a short explanation about it. This indicates that the majority of the sample is aware of mediation as a method of conflict resolution in the workplace.

In the next question, the employees who answered yes were asked if they had ever participated in mediation and if it had helped to solve the conflict. More than half of the participants had never participated in mediation, indicating that, while mediation is recognized as a workplace conflict tool, it is not commonly used; Nine participants said they had been in mediation but did not believe it resolved the conflict, and 8 participants said they had been in mediation and the problem was resolved. The small number and proximity between than do not clarify if mediation, when used, is an efficient method to resolve workplace conflict based on this sampling.

The participants were asked if they had ever used other methods of ADR (adjudication, arbitration, investigation, peer views) and were given a brief description of each. More than one answer was permitted. The majority of respondents, 74 workers, stated that they had never utilized other ADR techniques, implying that not only is mediation not often adopted but that other ADR methods are also not used in the majority of workplace disputes. The most often utilized ADR was investigations, with 11 responses, followed by adjudication, arbitration, and peer review, with 7, 6, and 5 responses, respectively.

In the following question, participants who chose one of the ADR choices were asked to identify whether the conflict was solved and whether it made the workplace a better or worse place to work. Ten participants responded that the disagreement had been resolved and that it made a better place to work in, whereas three participants indicated that the conflict had been handled but resulted in a worse place to work. This data shows that, despite the fact that ADR has not been used frequently, most of the disputes were resolved, and most have reported that their workplace is better as a result of this. Five participants responded that the disagreement was not resolved and that this made the workplace

a worse place, whereas 2 participants indicated that the issue was not resolved but that it made the workplace a better place to work. Moreover, half of the participants (62) stated that they had never used ADRs.

Participants who responded, "No, I have never utilized ADR in my workplace problems" in the previous question are asked to describe how they handle workplace conflict. Everyone has the option of selecting one or more responses. More than half of the participants (54) said that they report to a line manager; this response validates Mckenna and Webb's (2013) view that managers who are better equipped with training, such as EI training, can boost the efficacy of bullying prevention. Also, reporting to HR, with 33 replies, follows the same logic; an HR staff member that is better prepared to deal with workplace disputes and, specifically, with bullying in the workplace may help reduce bullying incidents. On the other hand, 41 participants responded, "fix the problem on your own," which is concerning because this could result in the employee escalating the conflict until they lose control, and 18 participants indicated that they had resigned the position, which means higher turnover and potential emotional and physical effects on the victim.

In the final question, participants are free to share their opinions on whether mediation may assist with workplace conflicts and why. The majority of participants, 50, stated that yes, they believe that a third party can help to resolve the conflict and indicated some of the mediation principles such as neutrality, impartiality, confidentiality, and some necessary mediator skills, such as communication and facilitation, can assist the parties in seeing different points of view. Some participants (10) agree and disagree with the use of mediation, indicating that each case should be measured and the best method adopted to handle it. Some of the variables are the level of the conflict, parties being on the defensive and the company culture. These answers show the necessity of evaluating the conflict before choosing the method to deal with it, as explained in Glasl's model of conflict escalation. On the other hand, four participants answered that having a third party will make the dispute worse and that the responsibility for dealing with it is with business departments such as HR. This supports the

need for HR and managers to be prepared to deal with workplace disagreements.

**Chapter 5 – DISCUSSION.**

Discussion of results is an important phase in any research process since it allows you to compare and contrast the most important findings. This chapter compares the acquired primary data to the previously offered literature review to produce clear and easy-to-understand material. The structure follows the objectives specified in the introduction.

**5.1. – Identify the understandability of the bullying definition in the workplace.**

In our first piece of research, a substantial proportion of employees responded that they had been subjected to workplace bullying. However, when asked what their perceptions of workplace bullying were, the responses showed a variety of behaviours, which were not of all identified as bullying. It was observed in the sampling that employees confuse harassment due to gender, race, culture, religion with workplace bullying. This was contradictory to the first half of Buon and Buon's (2007) study, which found that the workers clearly understood that harassment occurred regarding one specific cause (gender, race, disability) but, nevertheless, had no comparable understanding of bullying, which has been thought to be linked to definitional issues. Similarly, some answers described a non-specific behaviour which could be be interpreted in many different ways, such as "harm to another employee" or " It is whenever you harm the respect that you should have with the other person and trespass their limit," and "When conduct is inappropriate and denigrates the dignity of another person". This corroborates with the concept that an organization policy with examples of bullying behaviours will better explain what  bullying is (Malley, 2020). Also, while most workplace bullying is non-physical, 5 individuals reported physical abuse in their responses. Physical abuse is frequently associated with child bullying in schools, indicating a misunderstanding of the meaning of workplace bullying (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011).

According to the literature study, the writers agree on the need for a more precise definition of workplace bullying (Bartlett & Bartlett, 2011; Saunders, et al., 2007; Greco & Batagol, 2017).

Furthermore, without a precise definition, HR, managers, and employees are likely to fail in recognizing workplace bullying (Einarsen, et al., 2003; Hoel, et al., 2001).

**5.2. – Clarify the necessity of one in-depth definition of bullying in the workplace.**

As previously stated, the majority of the sample lacks a precise concept of bullying. According to the survey, when there is a problem, employees seek their line manager and HR to assist them in resolving the issue. Also, for some workers, dealing with these concerns is part of the organization's responsibilities, as seen by the responses "...all the problems were covered by the contract", and "typically, HR would act as a third party...". HR and managers may make a difference when they are adequately equipped to deal with conflict and bullying, which occurs when they grasp what defines workplace bullying. Furthermore, workers who can detect bullying circumstances will report the proper occurrences to the company, offering responsible departments the chance to promote early action against bullying, preventing, stopping, or decreasing impacts (Keashky & Nowell, 2003). When there is not one clear description, the bullying experience might be translated as personality problems, interpersonal conflict, or insubordination by HR or managers (Crimp, 2017; Ferris, 2004; Harrington, et al., 2015; Hutchinson, et al., 2010; Jenkins, 2011; Klein & Martin, 2011; Vickers, 2012). Employees who do not understand the definition or do not find support from the company can try to solve the conflict on their own, as seen in the survey responses, which may escalate the conflict into personal battles and "office wars" (Einarsen, 2000), affecting the health and well-being of the employee and colleagues (Rocaboy, 2006), or quit from the position, as reported in the study, resulting in higher turnover and expenses to the company (Grimm, 2015; Hoel, et al., 2001). Implementing workplace bullying solutions can save employees' lives and save businesses millions.

**5.3. – Mediation can help to identify hidden bullying in the workplace.**

Some of the possible benefits of using mediation include that it allows workers to express themselves

openly and honestly, provides a confidential approach to resolving issues, and assists in viewing other points of view (Podro & Suff, 2013). These aspects were also considered in the survey, where employees highlighted how mediation might help dialogue, offer confidentiality, and encourage alternative points of view.

Due to the concept of confidentiality, the use of mediation in assisting in detecting hidden bullying situations may be limited; nevertheless, in some cases, when the bullying is clear, and the victim is certainly affected, the confidentiality can be broken, as stated by Jenkins, (2011) "Confidentiality in mediation is never total, and mediators are obligated by a "duty of care" to cease mediation and investigate any threats (whether explicit or covert) to either participant's safety." This can be useful when the victim is discouraged from participating in a mediation, as in the answer, "In theory, it sounds good. The reality might be that the bullied person is not on an even playing field so it could be a very big brave step to get into the same room as a bully and talk about it.".

Nonetheless, each case of bullying should be studied before a method is decided. Some of the answers identify this point when the participants express their concern about conflict escalation "It will depend on the level of conflict.". When analysing bullying from a conflict escalation viewpoint, mediation can occur in the early stages of bullying, when power imbalances can be handled (Jenkins, 2011; Podro & Suff, 2013). Also, mediation may be preferred over other alternatives while the target is still employed (McLay, 2009). However, if the parties become contentious, mediation may still be effective, but the mediator should be aware of power inequalities, the need to address pre-existing issues, and the need for follow-up. Violent efforts to destroy or control the other are not fit for mediation, and the mediator must be aware of the possible risks to both parties (Jenkins, 2011).

On the other hand, when a hierarchy is involved, such as when the employer is the bully, and trust in the organization does not exist, it is hard to handle the power imbalance, and the victim's vulnerability in the mediation, as well as some of the mediator's useful tools, can aggravate the conflict (McLay, 2009). The following two answers given in the questionnaire are examples of this: "No, I believe

getting a third party involved would have made the situation worse due to my colleague's hierarchy in the workplace", and "a third party can help, however, if the third party is the HR director and is paid by the company's CEO, then it is hard to feel comfortable that fairness and impartiality are respected." Notwithstanding, there is no agreement among the writers on the benefits of mediation in workplace bullying. Even those who agree that mediation can be used in most cases see exceptions and vice-versa.

**CONCLUSION.**

The foundation of human beings is their relationship with others, and conflicts are likely to arise within these relationships. This current study focuses on workplace conficts, specifically bullying. Bullying has become one of the most widely discussed topics in the last 20 years, beginning with childhood bullying and expanding to workplace bullying.

All of the scholars cited in this book agree on the importance of a formal universal definition of bullying. The first purpose of this study was to determine whether the lack of a single bullying definition could have led to bullying being disguised or hidden. Based on the literature review and the employees' responses in the first research, this idea was confirmed. Many reasons were given, for example, an absence of a legal definition of workplace bullying (in some countries), many different terminologies for the same issue diverting the focus of the studies, confusion of workplace bullying with childhood bullying, the need for effective and clear bullying policies in organizations, poor training on the part of managers and HR personnel to deal with bullying problems, and a personal interpretation of what constitutes unacceptable behaviour or harm to one's dignity, among other things. When confronted with bullying, employees are unsure about what to complain about, where to complain and to whom. They frequently do not report cases because they blame themselves for not stopping the bullying event, think they will not be believed, are afraid of punishment, do not want to relive the bullying, are worried about not being seen as part of the team, and are unsure if it is actually a bullying issue.

The advantages of a better definition of bullying are also fully supported by the writers. Organizations should develop a healthy work environment as well as an anti-bullying and harassment culture, in which the bully does not feel supported by the employer. The organization and employees should analyse and comprehend the characteristics associated with the emergence or intensification of bullying, such as conflict escalation, lack of emotional intelligence, and X leaders. Promoting preventive actions such as training for employees, managers, and HR teams, as well as policies that

are better elaborated with examples of what can be considered bullying or not, can avoid physical (lack of energy, sleep difficulties, musculoskeletal issues) and mental (burnout, anxiety, irritation, loss of self-esteem, suicidal thoughts) health issues for employees, as well as saving organizations millions in absenteeism, turnover, retraining, and litigation.

The research question "Can mediation help to identify hidden bullying behaviour in the workplace?" was not fully clarified due to the authors' disagreements on the use of mediation in bullying cases, and because the survey respondents did not provide enough information on the method's effectiveness, as it is not widely used in practice, despite the fact that mediation is recognized by the respondents as a workplace dispute resolution strategy.

Nonetheless, it was possible to indicate that mediation can be effective in the early stages of conflict escalation when the parties are willing to cooperate. Also, in cases where the bully is unaware of the harm that they are inflicting on a colleague, mediation can help make it understandable and create a space for both parties to explore their perceptions by seeing the other party's points of view. Eventually, mediation can help obtain more information about the conflict, assisting in elucidating possible fake bullying cases prior to a formal investigation.

On the other hand, the confidential nature of the mediation prevents cases from becoming "public," making the problem unnoticed by the general public, resulting in fewer efforts to combat bullying. The power imbalance, which is common in bullying situations, may not be compensated by the mediator, especially if the bully is conscious of their actions and takes advantage of the victim's vulnerabilities. Some mechanisms commonly used by the mediator to assist in the mediation session can exacerbate the conflict, such as downplaying the issue or even rejecting the existence of the bullying when paraphrasing, showing other perspectives of the story may give the impression that the victim did something to induce the bullying behaviour. Also, mediation may not be helpful in the final stages of conflict escalation when the parties' positions are destructive; in such cases, other solutions such as arbitration should be more efficient.

The most important consideration when selecting the best method to deal with bullying behaviour in the workplace is evaluating how this will affect the victim, minimize the event of bullying, make the target more vulnerable, or not address or punish the actions that were made, which will only increase the feeling of injustice and the individual's physical and mental health issues.

Bullying in the workplace should be a top priority for organizations, justice, and health authorities focused on the well-being of the employees.

**REFLECTION.**

Throughout the Disputes Resolution Masters course, I learned how essential it is to know how to deal with conflicts and determine the correct resolution possibilities for people involved. As a result, given the present study, I was glad to be able to go more into the subject of workplace bullying. Since I have experienced bullying as a worker in Ireland, this was a subject that I am interested in, and I was pleased to learn more about it. Furthermore, I have over 7 years of background in people management, which has given me a lot of experience in workplace conflict. All of the material used in this study gave me more knowledge about the subject and made me revise how I dealt with my subordinates, as well as question myself on how I deal with my work colleagues.

However, while conducting this research, I encountered some difficulties, such as the language, which, despite significant improvement, remains a barrier to free expression of my thoughts; the long hours of work, which sometimes frustrated me because I was unable to devote as much time to this work as I would have liked; and, last but not least, my emotional ups and downs as a result of anxiety about upcoming surgery.

Bullying is a sensitive topic, and I believe it to be an essential one for everyone. Learning more about it has been a wonderful and enriching experience.

Thankfully, I've arrived at the point where I can write my reflection. I am very grateful for the chance to do this study. I finish with far more knowledge than when I began and am proud of the work that I have completed.

I conclude with a Laozi[12] statement that I believe is completely relevant to the bullying topic: "Watch your thoughts, they become words. Watch your words, they become actions. Watch your actions, they become habit."

---

[12] Lao Tzu, also rendered as Laozi and Lao-Tze, was an ancient Chinese philosopher and writer (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, n.d.).

**BIBLIOGRAPHY.**

Adams, A. & Bray, F., 1992. Holding Out against Workplace Harassment and Bullying. *Personnel Management,* 24(10), pp. 48-50,53.

Al-Hamdan, Z., Al-Ta'amneh, I. A., Rayan, A. & Bawadi, H., 2019. The impact of emotional intelligence on conflict management styles used by jordanian nurse managers. *Journal of nursing management,* 27(3), pp. 560-566.

Andersson, L. & Pearson, C. M., 1999. Tit for Tat? The Spiraling Effect of Incivility in the Workplace. *The Academy of Management Review,* 24(3), pp. 452-471.

Bartlett, J. E. & Bartlett, M. E., 2011. Workplace Bullying: An Integrative Literature Review. *Advances in Developing Human Resources,* I(13), pp. 69-84.

Basogul, C. & Ozgür, G., 2016. Role of Emotional Intelligence in Conflict Management Strategies of Nurses. *Asian Nursing Research,* Volume 10, pp. 228-233.

Bassman, E. S., 1992. *Abuse in the workplace management remedies and bottom line impact.* Westport: Quorum Books..

Batur, M. & WistrÖm, E., 2012. *Workplace Bullying A Study about Awareness, Preparedness and Implementation,* Gothenburg: s.n.

Beer, J. E. & Packard, C. C., 2012. *The Mediator's Handbook.* 4 ed. s.l.:New Society Publishers.

Bell, J. & Waters, S., 2018. *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researches..* 7 ed. Maidenhead, Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.

Bhutta, C. B., 2012. Not by the Book: Facebook as a Sampling Frame. *Sociological Methods & Research,* 41(1), pp. 57-88.

Borisoff, D. & Victor, D. A., 1998. *Conflict Management: A Communication Skills Approach..* 2 ed. Boston, Mass: Allyn and Bacon.

Bowling, N. & Beehr, T. A., 2006. Workplace Harassment from the Victim's Perspective: A Theoretical Model and Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology ,* 91(5), pp. 998-1012.

Buon, T. & Buon, C., 2007. The 'bully' within. *Counselling at Work,* pp. 05-08.

Central Statistics Office, 2016. *Census of Population 2016 - Profile 3 An Age Profile of Ireland.*

[Online]

Available at: https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp3oy/cp3/aad/

[Accessed 22 October 2021].

Chartered Management Institute, 2015. *DOUGLAS MCGREGOR: THEORY X AND THEORY Y..*

[Online]

Available at: https://switcheducation.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/SEB_LYO_McGregor_Thinker.pdf

[Accessed 16 October 2021].

Citizen Information Ireland, 2021. *Bullying in the workplace.* [Online]
Available at:

https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/equality_in_work/bullying_in_the_workplace.html

[Accessed 11 May 2021].

Citizen Information Ireland, 2021. *Harassment at work.* [Online]
Available at:

https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/equality_in_work/harassment_at_work.html

[Accessed 22 October 2021].

Citizens Information Ireland, 2021. *Retirement age.* [Online]
Available at:

https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/retirement/older_people_and_working/retirement_age_in_ireland.html

[Accessed 22 October 2021].

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. R. B., 2011. *Research methods in education.* 7 ed. London:

Routledge.

Cooper, C. L. & Jackson, S. E., 1997. *Creating Tomorrow's Organizations: Handbook for Future Research in Organizational Behaviour.* Chichester: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.

Cosier, R. A. & Ruble, T. L., 1981. Research on Conflict-Handling Behavior: An Experimental Approach. *The Academy of Management Journal,* 24(4), pp. 816-831 .

Creswell, J. & Creswell., J. D., 2017. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches.* 5 ed. California : Sage.

Crimp, H., 2017. *Effective Prevention of Public Sector Workplace Bullying: Are we there yet?.* Victoria University of Wellignton: Centre Labour Employment and Work.

Danarson, J. H., 2014. The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Curbing Workplace Violence. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research ,* 4(5), pp. 159-171.

DCU, n.d. *Workplace Bullying.* [Online] Available at: https://antibullyingcentre.ie/bullying/workplace-bullying/ [Accessed 13 May 2021].

Deshpande, S. P. & Joseph, J., 2008. Impact of Emotional Intelligence, Ethical Climate, and Behavior of Peers on Ethical Behavior of Nurses. *Journal of Business Ethics ,* 85(3), pp. 403-410.

Domendos, n.d. *9 Stages of Conflict Escalation according to Friedrich Glasl.* [Online] Available at: https://projectmanagement.guide/9-stages-of-conflict-escalation-according-to-friedrich-glasl/ [Accessed 17 October 2021].

Dreu, C. K. W. d., 1997. Productive conflict: The importance of conflict management and conflict issue.. In: C. K. D. Dreu & E. V. d. Vliert, eds. *Using Conflict in Organizations.* London: SAGE Publications Ltd, p. 09–22.

Einarsen, S., 1999. The nature and causes of bullying at work. *International Journal of Manpower,* 20(1/2), pp. 16-27.

Einarsen, S., 2000. Harassment and bullying at work: A review of the Scandinavian approach. *Aggression and Violent Behavior,* 5(4), p. 379–401.

Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D. & Cooper, C. L., 2003. *Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace..* 2 ed. Boca Raton: CRC Press Taylor & Francis Group.

Einarsen, S. & Raknes, B. I., 1997. Harassment in the Workplace and the Victimization of Men. *Violence and Victims ,* 12(3), pp. 247-263.

Einarsen, S. V., Hoel, H., Zapf, D. & Cooper, C. L., 2011. The concept of bullying and harassment at work: The European tradition. In: *Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace.* s.l.:s.n., pp. 03-39.

Eizen, D. & Desivilya, H. S., 2005. Conflict management in work teams: The role of social self-efficacy and group identification. *International Journal of Conflict Management,* pp. 01-18.

Employment Equality Act, 1998-2015. *electronic Irish Statute Book.* [Online] Available at: https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1998/act/21/section/32/enacted/en/html#sec32 [Accessed 22 October 2021].

Ferris, P., 2004. A preliminary typology of organisational response to allegations of workplace bullying: See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling,* 32(3), pp. 389-395.

Financier Worldwide, 2021. *Calming conflict: emotional intelligence in the workplace.* [Online] Available at: https://www.financierworldwide.com/calming-conflict-emotional-intelligence-in-the-workplace#.YWoMdrjMI2x [Accessed 15 October 2021].

Fox, S. & Miles, P. E. S. a. D., 2001. Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB) in Response to Job Stressors and Organizational Justice: Some Mediator and Moderator Tests for Autonomy and Emotions. *Journal of Vocational Behavior,* p. 291–309.

Georgiou, S., 2021. *World Mediation Organization - The principled Mediation.* [Online] Available at: https://worldmediation.org/the-principled-mediation/

[Accessed 20 October 2021].

Greco, C. & Batagol, P. B., 2017. *The Australian Dispute Resolution Research Network.* [Online]
Available at: https://adrresearch.net/2017/02/20/there-is-a-time-and-place-for-mediation-but-a-bullying-allegation-in-the-workplace-is-not-one/
[Accessed 13 May 2021].

Grimm, J. P., 2015. *Labor and Employment Law Workplace Bullying: Its Costs and Prevention.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.lexisnexis.com/LegalNewsRoom/labor-employment/b/labor-employment-top-blogs/posts/workplace-bullying-its-costs-and-prevention#:~:text=In%20some%20studies%2C%20these%20costs%20are%20estimated%20to,bullying%20seriously%20and%20failed%20to%20addre
[Accessed 09 October 2021].

Harrington, S., Warren, S. & Rayner, C., 2015. Human Resource Management practitioners' responses to workplace bullying: Cycles of symbolic violence. *Organization,* 22(3), pp. 368-389.

Harvey, M. G., Treadway, D. C. & Heames, J., 2007. The Occurrence of Bullying in Global Organizations: A Model and Issues Associated With Social/Emotional Contagion. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology ,* 37(11), pp. 2576-2599.

Hasa, 2016. *Difference Between Bullying and Harassment.* [Online]
Available at: https://pediaa.com/difference-between-bullying-and-harassment/
[Accessed 13 October 2021].

Hattangadi, V., 2015. Theory X & Theory Y. *International Journal of Recent Research Aspects,* 2(4), pp. 20-21.

Hawthorn Press, 2013. *Friedrich Glasl.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.hawthornpress.com/authors/friedrich-glasl/
[Accessed 17 Ocober 2021].

Hodgins, M., MacCurtain, S. & Mannix-McNamara, P., 2020. Power and inaction: why organizations fail to address workplace bullying. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management,* 13(3), pp. 265-290.

Hoel, H., Sparks, K. & Cooper, C. L., 2001. THE COST OF VIOLENCE/STRESS AT WORK AND THE BENEFITS OF A VIOLENCE/STRESS-FREE WORKING ENVIRONMENT. *Report Commissioned by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Geneva,* pp. 01-81.

Hogh, A., Carneiro, I. G., Giver, H. & Rugulies, R., 2011. Are immigrants in the nursing industry at increased risk of bullying at work? A one-year follow-up study. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology,* Volume 52, p. 49–56.

Hopt, K. J. & Steffek, F., 2013. *Mediation: Principles and Regulation in Comparative Perspective.* 1 ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hozack, N., n.d. *you tube.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOBYsdgGhVw
[Accessed 06 October 2021].

HR Daily Advisor, n.d. *HR Daily Advisor - Why Does Workplace Harassment Go Unreported?.* [Online]
Available at: https://hrdailyadvisor.blr.com/2019/08/20/why-does-workplace-harassment-go-unreported/
[Accessed 14 May 2021].

Hussein, A. F. F. & Mamary, Y. H. S. A., 2019. Conflicts: Their Types , And Their Negative And Positive Effects On Organizations. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC & TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH,* 8(8), pp. 10-13.

Hutchinson, M., 2012. Bullying as workgroup manipulation: A model for understanding patterns of victimization and contagion within the workgroup. *Journal of Nursing Management,* 21(3), pp. 563-571.

Hutchinson, M. & Hurley, J., 2012. Exploring leadership capability and emotional intelligence as moderators of workplace bullying. *Journal of Nursing Management,* 21(3), pp. 553-562.

Hutchinson, M., Vickers, M. H., Jackson, D. & Wilkes, L., 2010. Bullying as Circuits of Power An Australian Nursing Perspective. *Administrative Theory & Praxis,* 32(1), pp. 25-47.

Integrityline - University of Central Florida, 2016. *Understanding Conflict of Interest.* [Online] Available at: https://compliance.ucf.edu/understanding-conflict-of-interest/ [Accessed 22 October 2021].

Ireland, C. A. & Ireland, J. L., 2000. Descriptive analysis of the nature and extent of bullying behavior in a maximum-security prison. *Agressive behaviour,* 26(3), pp. 213-223.

Irish Tech News, 2020. *Irish Tech News - Percentage of Women in Senior Management roles in Ireland above global and European average.* [Online] Available at: https://irishtechnews.ie/percentage-of-women-in-senior-management-roles/ [Accessed 13 October 2021].

Irvine, C., 2014. 'Do You see what I'm Dealing with here?'. *Journal of Mediation & Applied Conflict Analysis,* 1(1), p. 3.

Jenkins, M., 2011. Practice Note: Is Mediation Suitable for Complaints.

Jenkins, M. F., 2011. *Workplace Bullying: The Perceptions of the Target, the Alleged Perpetrator and the HR Professional.* Doctor of Philosophy: University of Adelaide.

Jennifer, D., Cowie, H. & Ananiadou, K., 2003. Perceptions and Experience of Workplace Bullying in Five Different Working Populations. *Aggressive Behavior ,* 29(6), pp. 489-496.

Jerus, R., 2019. *Assessments 24x7.* [Online] Available at: https://www.assessments24x7.com/blog/emotional-intelligence-in-conflict/ [Accessed 15 October 2021].

Jordan, T., 2000. Glasl's Nine-Stage Model Of Conflict Escalation.

Juneja, P., n.d. *Theory X and Theory Y.* [Online]

Available at: https://www.managementstudyguide.com/theory-x-y-motivation.htm [Accessed 16 October 2021].

Kearins, K., 1996. Power in Organisational Analysis: Delineating and Contrasting a Foucauldian Perspective. *Electronic Journal of Radical Organisational Theory ,* 12(2), pp. 01-24.

Keashky, L. & Nowell, B. L., 2003. Conflict, Conflict Resolution,and Bullying. In: s.l.:s.n., pp. 399-358.

Keashly, L., 2001. Interpersonal and systematic aspects of emotional abuse at work: The target's perspective. *Violence and Victims,* 16(3), p. 233−268.

Keashly, L., Trott, V. & MacLean, L. M., 1994. Abusive Behavior in the Workplace: A Preliminary Investigation. *Violence and Victims,* 9(4), pp. 341-357.

Klein, A. & Martin, S., 2011. Two dilemmas in dealing with workplace bullies - False positives and deliberate deceit. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management,* 4(1), pp. 13-32.

Kumar, M., Singh, K. & Tewari, D. V., 2018. *Workplace Conflict Resolution through Emotional Intelligence (EI).* Roorkee, India, 1ST PAN IIT International Management.

Law Society of Ireland, n.d. *Employment law / Legal Guides.* [Online] Available at: https://www.lawsociety.ie/Public/Legal-guides/Employment-law/Bullying/ [Accessed 11 May 2021].

Lewis, M. A., 2006. Nurse bullying: Organizational considerations in the maintenance and perpetration of health care bullying cultures. *Journal of Nursing Management,* 14(1), pp. 52-58.

Leymann, H., 1996. The content and development of mobbing at work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology,,* 5(2), pp. 165-184.

Liefooghe, A. & Davey, K. M., 2010. The Language and Organization of Bullying at Work. *Administrative Theory & Praxis,* 32(1), pp. 71-95.

Lumen Organizational Behavior and Human Relations, n.d. *McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y.* [Online]

Available at: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-organizationalbehavior/chapter/mcgregors-theory-x-and-theory-y/

[Accessed 16 October 2021].

Malley, C., 2020. *Wirehouse employer services.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.wirehouse-es.com/wirehouse/difference-between-bullying-and-harassment/

[Accessed 07 October 2021].

Matthiesen, S. B., Raknes, B. I. & Rokkum, O., 1989. Bullying at Work. *J.Norwegian Psych. Assoc.,* Volume 26, pp. 761-774.

McConnon, S. & McConnon, M., 2008. *Conflict Management in the Workplace: How to Manage Disagreements and Develop Trust and Understanding.* 3 ed. Oxford: How To Books.

Mckenna, J. & Webb, J.-a., 2013. Emotional Intelligence and the Occupational Therapist. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy,* 76(9), pp. 427-430.

McLay, L., 2009. Workplace bullying: To mediate or not?. *ADR bulletin The monthly newsletter on dispute resolution,* 11(1), pp. 01-05.

Mediation Act, 2017. *gov.ie.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/226c5-mediation-act-2017/
[Accessed 18 October 2021].

Menkel-Meadow, C., 2018. Uses and Abuses of Socio-legal Studies. In: N. Creutzfeldt, M. Mason & K. McConnachie, eds. *Routledge Handbook on Socio-legal Theory and Methods.* London: Routledge, p. Chapter 3.

Mind Tools, n.d. *Theory X and Theory Y Understanding People's Motivations.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_74.htm
[Accessed 17 October 2021].

MIT Institute for Work and Employment Research, n.d. *Douglas M. McGregor.* [Online]

Available at: https://iwer.mit.edu/about/iwer-pioneers/douglas-m-mcgregor/ [Accessed 27 October 2021].

Mohr, J. W. & Ventresca, M., 2002. Archival Research Methods. In: J. A. C. Baum, ed. *Companion to organizations.* s.l.:Blackwell, pp. 805-828.

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

Niedl, K., 1996. Mobbing and well-being: Economic and personnel development implications.. *European journal of work and organizational psychology,* 5(2), pp. 239-249.

Oberman, S., 2005. Mediation Theory vs. Practice: What Are We Really Doing? Re-Solving a Professional Conundrum.

O'Moore, M. & Crowley, N., 2011. The clinical effects of workplace bullying: A critical look at personality using SEM. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management ,* 4(1), pp. 67-83.

Ott, M. C., 1972. Mediation as a Method of Conflict Resolution: Two Cases. *International Organization,* 26(4), pp. 595-618.

Podro, S. & Suff, R., 2013. Mediation an approach to resolving workplace issues. *Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development,* pp. 01-42.

Pranas Žukauskas, J. V. R. A., 2017. *Philosophy and Paradigm of Scientific Research.* [Online] Available at: https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/58890 [Accessed 03 October 2021].

Rayner, C., 2000. *Bullying at work workplace bullying survey of UNISON police support staff members.* London: UNISON.

Reece, R., n.d. *Emotional Intelligence & Conflict Management.* [Online] Available at: http://emotionalintelligenceworkshops.com/emotional-intelligence-conflict-management.htm [Accessed 15 October 2021].

Rocaboy, G. P. -., 2006. Bullying in the Workplace: A Proposed Model for Understanding the psychological Harassment Process. *Research and Practice in Human Resource Management* , 14(2), pp. 01-17.

RTE, 2017. *RTE Female managers in Ireland earn 16% less than male counterparts - study.* [Online] Available at: https://www.rte.ie/news/business/2017/0308/857998-eurostat-statistical-agency/ [Accessed 13 October 2021].

Rubin, J. Z. & Levinger, G., 1995. Levels of Analysis: In Search of Generalizable Knowledge. In: B. B. Bunker & J. Z. Rubin, eds. *Conflict, cooperation, and justice : essays inspired by the work of Morton Deutsch.* San Francisco : Jossey-Bass Publishers, pp. 13-38.

Russell, H., Maître, B., Watson, D. & Fahey, É., 2019. *Job Stress and Working Conditions Ireland in Comparative Perspective An analysis of the European Working Conditions Survey,* Dublin: Health and Safety Authority.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005. *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act.* Ireland: s.n.

Salin, D., 2001. Prevalence and Forms of Bullying among Business Professionals: A Comparison of Two Different Strategies for Measuring Bullying. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology,* 10 (4), pp. 425-441.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A., 2007. *Research Methods for Business Students.* 4 ed. s.l.:Harlow: Financial Times Prentice Hall.

Saunders, M. N., 2009. Understanding research philosophies and approaches. p. 125.

Saunders, P., Huynh, A. & Goodman-Delahunty, J., 2007. Defining workplace bullying behaviour professional lay definitions of workplace bullying. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry,* 07, 30(4-5), pp. 340-354.

Segal, S., 2020. *Workplace bullying – is mediation appropriate?.* [Online] Available at: http://www.mediationrescue.co.uk/2019/05/07/workplace-bullying/ [Accessed 20 October 2021].

Skordoulis, M., Liagkis, M. K., Sidiropoulos, G. & Drosos, D., 2020. Emotional Intelligence and Workplace Conflict Resolution: The Case of Secondary Education Teachers in Greece. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science,* 6(4), pp. 521-533.

Swartz Swidler, LLC, 2019. *Swartz Swidler, LLC.* [Online] Available at: https://swartz-legal.com/what-are-the-most-common-types-of-harassment-in-the-workplace/ [Accessed 13 October 2021].

The Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d. *What is bullying?: Violence, Harassment and Bullying Fact sheet.* [Online] Available at: https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/commission-general/what-bullying-violence-harassment-and-bullying-fact-sheet [Accessed 11 May 2021].

The Mediators' Institue of Ireland, 2021. *MII The Mediators' Institue of Ireland.* [Online] Available at: https://www.themii.ie/code-of-ethics-and-practice [Accessed 20 October 2021].

Tjosvold, D., 1997. Conflict within Interdependence: Its Value for Productivity and Individuality. In: C. K. D. Dreu & E. V. d. Vliert, eds. *Using Conflict in Organizations.* London: SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 23-37.

Tummers, L., Teo, S. T. T. & Brunetto, Y., 2016. Workplace aggression: Introduction to the special issue and future research. *International Journal of Public Sector Management,* 29(1), pp. 02-10.

University of Southampton, n.d. *Leadership & Strategy » HR for Leaders » Bullying » Bullying and Harassment - What's the Difference?.* [Online] Available at: https://www.southampton.ac.uk/~assets/doc/hr/Bullying%20and%20harassment%20-%20what%27s%20the%20difference.pdf [Accessed 13 October 2021].

University of Technology, Sydney, n.d. *Stewart Clegg.* [Online] Available at: https://profiles.uts.edu.au/Stewart.Clegg [Accessed 17 October 2021].

Vickers, M. H., 2012. A Rhetorical Portrayal of the Sham Face of Organizational Support. *Administrative Theory & Praxis,* 34(4), pp. 533-556.

Walliman, N., 2016. *Social Research Methods.* 2 ed. London: SAGE Publications.

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, n.d. *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia - Laozi.* [Online] Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laozi [Accessed 26 October 2021].

William Fry, 2016. AGE IN THE WORKPLACE. *EMPLOYMENT REPORT 2016*, pp. 01-28.

William Wiersma, S. G. J., 2008. *Research Methods in Education: An Introduction..* 9 ed. London: Pearson.

Workplace Relations Commissions, nd. *Code of Practice on Addressing Bullying in the Workplace.* [Online] Available at: https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/what_you_should_know/codes_practice/cop6/ [Accessed 05 May 2021].

YouGov Plc, 2020. *Mental Health UK.* [Online] Available at: https://mentalhealth-uk.org/burnout/ [Accessed 13 October 2021].

**APPENDIX.**

**Appendix 1 – Consent Form.**

Disguised Bullying. Can the mediation help to identify hidden bullying behaviour in the workplace?

Purpose

This research has an academic purpose only. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this research survey, you may withdraw at any time.

There is no direct benefit from answering the questionnaire, but your participation will have an importance in the development and further understanding of the topic.

Confidentiality

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

Aim

The research aims to determine the understandability of bullying in the workplace and if the mediation can help identify and clarify the hidden bullying.

Declaration

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

Concerns

In case you have any doubts or concerns in relation to this research, you are welcome to contact the research supervisor David Smyth (david.smyth@independentcolleges.ie) and research candidate Tatiana Gomes Reis (tatiana.g.reis@hotmail.com), who is a registered student at Independent College Dublin undertaking the degree of Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution.

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

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.

**Appendix 2 – Survey.**

1. Do you reside in the Republic of Ireland?

   ( ) Yes

   ( ) No

2. How long have you been a resident of Ireland?

   ( ) It's been less than a year

   ( ) 1 – 3 years

   ( ) 3 – 5 years

   ( ) For more than 5 years

3. What is your age?

   ( ) Under 18

   ( ) 18 – 24

   ( ) 25 – 34

   ( ) 35 – 44

   ( ) 45 – 54

   ( ) 55 – 64

   ( ) More than 65

4. Do you work in Ireland?

   ( ) Yes

   ( ) No

5. How long have you been working in Ireland?

   ( ) It's been less than a year

( ) 1 – 3 years

( ) 3 – 5 years

( ) For more than 5

( ) I have never worked in Ireland

6. What is your area of work??

   ( ) Accountancy, banking or finance

   ( ) Administration, business, or management

   ( ) Advertising, marketing, or PR

   ( ) Arts, culture, design and entertainment

   ( ) Charity and voluntary work

   ( ) Communications

   ( ) Community and social services

   ( ) Computing or IT

   ( ) Construction, installation, repair and maintenance

   ( ) Education

   ( ) Engineering or Architecture

   ( ) Farming, fishing and forestry

   ( ) Food delivery or food app

   ( ) Government

   ( ) Healthcare

   ( ) HR or recruitment

   ( ) Hospitality or events

   ( ) Law and public policy

   ( ) Religious

   ( ) Retail

( ) Science and technology

( ) Student

( ) Unemployed

( ) Other


7. Have you ever dealt with a workplace conflict in Ireland?

( ) Yes

( ) No


8. If your answer were yes to question 7, what type of conflict did you have? More than one answer is possible.

( ) Disputes/Complaints Involving Statutory Rights (e.g. minimum pay, terms, work hours, rest breaks, redundancy entitlements, payment of wages, etc.).

( ) Disputes/Complaints originated from conflicting interests (e.g. leadership, personality, responsibility, culture, and work style conflicts). Involving employee vs employee or leadership vs employee.

( ) Disputes/Complaints due to the behaviour against you of a colleague or leadership (e.g. Social exclusion and isolation, verbal abuse and insults, have an unfavourable treatment in comparison with your colleagues in the same position, to underestimate your opinion, spreading malicious rumours, gossip or innuendo, spying or stalking, coercion and aggressive interactions, excessive monitoring of work, do not give you the necessary information execute your job correctly, frequently manipulate your contents and targets, attribute to you things that were not in your control, to use aggressive or obscene language, other menacing behaviour).


9. If you choose the last option in question 8, did these behaviours happened more than once

or a combination of more than one of them, coming from the same person or group?

( ) Yes

( ) No

10. In your perception, what is bullying in the workplace? (open question)
R:

11. Have you ever heard of mediation as a method of resolving workplace conflicts? Mediation is when a third party (mediator) uses tools to guide the conflicting parties to settle their disagreement. The parties came up with the outcome independently, without anyone imposing a decision or offer assistance.

( ) Yes

( ) No

12. If you answered yes to the question above, have you ever participated in mediation?
( ) Yes, that helped resolve the conflict.

( ) Yes, but I didn't believe it helped resolve the conflict.

( ) Never take part in a mediation.

( ) I'd never heard of mediation.

13. If you did not use mediation to resolve the workplace conflict, did you ever have used one of the Alternative Dispute Resolutions? More than one answer is possible.
( ) Yes, adjudication – the parties explain their narrative by submitting paper evidence (rosters, e-mails, reports, etc.) to an impartial adjudicator, who then makes a decision.

( ) Yes, arbitration - when a third party (the arbitrator) makes a decision (binding or non-binding) after hearing both sides.

( ) Yes, investigation (ombudsman) — an investigator reviews the objection and provides a

report about the case based on interviews and evidence.

( ) Yes, peer review (internal tribunals) – When the parties present their concerns to a group of managers or employees, who come up with a solution.

( ) No, I had never use Alternative Dispute Resolution in my workplace conflicts.

14. If you used one of the ADR's above to resolve the workplace conflict. Was the dispute resolved? Did it make your workplace a better or worse place to work?

( ) Yes, it was resolved – A better place to work.

( ) Yes, it was resolved – A worse place to work.

( ) No, it was not resolved – A better place to work.

( ) No, it was not resolved – A worse place to work.

( ) No, I had never use Alternative Dispute Resolution in my workplace conflicts

15. If you answered "No, I had never use Alternative Dispute Resolution in my workplace conflicts", to question 14, how do you generally resolve workplace conflicts? More than one answer is possible.

( ) Going to court as in instruct a lawyer.

( ) Nothing

( ) Report to HR.

( ) Report to line Manager

( ) Resign from your position

( ) The Work Place Commission (WRC)

( ) Trade Union

( ) Try to fix the problem on your own

( ) Other

16. If you did not use mediation to help to solve your workplace conflict. Do you believe that having a third party facilitating dialogue between the conflicting parties would make the process easier? Would you please explain your answer? (open question)

R: