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Abstract

The importance of this thesis lies in its ability to understand the dynamics of conflicts and creating a greater understanding of how the mediation process can be used for the resolution of conflicts with a particular focus on personal development and how forgiveness can aid this process. This research has chosen mixed methodologies and gathered a sample size based on 100 responses. The data analysis has been performed based on demographic and thematic analysis. The results of this research have shown that around 60 percent of the respondents were male and 40 percent were female. 19 percent respondents were from 18 to 25 years, 41 percent of respondents ranged from 26 to 30 years, 11 percent of respondents were between the ages of 31 to 40 while 29 percent respondents were from 40 years or above. The main themes that were highlighted in this research were the use of forgiveness throughout the mediation process for dealing with conflicts, strategies for resolving conflicts effectively, potential benefits of forgiveness in the conflict resolution and mediation process, potential benefits of assistance from third parties, and potential of forgiveness in rebuilding relationships.

Keywords: *Conflict Dynamics, Conflict Resolution, Forgiveness, Mediation, Mixed Methodology.*

The Relationship Between Mediation and Forgiveness: An (Im)Possible Result of Conflictual Dynamics?

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Introduction

Background

The term forgiveness is defined traditionally as a method to deal with the offences rather than as a way to deal with the conflicts. The literature has described the offences and conflicts that tend to be assumed in order to be conceptually different. The offences entail the damages that are significant to the individual specifically to the view of the self and/or to the core beliefs while conflicts between parties tend to occur when an inconsistency develops between their goals, interests, expectations and wishes. These could be ranging from mild divergences in views to serious verbal or physical altercations (Brinkert, 2016). Minor conflicts do not always necessarily require forgiveness or mediation, it varies depending on the degree of personal damage caused by the offence.

One late investigation of work environment intercession has found that there are regular conflicts in the workplace which create relationship challenges, a feeling of helplessness among staff and issues with management style and method of practices (Elemo, 2018). Work environment intercession has existed for many years, although it remains a relatively young concept with the benefits not yet widely researched (Bollen and Euwema 2013). This study presents an opportunity to further examine the various methods to deal with workplace conflicts with a particular focus on mediation. and the role forgiveness plays in the process.

Definition of the Problem

The problem of the study here is to identify the impact of forgiveness on the mediation process. Forgiveness arises at the point where there is the recognition that conflicts and offences are likely to occur in daily life. With this, the conflicts lead to the offences at the time when one partner says things or acts with a behaviour that the other person perceives as hurtful or it can be referred to as insulting. The offences tend to engender the conflict especially when they are committed against those close to others.

It is perceived that society as a whole is used to resolving conflict through the imposition of decisions, and not in a negotiated manner, moving away from the autonomy of seeking dialogue to understand the conflict between the parties. However, the conflict visualized is only apparent and, sometimes it is an escape for deeper issues that have been experienced. Due to the plurality of perceptions, feelings, beliefs and interests, relationships are conflicting, especially in the work environment. In this sense, conflicts may not be resolved, but it can be worked on so that those involved can understand the wrong done and develop empathy with each other; listen and meet the needs of the person who suffered the damage and the person who caused it; to encourage commitment to assume the consequences of one's actions and the responsibility through personal reflection or, if possible, forgiveness.

Research Question

Upon the aims and the objectives, the research questions are defined as follows:

RQ1: What is the relationship between forgiveness and mediation in the solving of conflicts?

RQ2: Do forgiveness and mediation have a significant impact on conflict resolution?

RQ3: What are the other methods that are used in order to solve the conflicts?

Aims and Objectives

The goal of the exploration introduced here is to investigate intervention as a popularity-based method for managing clashes dependent on the foundation of arrangements dependent on forgiveness. The research conducted here can be broken down into five distinct segments which will start with the ideas of contention followed by the elements. The researcher will then dissect key standards of intercession and the effective execution of absolution in the intervention cycle while finally, there will be an inspection of the intervention and its humanistic qualities.

Scope of the research

The importance of this thesis lies in its ability to further enhance our understanding of the dynamics of conflicts and the impact of social bias in the understanding of human relations for the resolution of conflicts and how the mediation process can affect an individual's personal development. The research philosophy will be guided by interpretivism with the aim of presenting and interpreting aspects of conflicting dynamics between people within the mediation process and how it can represent a social construction with the understanding of forgiveness.

The research revolves around variables such as forgiveness and mediation in the resolution of the conflict. The research is going to evaluate the impact of forgiveness and mediation over the resolution of the conflict. The research is significant as these conflicts are commonly seen in the workplace and these situations can easily escalate and develop into situations of deep mistrust and dislike which will have a negative impact on the overall working

environment for all employees. Conflict resolution strategies should be used to avoid these situations from reaching this point.

Potential Contributions of the Research

The research is important because it is going to define the optimum strategies for conflict resolution. It is important that the strategies of conflict resolution are known and clearly identifiable to people in the workplace as this will help avoid issues escalating and contributing to a negative working environment. The most common strategy that is used in order to solve conflict is mediation but many mediation processes are not yet familiar with the concept of forgiveness.

However, this research is going to find out the relationship between forgiveness and mediation in the conflict resolution process. If the methods of conflict resolution are properly utilised and given their due importance then the development of the conflicts can be minimised. On the other hand, if there are poor conflict resolution skills it can elevate the levels of the tension and conflicts which could possibly escalate to a situation where they are beyond solving.

Dissertation Outline

This dissertation, “The Relationship Between Mediation and Forgiveness: An (Im)Possible Result of Conflictual Dynamics?” is going to be covering the following five major sections which are further divided into subsections. The first chapter of the dissertation is the introduction. This chapter is going to evaluate the background of the study; the problem

statement; aims and the objectives with the research questions. Also, this chapter has been discussing the scope and the contributions of the research.

Chapter 2 contains the Literature review. The Literature review is going to define the topic with the help of the existing literature. Following on from this, chapter 3 refers to the research methodology while the last section will define the limitations of the study.

The chapter of the research methodology is going to be defining the approaches; philosophy; data collection methods; time frame; strategies. Chapter 4 of the thesis will contain the results and the discussion section while the last chapter, which is chapter 5, will be the conclusion of the study.

Limitation of the Research

This study's primary focus is on the impact of mediation and the role forgiveness plays in the conflict resolution process, but there are other strategies as well which can be beneficial for the resolution of conflict. Therefore, the study should include conflict resolution strategies which can occur in everyday life. The method of the research is the mixed approach. The mixed approach is quite complex and takes much more time and many more sources in order to plan and then implement this particular type of research. It might be difficult in order to implement and plan the one method by drawing on the findings of others. The mixed approach can be unclear on the point of how to resolve the discrepancies which arise in the interpretation of the findings.

Considering that the research will occur in pandemic times, the method of the exploration will have to be slightly altered. I can see the constraint of meeting face to face and improving my

view of sentiments associated with the intercession cycle. The decision for this exploration is to utilise polls and meetings. Hence, it may not mirror the perspectives, mentalities, or practices of the populace overall. Also, an interpretivist epistemology has been chosen as the most fitting approach as a result of the idea of the exploration.

Chapter Summary

The term forgiveness is defined traditionally as a method to deal with the offences rather than as a way in order to deal with the conflicts. The literature has described the offences and conflicts that tend to be assumed in order to be conceptually different. This chapter has outlined that the present study will focus on defining the impact of mediation and forgiveness throughout the conflict resolution process. While doing so the study will be covering the applications of the models like forgiveness and mediation over the resolution of the conflict.

The importance of this research will lie in the ability to understand the role mediation and forgiveness can play in a conflict resolution process while also taking into account other successful strategies which can be implemented throughout the process.

Chapter 1 – Review of the Literature

1.1 Introduction

This chapter of the research study has been written with the main purpose of exploring the different research studies that have been conducted on this topic. The major discussion areas of the literature review are related to the concept and dynamics of conflicts, the mediation process, and forgiveness. The literature review has provided a detailed discussion to explain the different concepts of conflicts and how to cater for these conflicts. Similarly, the literature review has also focused on providing a critical analysis of the concept of forgiveness as a reworking or solution to conflicting social relationships while also analysing the concept of mediation and its humanistic characteristics.

The literature review identifies and analyses those factors that become the causes/basis of conflicts. The literature review also discusses conflict escalation, consequences of conflict and methods which can be used to resolve conflicts. There are also subparts to be discussed such as negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and conciliation. Finally, the last parts of the literature review will focus on forgiveness as a conflict resolution strategy and the chapter summary. There are references to different research studies throughout the literature review to help analyse different aspects of the research.

1.2 Concept and Dynamics of Conflict

The term conflict has been derived from the Latin language and the literary meaning of conflict is the degree of clashes or disputes among the people working within the organisational working environment. There are two types of outcomes from conflicts, it can be measured in negative and positive ways (Nunkoo, and Sungkur, 2021). In terms of negative, it can be seen as dangerous for the organisational performance because when the employees of the organisational working environment are involved in conflicts and clashes then it can lead to a decrease in the performance of employees and the image of an organisation. In the second context, from the positive perspective viewpoint, sometimes conflicts lead to the solutions of problems that occur within the organisational environment (Nunkoo, and Sungkur, 2021) based on the conflict approach, there are two types of assumptions of the conflict's dynamics.

According to the classical realistic conflict approach (Nunkoo, and Sungkur, 2021), conflict is a dynamic phenomenon in which there are two parties. In this phenomenon the one party takes the actions and, in response to this, the other party reacts to those actions taken by the one party. These actions and reactions are dependent on the situation and nature of the conflicts and the problems. The actions and reactions sometimes lead to effects on the organisational performance and the employees' working capacities and their attitudes. Additionally, other dynamics define the conflicts in different contexts such as one dynamic is known as polarisation (Mio et al.,2021).

With reference to this dynamic, conflict is the process of pushing two parties into two different reactions. Another conflict dynamic is centralisation, it is that dynamic in which there is the central command. With reference to this dynamic, certain institutions have been established

to assess these conflicts and find the best possible solutions to these problems. These conflict-handling institutions are also engaged in providing security and protection to the employees working in the organisations. The conflicts always lead to a higher degree of violations and threats. It is difficult to stop the conflicts whenever they have occurred.

To some extent, there is a possibility of stopping the conflicts when the employees follow the established rules and regulations by the organisational top management (Juutinen, 2019). The best example of the conflict dynamic is the Johan Galtung model of conflict. Johan designed this model as a potential conflict handling and managing tool. The diagnosis and prognosis analytical model have been developed to resolve the conflicts. According to this model, Johan defined the model as that the conflict is the outcome of attitude, behaviour, and contradiction. The conflict model is given below.

$$\textit{Attitude} + \textit{Behaviour} + \textit{Contradiction} = \textit{Conflict}$$

1.3 Dynamics Between Actors Under Conflict Management

According to the study conducted by Jones (2016), the most understandable impact on the behaviour of the disputants is the behaviour related to the other disputant. Usually, the dynamic element is within the conflict that usually originates from the actions of one actor towards the other and the latter one responding to the action at the following moment in the form of the action reaction manifest argument. According to the cooperation theory it stated that similar actions have a similar response which is taken by one actor towards the other. The best example of this work regarding the foreign policy related behaviour which tends to be focusing

on the way out in which the two actors usually states in this present case interact with one another from the period to another period (Jones, 2016).

Moreover, the hostile behaviour by one of the states in one period might be eliciting a similar response which is a hostile response that is given by the other state in the following period on the other hand, the friendly behaviour will be invoking a mutual friendliness. Notably, the reaction of an actor towards the first action is doubtful to be only the working of that initial action. In accordance with this, a disputant's action might be in the reaction to the actions of many of the other disputants, not the single one.

Additionally, the research conducted by Farazmand, (2018) states that these additional actors might be the additional states for example the modelling of the actions; conflict dynamics and the reactions of NATO; Serbia; Bosnia at the time of the conflict of the Bosnia or they might be including the domestic actors within the states for the illustration taking into account the ways the domestic public responses may be impacting on the actions and the reactions of the state in the constant conflict. In more of these complex situations, the dynamics still arose from the interplay of each of the behaviour of the actor and the differential responses from the other actors that are involved in the conflict which follows from that start behaviour.

1.4 Forgiveness as a Reworking of Conflicting Social Relationships

In order for forgiveness to be granted to another party, it is necessary that an offense or transgression be identified by the person who was offended and that feelings of injustice and hurt are recognized, since without prejudice, there is nothing to forgive. However, the identification

of the offense is not the only “condition” necessary for forgiveness, it is also necessary that the transgression be seen by the victim as intentional or, at least, the result of negligence (McCullough, Rachal & Worthington, 1997). In these situations, it is also expected that the offended partner is aware of his right to position himself negatively in relation to the offended partner and that this, in turn, expects a minimization of hostile thoughts, feelings and behaviors from the other towards you. After suffering the offense, the offended person has the voluntary choice of wanting or not to forgive (Martín, González, & Fuster, 2011). Still, there are several models that have been developed around this process and in relation to the fact that forgiveness is not a single static act, but rather a process. For (Enright, 2012), forgiving implies a gradual process that it encompasses behavior, cognition and affection and it is from this perspective that it elaborates a process consisting of four distinct phases: 1) discovery phase: in this first phase, the hurt is recognized, not “closing our eyes” to the offense; 2) decision stage: in which, through a detailed analysis of the various factors involved, the decision to forgive is made; 3) working out forgiveness: that is, through effort and work around forgiveness, trying to somehow understand and reflect on the offense and the offender; 4) deepening forgiveness: the phase of results, in which forgiveness is achieved, meaning psychological growth and inner freedom.

In the study of (Juutinen, 2019), forgiveness is linked with two aspects, time and the law. According to this time and law approach, the conflicts occur at a certain period within the organisational environment and in response, some specific rules and laws have been developed to protect the society from such types of conflicts. While Hancock (2016), defines forgiveness as the process in which two parties both actors and reactors of the conflict dynamic, agree on the deal and make an agreement to resolve an issue with offences or in other words they resolve an

issue by making a proper deal among each other with transgressions or with the injuries. There are two types of concepts, one is known as the offences and the other one is known as the conflicts. In the offences, the one party in the conflict may be offended on their point of interest while in the case of conflicts, both parties have different opinions regarding the issue (Juutinen, 2019). In this case, they have to work together to resolve the conflict.

In the study of Friedman et al. (2017), the literal meaning of the term offences is that it is the process in which an individual significantly becomes damaged and harmful especially if an individual's beliefs, core values, norms, and traditions become affected by the opinions and disagreements of others. In response to that, the conflicts can be defined as the inefficiency in the organisational working environment in which the incomputable goals have been designed that are very difficult to achieve and become harmful for the employees to work. Therefore, in that case, the employees become more concerned about their personal opinions regarding the issues and objectives defined by the company. Additionally, the other factors that can cause conflicts among the employees in the organisational working environment are the worker's wishes (Friedman et al., 2017), their preferences, expectations, and different employees' opinions that are not considered by the professionals and upper management of the organisation.

When all of these factors become hampered, they lead to creating issues and conflicts among the employees. The second difference between the conflicts and offences is that conflicts are especially minor and do not become the cause of damage to employees of personal interest and personal properties, while the offences are opposite to the conflicts, they become the cause of damage to the employees' personal properties. According to the opinions and thoughts of different researchers and scientists (Osman, 2015), to manage and handle interpersonal conflicts

and issues forgiveness is the key important factor to play a significant role to resolve the issues. Forgiveness provides a certain effective platform both for the individual and society that how to understand the issues and how to cater to these problems.

If there is a degree of forgiveness among the society and individuals then there is less possibility of occurrence of conflicts and issues. Furthermore, forgiveness mostly provides effective and quick solutions to the problems occurring among the employees during the working environment. It has been also studied that offences and conflicts are the daily basis issues that occur on daily basis activities that are why forgiveness is also considered the potential conflict management strategy (Van Wymeersch et al., 2020). Moreover, the main reason for the offences is conflicts because whenever someone's actions hurt another individual then it causes the offences. In this regard, offences also become the cause of engendering issues in the working environment.

Whenever the employees of people are in close relationships then there is a possibility that there would be an occurrence of overt verbal communications. It has also been noted that whenever there is a miscommunication among the employees at the working place that will lead to conflicts and issues. To manage and resolve these conflicts that lead to offences after some-times is forgiveness. In this regard, forgiveness is considered an important factor to handle and resolve conflicts. From the couple or group's conflict viewpoint, it has also been considered that forgiveness is also an important factor in resolving the couple and group issues (Mareš, and Netolická, 2020).

The concept of forgiveness is defined as it is an intellectual interaction that involves a rejection of revenge and a desire for answers. Forgiveness is a meaningful intellectual interaction

that must follow a dark confrontation among the parties that are involved in the conflicts. Boston, MA: Pearson, 2011 Forgiveness is a cycle that begins with resentment and leads to a change in the meaning of an event or the way we perceive that event in our lives ((Jones, 2016). Commitment is a social cycle in which the organisation can take steps to rebuild a relationship or enter a new one after forgiveness. Forgiveness involves a sequence of actions and requires agreement between the offender and the person who is upset.

The study on forgiveness shows that it begins with resentment for the offense committed and leads to a change in the meaning of the event or how people view the event in relation to their professional and personal lives. While forgiveness is one person's overreaction to a harmful circumstance, commitment restores two people to balance after forgiveness. However, forgiveness does not obligate them to forgive. Nor does it absolve the other person of the consequences of their behaviour, nor does it negate the scandal (Mio et al.,2021). However, if the preceding incident has become significant, forgiveness disappears into the fabric of a person's life.

Often forgiveness is misjudged by some professionals because it is tied to their need to see justice where wrong has been done. It is wiser to think of forgiveness as a gift that the offended person gives to the offender. It is always better to apologise in order to be able to act openly again than to complain or harbour a grudge. Accordingly, the study conducted by Hartwell, (1999) had evaluated that forgiveness was once dismissed as an irrelevant religious concept in the world of politics. But in the present world the concept of the forgives have begun to be associated increasingly within the higher secular post reconstruction of the conflict. As the post-cold war has disturbed the world into wars which are more violent and persistent, the low

level of the conflict's potential for the healing of the society have begun to be explored in the media; academic analysis and the popular as well. In spite of this increased profile, the forgiveness might be one of the least understood and the yet potentially required acts for the society in order to fully break the violence cycle.

Additionally, the paper presented by Hartwell, (1999) has addressed the questions related to forgiveness by the defining of the term forgiveness and also by focusing on its possibility and the relevance in the situations which are post conflict. Moreover, it has considered this topic within the framework of the social reconciliation which is a collective attempt in order to rebuild a benefit which is reached mutually and the cooperative civil society by the examination of the concept related to justice.

1.5 Mediation and its humanistic character

In the 1990s an approach was developed that is known as the humanistic approach to mediation. The main reason for the development of this approach is to consider the cases of those people who are engaged and facing critical issues and crimes. Mediation can be defined as the tool that focuses on producing positive results by managing and resolving the issues occurring in the workplace environment. Mediation is also considered as the goal-oriented approach that helps in producing the most effective results (Petkov, 2017).

Whenever there is a comparison between the mediation approach and the humanistic approach with both having the main purpose of producing the most effective results and

providing effective results (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021). According to these approaches, there is an open choice of feelings and ideas in which both parties can share the open ideas and feelings related to the issues and both parties are agree on mutual understanding to resolve the issues

There are primarily three stages in the process of humanistic mediation which have been established, the first stage is known as the therian stage of the humanistic mediation, it is the approach or stage where the people are expressing their grievances, the second stage of humanistic mediation is the crisis stage where the employees and people are getting to participate with the parties, where they control their feelings and are expressing their emotions while the third stage of humanistic mediation is the stage where an individual or the people mostly move from personal interests to the unselfishness stages.

Whenever the people and employees have reached the catharsis stage, they are going to overcome their level of suffering and pains to start the process of evolution and maturation at a certain level so that the issues can be resolved effectively. This level of saturation allows an individual to carry forward their daily routine's tasks, transforming the person and their outlook (Mayer, 2016).

1.6 Conflict Generating Factors

In the research study of Namangale (2015), several possible factors lead to conflicts in the workplace environment. The most common reasons for generation of conflict in the organisational working environment are; task interdependence; whenever there is work overload

among the employees at the workplace and employees are assigned the task in collaboration then there is a chance of occurrence of conflicts among the employees. It has also been concluded that whenever there is a high task interdependence then there is a possibility that the high intensity of the relationships can lead to conflicts.

Another important factor that contributes to creating conflicts is status inconsistencies; this is the factor that can create an issue at the working place whenever the manager of an organisation takes leave or rest during the working hours but the non-managerial staff are not permitted to do the same, this can lead to creating conflicts in the working environment. It also means that there is a lack of fairness in the organisational policies and procedures (Malone et al., 2021).

The third important factor that causes the creation of conflicts at the workplace is lack of communication skills among the employees and workers. Whenever miscommunication and communication gaps exist at the workplace it can lead to the creation of conflicts. Because whenever there is a misunderstanding of a message then a person usually responds in anger and frustration. Similarly, the other factor of creating conflicts in the organisational working environment is jurisdictional ambiguities.

Jurisdictional ambiguities are factors or situations where the employees are unclear about their job responsibilities and they do not know what types of tasks they have to perform (Lengers et al., 2015). The example of jurisdiction ambiguities can be clearly understood in such a way that whenever the fresh applicant is called for the job, an individual job application is evaluated by two different departments one is personal department and the other one in which an applicant

would be hired to work, in this case, both departments are unclear about their job responsibilities.

1.7 Conflict escalation

One of the main reasons for conflict escalation occurs whenever there are changes and variations in the employee's level of intensity in the working environment. Whenever there is the occurrence of conflict escalation, it creates a situation where more people are going to be involved in the process which creates many potential threats and negative consequences. There is even a chance that violence may occur in the workplace, if the violence has already occurred then there is a chance that the situation becomes more severe for the people as there are a large number of people who have been involved in the conflict creating process (Lengers et al., 2015).

1.8 Consequences of conflict

It has been mentioned in the different research studies that conflicts occur at every working place and there are certain reasons behind the occurrence of these conflicts such as miscommunications, jurisdiction ambiguities, employees and managers personal interest, work overload, environmental conditions, etc., it has also been necessary to understand what are the potential results and consequences of these conflicts. In the study of Johnson (2016), there are certainly positive results of conflicts which are possible. Conflicts can lead to change in the organisational environment. It has been studied that whenever conflicts occur in the organisation they are capable of enhancing and accelerating the change, especially small businesses as it is much easier to design and implement new policies in smaller enterprises. (Idrissou et al., 2016).

Another consequence of conflicts is goal congruence. Conflicts enable the organisational top management to assign the tasks in teamwork and to foster teamwork to achieve common goals. Furthermore, another consequence of conflicts is that it helps the organisations to design such policies and strategies so that they can compete in the market and can achieve economic growth. Conflicts also help organisations to go for innovation in terms of adopting new technologies, innovation in products and services. Similarly, as has been discussed in the study of Beaton and Marinkovic (2018) there are certain negative results of conflicts, first conflicts result in wasting of time and organisational resources, it also results in decreasing the employee's performance and organisational market image, it can slow down the productivity and increase production cost, while also result in reducing the quality of the products.

1.8.1 Positive Consequences

Conflict is not usually inevitable but it is also desirable. Additionally, this is constructive and tends to encourage new ideas in order to solve the problems which are related to the organisations (Bolton, 2017). Moreover, it promotes change and can help the organisation continue going and growing in the desired direction.

1.8.1.1 High Degree of Cohesion

Intergroup conflicts give rise to commitment and loyalty among the members of the group. Additionally, the group members tend to be uniting in collaboration; taking the benefit of the opportunities and overcoming the threats while taking stronger action in order to make the resolution of their issues (Bolton, 2017). Moreover, all the members of the group work together

for the common goal. It can also promote cohesiveness in the group if the individuals of the different groups compete with each other.

1.8.1.2 Improvement in the Quality of the Decision

When the members of the group face conflict, they calculate all of the possible solutions to the issues and evaluate the decisions and apply their creative and innovative abilities in order to arrive at the best decisions. In addition to this, the inter- group conflict might help improve the quality of decision making while also stimulating innovation and creativity. When people have opinions which are conflicting, they deeply analyse facts of the case (Bolton, 2017). Additionally, the deep understanding of the concepts tends to promote new insights; new sorts of ideas and thus raises innovation.

1.8.1.3 Emergence of the Leaders

Everyone does not think alike in situations which are conflicting. The group members will bestow the power on those who can positively contribute to the situations related to the problem in order to make decisions. In accordance with this the power gives rise to the leaders who tend to act as the group captain (Bolton, 2017). With this, it tends to reduce the rivalry amongst members in order to become the leaders of the group.

1.8.1.4 Responses in order to make the Change

Conflict tends to promote change as they introduce a difference in values: opinions and the perception to all those involved (Bolton, 2017). Moreover, the conflicts tend to be

challenging the existing state of affairs and then promote novel ideas with the reassessment of the current practices of the groups.

1.8.2 Negative Consequences

In a positive conflict situation, the diversification in opinion does not harm anyone's feelings. With respect to this, the people respect each other's ideas and arrive at new solutions to the issues in order to develop the working relationships (Bolton, 2017). Although in a negative conflict, people often show disrespect for each others' ideas. They will often aim to promote their own interests at the cost of others.

1.8.2.1 Mental Strains

Excessive conflict can create frustration and tension among colleagues which is harmful to both the employees and the organisation (Bolton, 2017).

1.8.2.2 Discontentment

Conflict can breed antagonism and discontentment. If the people do not arrive at mutually aggregable solutions, it results in discontentment (Bolton, 2017). In addition to this, employees will generally have low job satisfaction which can often lead to lower productivity.

1.8.2.3 Breakdown of the Communications

When the individuals or the groups tend to develop conflicting ideas, they will often avoid interaction with each other which reduces the communication between the employees and can often lead to inter group rivalry and the loss of the ideas which are productive (Bolton, 2017). As the conflict leads to the disagreement and the communication breakdown the people

do not come to a similar point with each other that leads to the splitting up of the units and the groups. Additionally, this takes focus away from the goals of the organisation and can lead to instability in the structure of the organisations.

1.9 Manners to resolve conflicts

It has been found that conflicts are key factors for organisations to be taken into consideration and organisations should take the necessary steps to manage and stop these conflicts. There are different types of conflict management strategies, but the main two are Negotiation and Mediation (Wymeersch, 2020).

1.9.1 Negotiation

It is an agreement in which both parties' actors and reactors agree on a specific agreement with the main purpose of resolving an issue by sharing the same common interests and goals. In some other contexts, negotiation can be defined as an interpersonal decision-making process and it is considered a very important factor for organisations to achieve the targets and specific goals when these goals are unable to be achieved (Anam, and Satris, 2020). In other words, a process or situation in which two parties with different preferences agree on a joint decision to resolve an issue is known as a negotiation (McGuire, and Ehlinger, 2018).

Moreover, there are seven elements of negotiations in which both parties agree on resolving an issue. These elements include the interest of both parties, legitimacy of both parties, relationships among the parties, options to resolve the issues, alternative solutions to resolve the issues, making of commitments and making effective communications to resolve these issues.

Additionally, there are certain benefits of negotiation for both parties, it helps in building relationships among the parties involved, it helps to provide quality solutions, and lastly it helps the organisations to take the preventive steps to become secure from the future problems and conflicts and take the necessary steps as early as possible (Niño, and Palma, 2018).

1.9.3 Arbitration

According to Noll, (2018), the term arbitration is defined as the nonjudicial legal technique which is used for the resolving of the disputes by taking help from the other person who acts as the neutral party for the binding of the decision or it can be for the award as well. An arbitrator might be composed of a single person or a board of the arbitration which usually consists of three members. Moreover, arbitration is most commonly utilised in disputes which are of a commercial nature and is distinct from conciliation and mediation (Kazansky, 2019). This method of conflict resolution is more commonly used in the settlement of the labour disputes that are present amid the management and labour unions.

Moreover, Kazansky, (2019) explained that the process of arbitration occurs when there is the involvement of a third party which is known as the arbitrator. Arbitration is defined as the method for the resolution of the dispute that is done with the help of a certain professional that is known as the arbitrator that is the neutral third party who tends to be given training in resolving the disputes in the labour management; collective or it can be of the individual conflicts.

1.9.4 Conciliation

As per the study of García (2019), the term conciliation is defined as a type of conflict resolution method, which is an out of court dispute resolution instrument. Similar to the mediation, the conciliation is done by free will and it is also confidential. Additionally, the

parties have sought to reach an amicable settlement of the dispute with the assistance of the conciliator who is acting as the neutral third party. The conciliator is going to be asked by the parties in order to provide them with a settlement proposal which is non-binding.

Conciliation proceedings are voluntary for all parties involved, they have free will to agree and attempt to resolve their dispute by the conciliation. In addition to this, the process of the conciliation is flexible which allows the parties to define the time, content and the structure of the proceedings of the conciliation (Gracia, 2019).

1.10 Forgiveness as a Conflict Resolution Strategy

An important element of conflict resolution is forgiveness which can be used as a conflict resolution strategy. There are certain advantages of using the forgiveness strategy, first, it helps in building a stronger and healthier relationship among the employees and organisational environment, it can help improve employees mental health and it also helps employees in improving performance and self motivation.(Clausen, 2019). Most studies about the use of forgiveness as strategy for resolving conflict reveal a preference for a multidimensional approach to forgiveness, which presupposes a decrease in negative motivations and an increase in positive motivations in relation to the offender. Effective conflict resolution is positively correlated with the positive dimensions of forgiveness and negatively correlated with the negative dimensions of forgiveness. The lack of forgiveness as a response to a specific offense, on the other hand, seems to fuel conflicts, being associated with their ineffective resolution.

According to Enright & Fitzgibbons (2000, 2012), forgiveness is a strategy in which the individual directs his attention to the other, involving changes in thoughts, feelings and motivations in relation to the offender. Several authors who have focused on the study of forgiveness state that these changes should manifest themselves in behaviors evident to be genuine (Fincham, 2000; Rique, Júlio, & Camino, 2010). Thus, as a conflict resolution strategy, forgiveness involves the behavioral system, even though it cannot be reduced to behavior alone. The theoretical considerations referred to apply to both dimensions of forgiveness: the lack of forgiveness (negative dimension - which refers to constant negative reactions towards the offender, such as avoidance, vengeful or resentful thoughts, feelings, motivations and behaviors) and benevolence (positive dimension - described as a constructive resolution strategy, which is the ability to identify the strengths of the relationship and of oneself during conflicts (Fincham et al., 2006).

1.11 Benefits of Mediation and Forgiveness in Dispute Resolution

According to the research conducted by Singer, (2018); forgiveness is a cognitive process which consists of the feelings of letting go of revenge and the desire to retaliate. In addition to this, forgiveness is a vital kind of mental process which should be followed by a traumatic conflict. The importance of this kind of dispute resolution is that it starts with anger upon the

transgression and moves forward while changing the meaning of the event and transforming the way in which the particular event is happening in their lives.

In the context of dispute resolution the importance of forgiveness is inspired by the well-timed and sincere kind of apology that can potentially improve the odds related to the settlement and the repairing of the relationships. The beneficial effects produced by conflict mediation should be considered by litigants who face conflicts, as this seems to be a great way out for people to reach forgiveness as they are able to elaborate their issues, recontextualizing the disagreement, reaching an empathetic position in relation to the other, putting himself in his place, understanding that he too felt affronted. And from the forgiveness, other positive emotions will emerge, bringing benefits to the parties with a subjective well-being.

Hamilton (2020) states that there are many benefits of the settlement of the conflict via mediation such as a reduction in costs and an ease of the court load. Additionally, mediation tends to elevate the control which the parties have over the resolution. In the mediation each of the parties is directly involved in negotiating their own agreement and no settlements could be imposed upon the person.

Another significant benefit of mediation is that it is confidential. Unlike the potential publicity of the proceedings of the court, whatever is said at the mediation remains confidential to the parties. Mediation is also a voluntary process. Any of the parties at the mediation are able to withdraw at any time. Mediation is also a convenient process, it is arranged at a venue which is feasible to all of the parties which are involved in the mediation. Another important positive is mediation can result in faster outcomes for the participants. (Hamilton, 2020).

1.12 Potential Problems associated with Meditation in Dispute Resolution

Mediation usually occurs when a third party is invited in order to assist the disputing the parties in order to achieve a settlement. The mediators are typically accomplished negotiators who tried to manage the process of the bargaining between the parties. Unlike the third-party conflict the mediators have no power of imposing an outcome on the associated parties. Another significant difference is that mediators tend to have a broader view of the disputes with the possible outcomes which might be novel or it can be inventive when contrasted in order to the traditional methods. Handling of the conflict is not an easy process because it can be stressful sometimes especially if the person is not habitual of it (Niriella,2016). Furthermore, the employers who climbed the ladder with another set of skills might be able to find themselves in a struggle associated with the addressing of the conflict. The challenges of the mediation while resolving the conflicts are as follows:

1.12.1 Low Confidence

Mediating is a role in which a person needs to be familiar with and know when to be active and when to let the others speak out. This can be difficult to interpret especially when a person is unfamiliar with the role and the individuals involved. The more experience acquired in this field will help to increase the confidence of the mediators involved (Niriella,2016). But the new mediators can also be thoughtful regarding their philosophies related to the conflict and making sure that they really believe in the foundation from which they have practiced. This kind of grounded clarity can help make up for the lack of experience while building confidence.

1.12.2 Lack of the Support and the Training

The field of mediation continues to evolve and new research has been leading towards the new sort of approaches (Niriella,2016). However, the learning can feel overwhelming for mediators as they have to constantly innovate and keep up to date with modern methods.

1.12.3 Lack of the Authority

Each of the parties which is involved in the mediation should be collaborating on the solution but it depends on the authority of the ones that are involved. Some of the solutions might require the approval from the employer, complicating the handling of the confrontation at the place (Niriella,2016). This can often impede the process of the mediation and slow it down.

1.12.4 Disagreement on the Vital Issues

The conflict resolution among the employees is most satisfactory when the mediator pays attention and listens to the issues of the parties that are required to have dispute resolution and facilitates consensus on the main problems (Niriella,2016). If the mediator is unable to aid in the disputing parties reaching the mutual understanding they shall be continuing their efforts before jumping to the next blue print otherwise trust might vanish and there are chances the conflict may again re-ignite.

1.13 Possibility of Ensuring Forgiveness and Mediation in Dispute Resolution

When both sides of the conflict share a similar attitude regarding the importance, shape and value of forgiveness, the difficult long journey towards forgiveness can culminate in reconciliation. Forgiveness is the sub process of the resolution which is related to the conflict and the reconciliation and could be intentionally integrated into the process related to the resolution

of the deep-rooted conflicts (Fincham, 2016). Furthermore, it is not the one-shot process or the act, it can be a part of an ongoing process or the culmination of the process of the attempts that were previously made towards reconciliation. Forgiveness tends to break the cycle of violence; despair and hate which is particularly pronounced in protracted conflicts.

Forgiveness can work towards compromise, it plays an associating job in changing temporary social orders rising out of contention. Forgiving is one method of recuperating one's own self confidence. Tutu says forgiving means forsaking your entitlement to take care of the culprit in his own coin, however it is a misfortune that frees the person in question." (Fincham, 2016). The request for absolution might be seen as a demonstration of embarrassment and along these lines hurt the arguing party's status. Then again, the casualty who is approached to allow pardoning may feel that "to excuse is to give up the casualty job and the prizes that go with it, for example, "the ability to initiate culpability, to request conciliatory sentiments and repayments or to look for discipline of the culprit."

Frequently, casualties and their families are compelled to continue with the errands of ordinary living without the advantage of reflection on the past. These individuals may deliberately recall nothing of previous occasions, on the grounds that the day-by-day injury they keep on encountering may just have become standardised or more than likely they have settled on a cognizant choice to dismiss reality encompassing the past, as seen wilfully ignorant and revisionism (Fincham, 2016). It can be comprehended from late examination that the vast majority who encountered the segment riots in the Indian subcontinent regularly needed not to resuscitate recollections of such injury and made a type of neglect as a protective methodology.

A definitive motivation behind forgiveness is rebuilding of connections and the restoration of associations with the local area. General acknowledgments and looking for and allowing absolution make another measurement to fixing broken connections. In places like Gujarat where the shared interests have been raised for political benefit, and past brutality of slaughter extents have cracked public relations, it is just through a course of aggregate remorse that compromise will be conceivable. It would be fitting for an individual like Narendra Modi, who is currently in a politically solid situation, to apologise for the state-coordinated viciousness that occurred in 2002 (Fincham, 2016). All the more as of late, there was far and wide judgment of the Sri Lankan Government on the abundances submitted by it on the regular citizen Tamil populace in its last fight against the Tigers, one that truly requested a statement of regret. Conciliatory sentiments when done at the proper time are valuable.

The genuineness of such expressions of remorse additionally ought to be felt by the people in question. Absolution stays the main expectation in circumstances where customary compromise thoughts chiefly based on judicious decision suppositions are lacking advisers for compromise. Thus, it is important to mix the inner voice of individuals through restoring their accounts and go through a course of social mending (Fincham, 2016).

In aggregate, the focusing of a governmental issue of memory, lament, statement of regret, pardoning, and restitution has further ramifications for compromise and post-struggle harmony building. This doesn't imply that absolution and demonstrations of remorse in themselves can fill in alternatives for genuine arrangements or discourse. All things being equal,

they can give an ideal setting wherein arrangements can occur without power contemplations, without bartering, where the force of reason is enhanced by the force of heart or sympathy.

The way where these less used human resources are permitted to practice in individual social settings may absolutely change. I might want to end by saying that a culture of pardoning or the advancement of propensities for the heart ought to likewise establish a fundamental component of a culture of harmony and one of the objectives of harmony schooling (Fincham, 2016). The new change in accentuation from compromise to struggle change is unquestionably a welcome advancement in that it tries to join pardoning and expression of remorse as key components of compromise. In any case, absolution and related qualities can't be foisted on social orders from somewhere else. As Lederach (1996) said, *"getting struggle and creating fitting models of dealing with it will essentially be established in, and should regard and draw from, the social information on a group."*

1.14 Types of Mediation

1.14.1 Facilitative Mediation

According to Harmon-Darrow et al. (2020), in facilitative mediation (which is also sometimes referred to as traditional mediation), a professional mediator is often found to assist or facilitate the parties under a conflict within the negotiation process. The authors further stated that instead of imposing a decision or making recommendations, the focus of the mediator in the facilitative mediation process is to motivate disputants in reaching a voluntary solution for their dispute by exploring deeper interests of each other. Moreover, in the process of facilitative

mediation, the mediator is also noted to keep his/her own opinions or views related to the conflict hidden (Lohvinenko et al., 2021).

1.14.2 Evaluative Mediation

Another type of mediation that is often utilised under dispute resolution and stands in direct contrast to facilitative mediation is the evaluative mediation process. In the study of McCorkle and Reese (2018), evaluative mediation has been explained as a type of mediation where the mediators are found to make suggestions and recommendations to the parties in the conflict. Moreover, unlike facilitative mediation, the mediators also express their views/opinions in evaluative mediation.

García et al. (2019) found in their study that in evaluative mediation, the mediators rather than paying attention to the underlying interest of the parties who are involved in the conflict are observed to help the parties in making their determinations fairly. Moreover, they also help the parties in assessing the legal benefits of their arguments. Furthermore, this type of mediation is also often utilised under court-mandated mediation where attorneys in the court can be considered as evaluative mediators who are found to possess legal expertise within the area of conflict or dispute (Goldman, 2016).

1.14.3 Transformative Mediation

Transformative mediation was first described under the book “*The Promise of Mediation*” which was published in 1994 by Joseph P. Folger and Robert A. Baruch Bush where the authors stated that in this type of mediation, the mediator focuses on empowering the parties to resolve their conflicts (Folger and Bush, 1994). Moreover, the mediator in this mediation

process also encourages the parties or disputants to recognise each other's interests and needs. Transformative mediation is also deeply rooted within the facilitative mediation tradition. This process ambitiously aims to enhance the relationship of the parties by transforming them through the process of acquiring the needed skills, which the parties require for making constructive change (Folger and Simon, 2017).

1.15 Stages of the Mediation Process

Upon analysing the existing literature, it can be inferred that the process of mediation and conflict resolution typically comprises seven stages (McCorkle and Reese, 2018; Mulcahy, 2020). Stages 1 to 4 and 6 to 7 are typically carried out in joint sessions that are held for resolving the conflicts. Moreover, the focus of these stages also tends to vary since stages 1 till 4 typically focus on the present and the past, while stages 6 till 7 give attention to the future (McCorkle and Reese, 2018). The mediator in all these stages helps the parties in defining their own needs and interests and understanding those of the other disputants/parties. In addition to this, referral to the mediation is typically held following a conference (Shamir, 2016).

1.15.1 Preparation and Opening Statement of Mediator – Stage 1

In the first stage of the mediation process, the opening statement usually comprises a brief description of the role of the participants and the mediator. This also includes a brief description of the ground rules and the process of mediation (McCorkle and Reese, 2018).

1.15.2 Mediators Summaries and Parties' Statement – Stage 2

In this stage, the parties within the conflict are generally found presenting their statements of the dispute from their own perspectives (Charkoudian et al., 2019). Here the

statements that are given by the parties are also recorded and summarised back by the mediator who checks the accuracy of the statement by consulting the parties. In the study of Mulcahy (2020), several benefits were provided by the authors related to this process, one of which relates to the potential of creating a positive social atmosphere during dispute resolution that can also be considered as conducive to effective negotiation.

Another benefit of this procedure is linked with providing assurance to the parties that their opinions, as well as concerns, will be heard by everyone, including the mediator. Moreover, this procedure also benefits the negotiation process by offering opportunities for an appreciation of the perspectives of the parties. Furthermore, options for resolution and emerging needs are also acknowledged under this stage of the mediation process, which are also later utilised while resolving the dispute (Faulkes, 2018).

1.15.3 Listing and Identification of Issues (Agenda Setting) – Stage 3

In stage 3 of the mediation process, the utilisation of a whiteboard or equivalent is typically observed during conflict resolution that assists the parties in referring to the issues or important topics during the mediation process (McCorkle and Reese, 2018). The listed issues on whiteboards also assist in forming the basis for more cooperative problem-solving and effective negotiation between the parties (Mulcahy, 2020) while the topics during the negotiation are expressed in mutual or neutral terms.

1.15.4 Joint Exploratory Discussions – Stage 4

Here the parties in a dispute are encouraged to focus on a topic for discussion. Moreover, they are also asked to conduct negotiations from the list of important issues. While conducting joint exploratory discussions, the mediator is also found encouraging the parties to contact or

communicate with each other directly. This again benefits the parties in the dispute in further clarifying their needs and interests to each other (Stitt, 2016).

1.15.5 Conducting Private Meetings – Stage 5

During this stage, parties in the dispute are again given an opportunity to express their views and provide information to the mediator privately if they are found to feel more comfortable in communicating privately with the mediator rather than in joint sessions (Faulkes, 2018). Such private meetings also facilitate the parties in preparing for negotiations and generating options that help in further ensuring that the particular proposals in the dispute remain realistic.

1.15.6 Joint Negotiation – Stage 6

Joint negotiations that are conducted in stage 6 of the mediation process assist in providing a basis for joint problem-solving and it also allows the parties to explore the agreement. Moreover, this process is usually conducted after private meetings (and even after those joint sessions that are conducted in the earlier stages of the mediation process) where necessary (McCorkle and Reese, 2018).

1.15.7 Final Session – Stage 7

Within the final stage of the mediation process, the parties are found to meet together in a final session for discussing issues and possible solutions or options for resolution in the presence of the mediator (McCorkle and Reese, 2018). Here the mediator is also found to facilitate the final negotiations between the parties in order to fine-tune the agreement. Moreover, in this stage, the mediation process can be terminated or adjourned by the mediator (Stitt, 2016).

1.16 Benefits of Mediation Process

There are several advantages that can be realised by the parties from the mediation process while resolving their conflicts or disputes. For instance, one such benefit that was highlighted in the article by Hațegan (2020) is linked with the preservation of the relationships. In this regard, the author stated that several disputes or conflicts that tend to occur between the parties often arise within the context of ongoing relationships. Thus, the mediation settlements that are found to be carried out within the mediation process assist the parties by addressing their interests. This, in turn, allows them to preserve their working relationships in such a manner that cannot be made possible within a procedure associated with win/lose decision-making.

Similarly, McCorkle and Reese (2018) have also stated that mediation can assist the parties in terminating their working relationships in a more amicable manner. Another benefit of the mediation process is linked with the greater degree of control that it offers to the parties in terms of resolving their dispute. Here authors like Terris (2016) and Mononyane (2020) have stated that when parties negotiate their own settlements during the mediation process, they are able to exert more control over the outcomes of their conflicts. Moreover, the mediation process also ensures that the parties are given an equal say within the dispute resolution process, which again helps the parties in reaching a mutually agreeable solution for their conflict (Amar, 2021).

Likewise, another advantage of the mediation process is linked with arriving at mutually satisfactory results. In this regard, Harmon-Darrow et al. (2020) have contended that when parties or disputants try to resolve their conflicts with the help of a mediator, they feel more satisfied with the solutions that they create to address their problems. This approach is also

considered more beneficial with regard to ensuring an effective conflict resolution as opposed to those procedures where the solutions for resolving the conflicts are imposed by third-party decision-makers (Petrean, 2018).

1.17 Summary of the Chapter

As can be seen from the literature review, it is clear that conflicts and conflict resolution strategies are considered as crucial factors for any organisation. Whenever conflicts occur in the organisational working environment, they can have a negative impact on the performance of employees and create a bad image of the organisation. Certain factors that contribute to creating conflicts are work overload, miscommunications, jurisdictions ambiguities and unclear job responsibilities (Subhan, 2018). Similarly, there are certain ways in which these conflicts can be resolved such as through the negotiation process, the mediation process and the use of forgiveness to reach deep, meaningful and long lasting resolution.

Chapter 2 – Research Methodology

2.1 Introduction

The research methodology is the specific procedures or techniques that are applied in order to select, analyse, process and identify the information relating to a topic. The methodology section will give the reader a critical analysis of the overall validity and reliability of the results (Langkos, 2014). The research methodology systematically brings the solution to the research issue. It could be understood as the science of studying the way research is carried out.

In the research methodology chapters, the writer discusses the various research approaches that have been used in finding and interpreting the data related to the topic. In addition to this, the research methodology chapters have been constructed in different sections. The first section defines the research philosophies; the second section elaborates on the approaches; the third section focuses on the strategies; the fourth section states the research choices while the fifth section is the time horizon and finally the sixth approach examines the techniques and procedures.

2.2 Research Design

The function of the research design is to make sure that the evidence is obtained rationally and unambiguously as possible. The investigation project reflects the chosen plan, which participates in the dissimilar mechanisms of the investigation in an intelligible, understandable, rational way and constitutes information group, measurement, and analysis (Saunders et al., 2007). The investigate onion model was proposed by Saunders; Thornhill and

Lewis in the book the Research Methods for Business Standards. Additionally, this model aims to explain the different stages of writing the dissertation in order to aid the student to create a better organised methodology. The model describes the stages that researchers must go through when designing practical methods. Through the effort of examination and likeness, the themes linked to assortment and group are found on the figure below.

The research onion proposed by Sanders categorises the research into the following sections. The first section of the research design is the research philosophy. The research philosophy is defined as the belief about the way in which the data is regarded as the phenomenon should be gathered; analysed and then used. Moreover, the term epistemology opposite to doxology encompasses the numerous philosophies of the research approach. The second section of the onion research is the approaches of the research (Saunders et al., 2007). The research approaches are the plan and the procedures which contain the steps of the broader assumptions in order to detail the methods of the collection of the data along with the analysis and interpretation of the data. The research approaches are further categorised into the following two types: the first one is the approach for the data collection and the second one is the approach for the reasoning as well as the analysis. The third section according to the Saunders Onion research is the strategies of the research. Additionally, a research strategy is defined as a step-by-step plan of the action that provides the direction of the thoughts and the efforts which enables the researcher to conduct the research in a systematic way and on schedule in order to produce a high quality of results with detailed reporting. In addition to this, it has enabled one to stay focused; reduce the frustration and most importantly save time with the resources. The fourth section is about the research choices and the fifth section is about the time horizon

(Saunders et al., 2007). The time horizon is defined as how much time is required in order to complete the research of the particular topic. Finally, the sixth section is about the techniques and the procedures of the research. This section of the research methodology deals with the data collection and the analysis of the data. In terms of the present study, the researcher is going to use this Saunder model, namely the research onion in order to conduct the research.

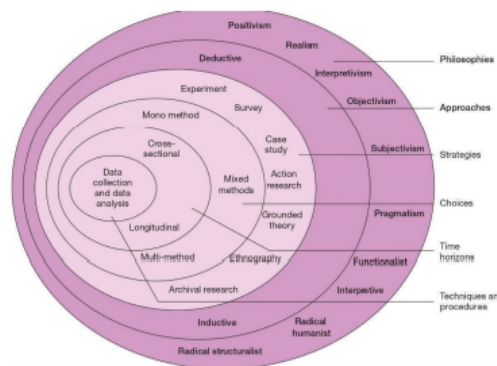


Figure 1: Research Union – Source: Saunders et al. (2007)

2.3 Research Philosophy

The term research philosophy refers to the beliefs regarding the way in which the data in relation to the phenomenon shall be gathered and then analysed and further used for the study. The researcher decides which type of philosophy shall be used as this is going to decide the type of data that needs to be gathered. The research philosophy is of numerous types. The first type of research philosophy is positivism. According to the positivists beliefs, the reality tends to be stable and tends to be observed and then described from the objective viewpoint that is without the interference with the phenomena being studied. Additionally, it argues that phenomena should be isolated and that the observations should be repeatable (Sahay,2016). Moreover, this

often involves the operation of the reality with the differences in only a single variable which is independent so in order to identify the regularities in and from the relationship amid, some of the constituent elements of the social world. In addition, the predictions are going to be made on the reasons of the previously observed and then you can explain the realities and their inter-relationships.

Interpreters believe that only through subjective interpretation and only by intervening in reality can we fully understand reality phenomenon study. their natural environment is the key to interpretive philosophy, and acknowledge that scientists cannot avoid the phenomena that affect them (Sahay, 2016). They confess that there might be multiple interpretations of reality, but insist that these explanations are themselves part of scientific knowledge pursued. Interpretivism has a strong tradition similar to positivism.

In the present study, the interpretivism approach is being applied. The research philosophy interpretivism is defined as the philosophical point of view, the researcher considers the views and the values of the people and with the help of their knowledge and views investigates the problem which is posted in the research (Žukauskas, 2018). Interpretivism is defined as the knowledge which is the basis of the abstract description of the meaning which is formed by the experiences of the individuals. This approach has been used in this study in order to find out the impacts of the mediation process and the concept of forgiveness in solving the dynamics of the conflict, focusing primarily on the work environment.

2.4 Research Approaches

There are two types of research approaches. The first approach is the inductive tactic, this is a more open ended method where the researcher can draw their own conclusions while looking at the topic from different angles. Inductive research tends to involve explorative designs from the observations and the development of the explanation philosophies for those designs via the series of the hypothesis.

The second approach is the deductive approach. The deductive approach is the choice of the researcher in order to conduct this present study. The deductive approach is defined as the development of the hypothesis with the help of the existing theory. After the collection of the data the researcher will design the research strategy in order to test the already stated hypothesis. Using the deductive method means the reasoning will go from the particular to the general (Opie, 2019). Not only this, but the deductive approach is beneficial when it comes to the testing of the hypothesis which is generated. Therefore, in the present study, the researcher has used a deductive approach in order to find out the relationship between forgiveness and the conflict in the workplace.

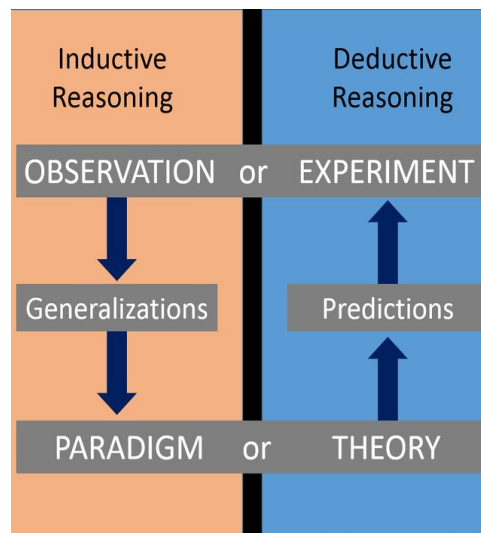


Figure 2: Research Approaches – Source: Karaman (2016)

2.5 Research Strategies

The term research strategies are defined as the method by which the information is gathered on which the study is going to be constructed. The research strategies are of the following types: case study; archival research; experiments and surveys. In the present study, the researcher has utilised the approach of the surveys. In surveys the researcher has used the interviews and the questionnaires for the collection of the data. Additionally, this approach is very beneficial when doing qualitative research as it is a great aid in exploring the research subject's behaviour; opinions; experiences and lastly the phenomenon etc (Clark, 2020). These interviews and questionnaires are usually open-ended questions as this helps provide in - depth information regarding the issue. It is for these reasons that the researcher has chosen this approach.

2.6 Research Choices

There were three research choices which we could have chosen from: mono; mixed and multi method. The mono method is defined as the choosing of one method, it can be a qualitative or a quantitative study. On the other hand, the mixed method is defined as the using of both the qualitative and quantitative study. While the multi method revolves around the selection of the approaches with more than one of the quantitative and qualitative. The researcher has used the multimethod and with this thematic analysis is done (Vass, 2017). Accordingly, the research

revolves around six themes which are the following; Development of inconsistencies between the goals, interests and expectations due to conflicts between the parties: Minor Conflicts do not require forgiveness as they do not cause personal damages: Mediation and forgiveness has a significant impact over the conflict resolution: conflict management and organisational performance and the centralisation is a conflict dynamic.

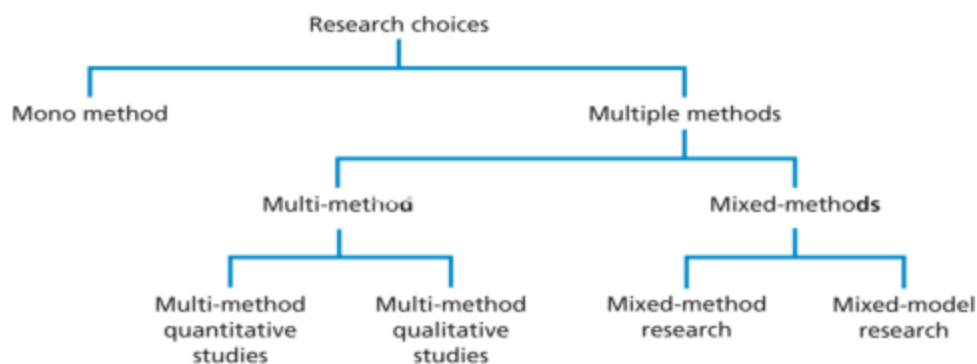


Figure 4: Research Choices – Source: Saunders et al. (2007)

2.7 Time Horizon

The time horizon is the time frame of the research which tends to be decided by the researcher. In addition to this, the time horizon is commonly of the two types: one is the cross sectional and the second is the longitudinal one. Both the longitudinal and the cross-sectional studies are studies which are related to the observational ones (Reilly, 2016). According to this it means that the researcher tends to be recording the information which is related to their subjects without the manipulation of the study environment. The benefit of the cross-sectional study is that it tends to be comparing the different population groups at the single point at the same time (Reilly, 2016). Another benefit of the cross-sectional study is that it tends to allow the researcher

to compare the different variables at the same time. Therefore, the researcher has used this time horizon in the present study.

2.8 Ethical Research

The credibility and the value of the study is dependent on the information which is obtained that is being ethical with that it's the moral and the ethical research strategies which are used in the duration of its complications. Additionally, the research must be guided via the ethics that is regarding both towards the access in order to inform and research the objects themselves. Moreover, the ethical research is related to the problem as the way the researcher is going to formulate and clarify the research design and the topic and the obtain the access also collects the data; processes and then store and analysed the data and in the end, write the conclusion that is according to the cultural morals and ethics (Saunders et al., 2007; Walliman, 2016; Bell & Waters, 2018). In addition to this, figure 1 has discussed the ethical issues which are present at the research stages. (Saunders et al., 2007). Furthermore, the study has been guided honestly and followed by ethical and moral parameters. In accordance with this, it was faithful to the specific and objective aspects without the biases to the nature and the sources of the respondents which also includes the data designs and the interpretation and the analysis. Specific guidelines have been followed in the duration of the study that contains the protection of the privacy of the data which is collected from the persons. In regards to this, the information that was obtained in the most reliable way is about the respondents via their answers.

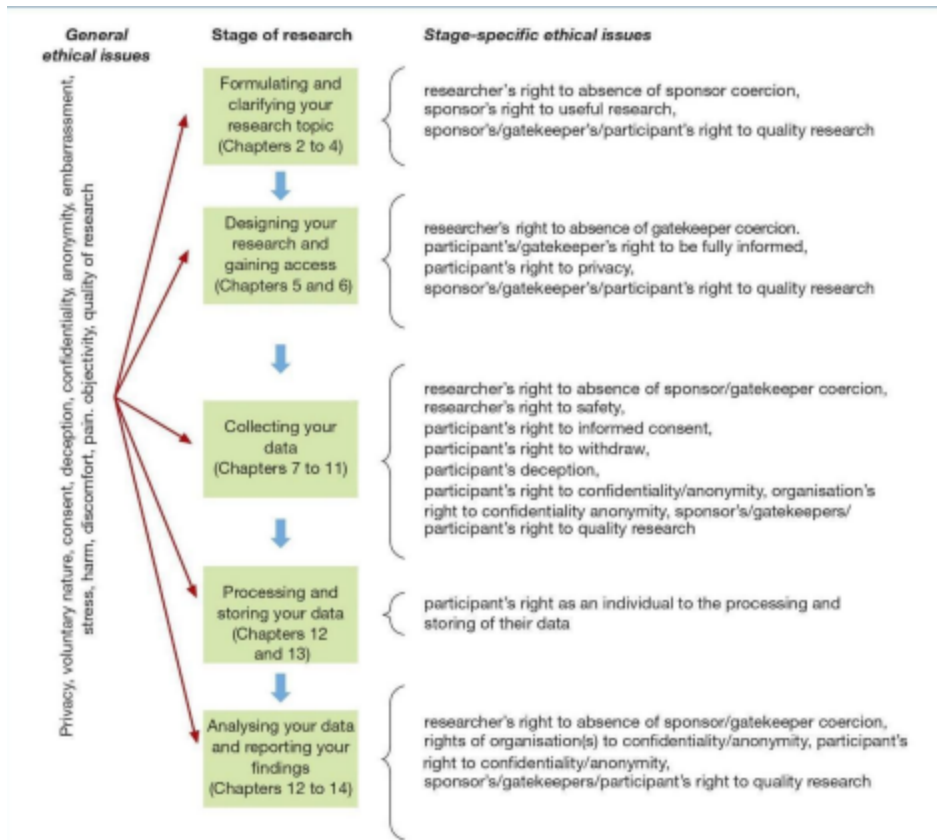


Figure 5: Research Ethics at each Stage - Source: Saunders et al. (2007)

2.9 Population and Sampling

In this research surveys and bibliographic methods have been taken as a sample on the basis of theories. The research questionnaires have been distributed among those who have a strong knowledge of dispute resolution and also those who do not have this prior knowledge. These include people who have studied this topic in university and people who work in the field. The sampling contains 100 respondents which includes 50 employees and 50 people who are managers or are in leadership positions.

2.10 Data Collection

In order to collect the information regarding the study, the data collection method used was the survey. The line of questioning in the survey is mixed which included open ended and closed ended questions. The closed ended questions which are included are Likert Scale questions. As already stated, the data was collected from the people who have a strong knowledge of dispute resolution and those that don't have this previous knowledge. Research bias can occur when a researcher skews the entire process towards a specific research outcome by introducing a systematic error into the sample data. In other words, it is a process where the researcher influences the systematic investigation to arrive at certain outcomes. We will try to avoid this research bias by carrying out the investigation on a wide spectrum of the population.

2.11 Data Analysis

The sample size of 100 people will be taken in the survey and the questionnaires will be distributed to them. Additionally, besides conducting analysis of the questionnaire, interviews have also been conducted to assess the effectiveness of forgiveness under the mediation process during conflict resolution and thematic analysis will be used to analyse the data from the interview.

2.12 Research Limitations

There are some limitations of this research study that have been taken into consideration by the researcher. One limitation of this research is that it has been conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, so there was an inability to conduct many face to face interviews and technology had to be utilised. Another limitation of this research study is that the attitudes and behaviours of the individuals cannot be measured accurately as the quick survey was taken into

account (Rey, and Extremera, 2016). However, an interpretivist epistemology is taken as a research approach on the basis of research nature.

2.13 Summary of the Chapter

In order to conclude, the chapter of the methodology has summarised the philosophies; approaches; strategies; choices and time horizon. In this chapter further discussion has been carried out on the population and sampling size in which two sampling methods have been used to collect the data, one is called surveys and the other is bibliographic. Questionnaires were distributed among the selected people for the study. In the data analysis a sample of 100 people was used for the research. The final discussion is on the limitations of the research study.

Chapter 3 – Presentation of the Data

In this chapter, the presentation of data that will be evaluated. This was a cross-sectional study. A cross-sectional study is both observational and behavioural research that evaluates the collected data over a time period in a sample that is the subset of the population. The information that is composed in the cross sectional study is from individuals from different professional people who both have and do not have prior knowledge of Dispute Resolution. The study of cross-sectional was the multimethod and also using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis helps to determine the pattern and behaviour of data that are most interesting and important for the study. In the survey format, fourteen questions are close-ended and five-questions are open-ended that are based on the research theme and identify the professional's people who have and do not have knowledge about Dispute Resolution . The survey was completed through Google Form.

In the first part of the survey, there are common close-ended questions like gender and age. The remaining close-ended questions are related to mediation, forgiveness and conflicts. It will help to identify the association between forgiveness and mediation. The remaining questions are open-ended to take information about their perspectives related to mediation, resolving the conflicts and forgiveness. It will help to determine the effective ways for resolving conflict (Green et al., 2019). For the analysis of close-ended questions, graphical representation will be used. The graphical representation of data helps to highlight the objectives of the study and avoid time wastage. It also helps to complete comparative analysis for rapid consideration and understanding. The pie chart will be used for graphical representation to evaluate the association between mediation and forgiveness. By using the pie chart, there are minimum requirements for further explanations. For the analysis of the open-ended question, thematic analysis will be utilised. Thematic research is a technique of research that could be utilised to discover and evaluate data. Thematic analysis is a flexible method that allows us to produce new concepts and perceptions that are derived by using data. The thematic analysis evaluates the outcomes by using different concepts and theories. The thematic analysis and graphical representations of the pie chart help to evaluate the data set and easily find the results.

Chapter 4 - Data Analysis and Findings

The current chapter has been prepared to conduct a detailed analysis of each question that was asked from the 100 respondents while conducting the survey for this research. As stated earlier, the data that has been collected for conducting the analyses under this chapter has been gathered from those respondents who have no information about the mediation process and also those who have prior knowledge. This has assisted in making the findings of this chapter

unbiased. For conducting analysis and presenting the findings of the study in order to accomplish its objectives, the chapter has been divided into 3 sections. In the first section, an analysis of the demographic questions has been presented in order to provide the details of the profile of the respondents. After this, the chapter has presented the analysis of each Likert-scale question that was asked from the research participants related to the variables of mediation, forgiveness, and conflicts. Finally, the last chapter provides a thematic analysis of the open-ended questions of the survey that were collected from the respondents to further assess the relationship between forgiveness and mediation in managing dynamic conflicts effectively. Thus, the analyses of these questions are as followed:

4.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Q1: Gender of the Participants

As can be seen from figure 6 in appendix 2, around 60 percent of the respondents who were found to participate in the survey were males. While around 40 percent of these research participants were females. However, it was also ensured that the people who were selected for this study had faced at least one conflict in their lives.

Q2: Age of the Participants

Most of the research participants who were found to participate in the research survey were noted to belong to the age group of 26 to 30 years (i.e., 41 percent). On the other hand, 29 percent of the research participants also had an age of 40 years or above while 11 percent of the

respondents were noted to belong from the age group of 31 to 40 years. Whereas, approximately 19 percent of the respondents who were observed to participate in the survey were observed to belong from the age group of 18 to 25 years (see figure 7 in appendices).

4.2 Mediation

Q1: Usefulness of Facilitative Mediation

As can be seen from figure 8 in appendix 2, when respondents were asked that whether facilitative mediation can be considered a highly useful process that can assist disputants to reach a mutually agreeable solution in a conflict, around 42 percent of them were noted to respond by strongly agreeing with the statement. Whereas, from the 100 respondents, 20 percent of them were also observed to agree with this statement. Similarly, 8 percent of the research participants were found to respond “neutral” to this statement and 19 percent of them were also noted to disagree with the statement. While only 11 percent of the respondents suggested that they strongly disagree with the statement. From these results, one can infer that most respondents considered facilitative mediation as a highly useful method of conflict resolution.

Q2: Effectiveness of Evaluative Mediation

Similarly, the results in figure 9 (see appendix 2) are indicating that when the research participants were inquired whether evaluative mediation can be considered as a highly effective conflict resolution process mainly due to the fact that it assists in offering a helpful second opinion to the disputants when their first expert fails to resolve their conflict, approximately 30 percent of the respondent were found to strongly agree with this statement. Similarly, 30 percent

of the respondents were also found to agree with this statement and 15 percent of them were noted to respond neutrally to this statement. Whereas, around 15 percent of the research participants were also noted to disagree with the statement and only 10 percent of them strongly disagreed with the statement during the survey.

Q3: Transformative Mediation

During the survey, when the research participants were questioned that whether transformative mediation can also be considered as a highly effective method for resolving disputes since it empowers parties to take responsibility for their own conflicts and motivates them to work collaboratively to reach a resolution, approximately 35 percent of them were noted to strongly agree with the statement. Likewise, 20 percent of the research participants also responded by saying “agree” to the statement and 5 percent of them were found to respond neutrally to this statement. On the other hand, 20 percent of the respondents were also observed to respond by marking “disagree” to this statement and again 20 percent of the respondents were found to strongly disagree with the statement. Overall, most respondents considered transformative mediation as a highly useful process in conflict resolution during the survey (see figure 10 in appendices).

Q4: Potential of Mediation in Promoting Forgiveness

To assess the usefulness of mediation as an effective democratic method, when respondents were asked whether it can be used in dealing with conflicts by promoting forgiveness and motivating the disputants to reach a resolution, approximately 55 percent of respondents were found to strongly agree to the statement. Whereas, 25 percent of the respondents were also noted to agree with the statement. On the other hand, 5 percent of the

respondents were also found to respond neutrally to this statement and 2 percent of them also disagreed with this statement. Whereas, around 13 percent of the research participants were also noted to strongly disagree with the statement. Overall, the results are indicating that most respondents found mediation as a useful process in promoting forgiveness and resolving conflicts (see figure 11 in appendix 2).

4.3 Forgiveness

Q5: Discomfort, Avoidance and Lack of Communication

In this section of the data analysis, the results of the questions/statements that were asked from the respondents related to the variable of forgiveness have been examined. As can be viewed from figure 12 (see appendix 2), when respondents completing the survey were asked whether discomfort, avoidance, and lack of communication between the parties are likely to persist when forgiveness is found to be missing under the mediation process for conflict resolution, around 65 percent of them were noted to strongly agree with this statement. Moreover, 15 percent of the research participants were also observed to agree with the statement. Whereas, 5 percent of them responded neutrally to the statement. While from 100 respondents, 12 percent of them responded to the statement by disagreeing with it and only 3 percent of them suggested that they strongly disagree with the statement.

Q6: Potential of Forgiveness in Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflicts

Similarly, while conducting the survey, when respondents were questioned whether forgiveness can be integrated into the mediation process effectively for resolving deep-rooted

disputes, approximately 50 percent of them responded by agreeing with the statement. Likewise, 20 percent of the respondents also strongly agreed with the statement. Whereas, 10 percent of the research participants were also observed to respond by disagreeing with the statement, while 11 percent of them strongly disagreed with the statement and only 9 percent of the research participants were not sure how to respond to the statement. These results clearly suggest that forgiveness can indeed be integrated into the mediation process for resolving deep-rooted conflicts (see figure 13 in appendices).

Q7: Potential of Forgiveness in eradicating Resentment

During the survey, when the research participants were asked whether forgiveness in the mediation process can help the parties effectively in giving up their resentment towards each other, around 36 percent of them strongly agreed with this statement. Likewise, 24 percent of the respondents also agreed with the statement. Whereas 16 percent of the research participants responded neutrally to this statement and around 14 percent of them disagreed with this statement. While only 10 percent of the research participants were noted to strongly disagree with the statement. As the majority of the respondents “*agreed*” or “*strongly agreed*” with the statement, one can infer that forgiveness can indeed help in eradicating resentment of the parties/disputants towards each other during the mediation process (see figure 14 in appendices).

Q8: Role of Forgiveness in Rebuilding Relationships between the Parties

As shown in figure 15 in appendix 2, when research participants were questioned whether forgiveness under the mediation process can assist or encourage the parties under a given dispute to rebuild their relationship, around 53 percent of the respondents were found to strongly agree with this statement. While 21 percent of the research participants also agreed with the statements and 5 percent of them were observed to respond neutrally to this statement. Whereas from 100 research participants, 6 percent of them were noted to disagree with the statement and only 5 percent of them responded by strongly disagreeing with the statement. These responses clearly highlight that in the mediation process, forgiveness can indeed motivate the parties in a given conflict to successfully rebuild their relationships.

4.4 Conflict

Q9: Effectiveness of Mediation in resolving Conflicts

In this section of the chapter, the responses to the questions that were asked from the respondents during the survey related to the variable of conflict have been thoroughly examined. From figure 16 (see appendix 2), it can be viewed that while conducting the survey, when research participants were asked whether the democratic method of mediation which is based on forgiveness can be considered as an effective way for reaching conflict resolution, around 49 percent of them were noted to strongly agree with the statement. Whereas, 21 percent of the research participants were also noted to agree with the statement. Moreover, 13 percent of the research participants were also found to reply neutrally to the statement and 10 percent of them

were also observed to disagree with the statement. While only 7 percent of the research participants were found to strongly disagree with the statement.

Q10: Forgiveness and Conflict Tactics

When the research participants were asked that whether forgiveness, as well as conflict tactics like compromise, aggression, and avoidance, can assist the parties in reaching a conflict resolution effectively, around 31 percent of them were noted to strongly agree with this statement, and 28 percent of them were also found to agree with the statement. Moreover, 10 percent of the respondents were also found to respond neutrally to the statement and 11 percent of them were observed to strongly disagree with the statement. Whereas around 20 percent of the respondents during the survey were found to reply “*strongly disagree*” while responding to the statement (see figure 17 in appendices).

Q11: Potential of Mediation in helping Disputants to regain Positive View of each other

Similarly, while conducting the survey, when research participants were inquired whether the mediation process that is based on forgiveness can help disputants in regaining a balanced and more positive view of each other during conflict resolution, around 61 percent of them were noted to strongly agree with the statement. Whereas, 11 percent of the research participants were also found to agree with the statement. 9 percent of the research participants during the survey also responded neutrally while replying to the statement. From 100 respondents, around 12 percent of them were also observed to disagree with this statement, and only 7 percent of them were found to strongly disagree with the statement. From these results, it can be inferred that

mediation based on forgiveness indeed plays a crucial role in helping the participants to gain a positive view of each other under conflict resolution (see figure 18 in appendices).

Q12: Potential of Forgiveness in enhancing Relationship Quality under Conflict Resolution

Finally, in figure 19 (see appendix 2), the results of the last close-ended question that was asked related to the variable of conflict have been presented. As can be seen from this figure, when respondents were questioned whether the use of forgiveness under the mediation process for resolving conflicts can assist in enhancing the relationship quality between the parties, around 68 percent of them were noted to strongly agree to this statement. While 20 percent of them were also found to agree to this statement and approximately 5 percent of these respondents were noted to reply neutrally to the statement. Whereas only 4 percent of the respondents were noted to disagree with the statement and 3 percent of them were also found to strongly disagree with the statement. From these results, it can be inferred that the mediation process indeed assists the parties in enhancing the quality of their relationship under conflict resolution.

4.5 Interview Questions – Thematic Analysis

Q1: Use of Forgiveness under the Mediation Process for Dealing with Conflicts

Under this section of the chapter, the responses of the research participants were examined that they were found to give during the interview. In this regard, when the research participants were inquired that whether forgiveness can be utilised under the mediation process for dealing with the conflicts, they were noted to provide the following responses:

- i. *“If the parties are seeking the help of a mediator, then it should be the duty of the mediator to encourage the parties to forgive each other in order to resolve the conflict.”*
- ii. *“If the issue is not that big then both the parties should forgive each other and move on with their relationship... Resolving conflicts over trivial issues is something that both the parties in a conflict should do by themselves by forgiving each other.”*
- iii. *“I believe that under any conflicting situations that happen in the workplace, managers or supervisors should always encourage their workers to forgive each other.”*

Q2: Strategies for Resolving Conflicts Effectively

Similarly, during the interview, when the research participants were questioned about the type of strategies that can be applied by the disputants for resolving their conflicts effectively, they were found to give the following responses:

- i. *“The best ways for the parties to resolve the conflict is by approaching an experienced mediator, who can listen to the arguments of both the parties and provide a mutually beneficial solution for resolving their conflicts.”*
- ii. *“I think parties should use the strategies associated with transformative mediation... This is because this technique empowers the disputant to take responsibility for resolving their own dispute by enabling them to set aside their differences and work together in order to reach a mutually beneficial solution.”*

- iii. *“Well... I think that people should take the help of a third person while resolving their conflict. This can help them to reach an impartial resolution as the third person would help them in giving them his or her neutral opinion.”*

Q3: Potential Benefits of Forgiveness under Conflict Resolution and Mediation Process

When research participants were asked about the potential benefits that can be obtained by the parties by forgiving each other during the mediation process for resolving conflicts, the following are some of the responses that they were noted to give while answering this question:

- i. *“Forgiveness assists the parties by eradicating their resentment for each other... This also allows the parties to even continue their relationships in the long-run.”*
- ii. *“Forgiving each other makes a person feel better and it even enhances the image of an individual in the eyes of another. This also helps individuals to work with each other in order to improve their relationships and mitigate the risk of conflicts between the parties in the future as well.”*
- iii. *“Forgiveness should always be considered as the first option by the parties for resolving their conflicts... I believe that it is the most effective way for resolving disputes and rebuilding relationships between the parties as it can help them to give up their resentment towards each other.”*

Q4: Assistance from Third Party

When respondents were asked that do they think that taking help from a third party is an effective way for resolving conflicts, the research participants were found to give the following replies while answering this question:

- i. *“Approaching a third party can indeed be an effective way for resolving conflicts, since these third parties in most cases tend to give their neutral opinion or judgement for resolving the conflicts for which they try to suggest mutually beneficial solutions to the parties for resolving their dispute.”*
- ii. *“Third parties should be approached by the disputants during serious conflicts as they tend to be highly experienced in providing good solutions for resolving a conflict. In most cases, they help the disputants in providing a mutually beneficial or acceptable solution without favouring any single dispute during the conflict resolution process... So, I believe approaching third parties is indeed an effective way for resolving conflicts.”*
- iii. *“I might not say that contacting third parties will always lead to conflict resolution but they can indeed assist the disputants to reach a mutually beneficial solution by giving their impartial or neutral opinion for solving the conflict... However, it is important for these third parties to remain objective while giving their opinions or else the disputant might not accept their proposed solutions.”*

Q5: Potential of Forgiveness in Rebuilding Relationship

When the research participants were asked about the ways in which forgiveness helps the parties under a given conflict to rebuild their relationship with each other, they were observed to give the following replies while answering this question:

- i. *“Yes, forgiveness indeed assists the parties in letting go of their negative emotions. This, as a result, also helps the parties under a given conflict to again move forward with their relationship with optimism and freedom.”*

- ii. *“When people forgive each other in a conflict, it automatically eradicates their negative emotions that they have for each other and gives them the opportunity to rebuild their relationship again.”*
- iii. *“When parties forgive each other under a given conflict, they become more open to understanding each other’s problems, as well as sorrows that are caused by their conflicts... I believe that this motivates the parties to collaborate and work with each other again to find a mutually beneficial solution for their problems by letting go of the past.”*
- iv. *“Forgiveness allows the parties to prevent escalating their conflict as they become empathetic towards each other which also motivates them to understand each other’s problems and work collaboratively to find the best possible solution.”*
- v. *“Forgiveness helps the parties to eradicate the resentment that they have for each other and this also gives them the opportunity to rebuild their relationship in a positive way.”*

Chapter 5 – Discussion

Within this chapter, a detailed discussion has been provided on the findings that have been obtained from the conducted analyses related to the whole role of mediation process and forgiveness for resolving conflicts. By looking at the findings of this research, one can infer that it is highly in line with the previous literature where forgiveness has been supported and encouraged within the mediation process for resolving disputes.

For instance, the respondents during the interview and survey clearly indicated that forgiveness helps the parties in eliminating issues associated with discomfort, avoidance, as well as a lack of communication which commonly occur due to resentment between the disputants. Upon comparing this finding with the previous literature, one can infer that it is consistent with the findings that were proposed by Hancock (2016) where the author has stated that forgiveness assists the parties in the mediation process to eradicate their grudges and motivates them to work towards rebuilding their relationship again.

The results of the survey also demonstrated that when forgiveness is utilised within the mediation process, it can help the parties in resolving their deep-rooted conflicts. Again, this finding is also aligning with the arguments that have been made by Singer (2018) where the author asserted that when disputants under any conflict forgive each other, they automatically let go of their desires for retaliation and revenge. This, as a result, assists the parties in resolving their deep-rooted conflicts effectively.

The findings of this research have also highlighted that several mediation techniques can be highly effective in the conflict resolution process. For instance, one such technique for which the majority of the research participants found to show strong support in terms of promoting its use in resolving conflicts was related to facilitative mediation. A significant percentage of the respondents were found to suggest that facilitative mediation is a highly effective conflict resolution process primarily due to the benefits that it offers in the form of a helpful third party who aids and facilitates the parties in resolving their conflict. This finding also supports the argument that was made by García et al. (2019) where the authors supported this mediation

strategy by stating that it can assist the parties in making their determinations fairly, which in turn, can help them to resolve their conflicts within their relationships.

Evaluative mediation was also supported by the respondents for resolving conflict and one of the reasons why the respondents supported the use of evaluative mediation under the conflict resolution process was the legal expertise which the mediator can provide for resolving the conflict. This was also an argument made by García et al. (2019) where the authors stated that it helps the parties in assessing the legal benefits of their arguments. This process can be helpful in assessing and identifying the merits of a dispute and can provide different recommendations regarding its resolution. The participants can come to an agreement with the aid of an expert.

Additionally, strong support was also observed for transformative mediation among the respondents, and this mediation technique was supported by the respondents for its benefits in terms of empowering the disputants for resolving conflicts which was supported by Folger and Bush (1994). Another reason why the research participants supported the transformative mediation technique under the conflict resolution process can be linked with the postulation that was made by Folger and Simon (2017) who state that it helps the parties in recognising their needs and interests. The process can help the parties to enhance their relationship by transforming them through the process of acquiring the needed skills for making constructive change within their relationships. This process focuses on a back-to-basics approach towards mediation. A strong majority of respondents expressed their agreeableness towards this form of

mediation. Respondents believed that having an ability to change/transform their relationship was more beneficial than focusing on just reaching a simple settlement.

The findings that have been obtained while conducting surveys and interviews for this research have also shown that the mediation process (especially when it is accompanied by forgiveness) can help the parties in successfully resolving their conflicts and even encourage them to enhance the quality of their relationships. Again, this finding that was observed during the interviews and the survey is also highly in line with the findings that were made by Hațegan (2020) where the author stated that the mediation process can allow the parties to preserve their relationship in the long run. Here the respondents during the survey and the interviews also supported the use of mediation and forgiveness for resolving conflicts due to their benefits in terms of helping the parties in understanding each other and then working collaboratively in order to address their interests.

The results of this research have also concluded that when forgiveness is promoted or used by the parties within the mediation process, they are more likely to resolve their dispute promptly and it also aids them in de-escalating their conflict since the parties become more encouraged to let go of their grudges or resentment. Moreover, from the findings of this research, it can also be inferred that the parties become more motivated to rebuild and even enhance their relationship when they forgive each other during the mediation process rather than just relying on the support or help of the third parties (including the mediation processes or techniques that have been explained in this research) for resolving their conflicts. One possible explanation behind this can be found in the article of Stitt (2016) where the author stated that when people

forgive each other in any conflicting situation they feel better about themselves and become more prone to understand each other's problems.

This also helps the parties to work collaboratively with each other, resolve their misunderstandings, as well as the problems within their relationship. Moreover, this also motivates them to enhance the quality of their relationship (Harmon-Darrow et al., 2020), which they might not be able to do by just solely relying on the mediation process. Thus, from these findings, it can be inferred that there is a positive relationship between mediation and forgiveness and they can both work in favour of the disputants for resolving their dynamic conflicts.

Conclusion

The current research has effectively examined the element of conflict resolution based on forgiveness within the mediation process. It has also studied what other factors can be used for conflict resolution. This study investigated the popular method of intervention regarding managing clashes based on arrangements and forgiveness. This research has used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies which is also known as a mixed method approach.

This research has used cross-sectional data that is based on a specific time period. The target population or respondents of this research were both those people that have knowledge of conflict resolution and those that did not have previous knowledge of the techniques. The sample size was based on 100 responses in which 50 employees and 50 people who have leadership positions were targeted. The data analysis was conducted based on thematic analysis for qualitative data and simple demographic analysis was conducted for quantitative data.

The presence of conflict can arise from any problem or issue between two parties and can lead towards an adverse working environment. The organisation needs to work effectively to handle conflicts and ensure they don't have a negative influence on the organisation's success and performance. This process can be achieved by a culture which appreciates and facilitates mediation practices with a focus on finding common ground and forgiveness between the conflicted parties. Conflict situations can be helpful in some scenarios if handled correctly. If an organisation is faced with major conflictual issues and dynamics, they should always try and seek win-win scenarios if possible in which both parties can be happy in agreeing to a mutual settlement or even more beneficial than this would be both parties developing a deep resolution through forgiveness and forging a new relationship together.

Mediation and forgiveness are vital factors in helping towards mitigating conflicts and reaching a new level of relationship. Chapter one of this research has emphasised the importance of these factors. Conflictual dynamics have also been identified in this research. Conflicts will often occur when the first party engages in some actions and behaviours and the opposing party reacts negatively based on those actions and behaviours. These dynamics may include perception of both parties as this is a major factor that can affect the behaviours and actions of people. Conflict can also be identified as a mixture of attitude, behaviour, and contradiction. This shows that these three factors can be the prior factors that can create a conflict between two parties.

This research has included various effective and useful information that can help the researcher in understanding the concept of positive, constructive and humanistic conflict

resolution and its management. There are many factors that can help in conducting positive conflict management and mitigate the difficulties between two people. The presence of facilitative mediation is a hugely helpful and significant factor or process that can help people in mitigating a conflict and dispute. This process can help people effectively reach a mutually agreed resolution while also developing their conflict resolution skills. The results have shown that the vast majority of respondents showed agreeableness towards the mediation process and the ability of forgiveness to aid the conflict resolution process. Mediation suspends the judicial normative logic, encourages dialogue and the autonomy of the conflicting ones. Mediation seeks to reestablish communication and this can be done through forgiveness. Mediation and forgiveness have similar logics in the sense of transforming social relations with respect to conflict, but they do not necessarily represent the same thing. Mediation may result in forgiveness, but not always resignation, submission or transaction will imply an act of forgiveness. Not every agreement made in mediation is based on forgiveness, reciprocal concessions can be anchored in the objective action of the commitment and based on respect between the parties, so that communication is reestablished and relations are maintained.

The participants of this research were highly in favor of using a mediation approach or process to promote forgiveness between the conflicted people or parties. More than 80 percent of the respondents agreed that the mediation process can play a significant part in allowing people to develop a better relationship into the future. For instance, when people are engaged in a conflict and try to resolve it on a settlement only basis then it cannot guarantee any future positive relationships. However, when people are encouraged towards forgiving each other then

it can help in building their relationships even after highly conflictual events. The reason behind this positive relationship is that when people are ready and brave enough to forgive each other then it can lead towards a positive and effective environment between the parties.

Likewise, the presence of discomfort, lack of communication, and avoidance between the parties were also identified as major factors that adversely affected their degree of forgiveness. For instance, almost 80 percent of the respondents showed that the absence of these factors was a major concern and it ensured that forgiveness was missing between the conflicted parties. The respondents were highly concerned that when two parties are not showing any signs of communication, collaboration, and comfort then it is almost impossible to conduct positive conflict resolution. These factors can be present due to the increase in informal exchanges and weak collective identity between different members of two parties.

The presence of forgiveness can be significantly used in solving the deep-rooted conflicts as more than 50 percent of the respondents have shown that the presence of mediation can lead towards forgiveness. This factor can further lead towards mitigating the resentment between two parties. For example, when people are capable of forgiving then it can decrease their resentment with each other. Also, it is necessary that the mediators between conflicted parties are highly trained as a lack of training can sometimes lead towards an even worse scenario. There should be an emphasis placed on developing the skills and abilities of the mediators to significantly manage an arising conflict and also try to avoid it all before even happening.

The current research has emphasized the cooperation theory and this states that a similar set of actions from a party can eventually lead towards a similar response from another party.

The prime example of this theory is when one party behaves negatively and adversely towards another party then as a result it creates a conflict between those parties. So, it shows that the creation or occurrence of a conflict is based on the mutual relationship with each other. When the mutual relationship is based on a positive environment then it can help to negate or avoid the conflictual situations. However, when the parties are engaged in various issues and mutual discomfort, this will ultimately enhance the presence of conflicts. Hence, this shows the importance of mediation and forgiveness as these factors can help in positive conflict resolution that can either lead towards a mutual settlement and/or proper forgiveness between the parties.

A more useful and highly recommended approach is that managers should conduct conflict management training/programs that can reduce the occurrence of conflicts. Also, in the presence of any conflict the managers should promote dialogue and if possible forgiveness as it can lead towards a new/transformed relationship between the parties and the workplace environment. Similarly, the managers should always remain very calm and analyse the conflict responsibly to identify the root cause or person which caused the conflict. One of the most important characteristics of a mediator is adopting a neutral approach and language in resolving a conflict as it can help in reaching a mutually agreed scenario. Finally, the organisation should be brave enough to separate the person from the problem and try to motivate those people to work together through positive conflict resolution.

The future research recommendations are also present that can help future researchers to conduct a relatively more effective and useful study. For instance, future researchers can use longitudinal data regarding different industries and conduct more in-depth research. Also, future researchers can conduct research based on cross-cultural environments and can examine their

conflict dynamics as well. Similarly, there are a few other factors that can be studied for conflict resolution and it includes transformation leadership, organisational citizenship behaviour, organisational culture, and human resource strategies. Future researchers can also conduct a study based on a relatively large sample size that can help in identifying a more general perspective of conflict resolution based on mediation and forgiveness.

Reflection

The current research has been based on conflict dynamics and how it can be managed or resolved based on mediation and forgiveness. During the research process, the study has helped me understand the scenario of conflict and how it can arise especially in an organisational setting and what are the best methods to deal with these conflicts. I am also now effectively able to understand the adverse effects and consequences of a conflict and how it can disrupt the organisational processes and personal relationships among the employees as well. So, this research is and will be highly helpful for me to highlight any future conflictual situations and the research I have conducted will help me to positively handle such situations based on my in depth understanding of the topic. This research has also identified the importance of the mediation process and the possibility of forgiveness and how these factors work in a conflicting situation.

This research is highly useful and I believe that it could be helpful in any industry and organisation as it provides a relatively general perspective towards the understanding of conflicts and their resolution. There were various research methods and techniques that were used in conducting this research and these provided helpful results and conclusions regarding the research topic. This research has helped me in fulfilling a gap of understanding regarding this topic and eventually enhanced the understanding based on the results. This research will be helpful for both academicians/researchers and practitioners/managers to further improve and develop their understanding. As this research has included an in-depth literature review it can help academics in having a relatively more effective and knowledge-based understanding of this topic. This research has also provided useful insights into the shape of results, conclusions and recommendations the practitioners can use to improve their strategic aspect of this topic. The knowledge gained from this study can help practitioners create strategies that can enlighten the employees to provide facilitated mediation and forgiveness in the presence of conflictual events. To conclude, I can say that this research has significantly helped me in increasing my knowledge of the topic and eventually developing my conflict resolution skills and abilities.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire and Interview Questions

Please spare few minutes to fill this questionnaire:

Purpose

This research has an academic purpose only. 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

This research and the main objective is to understand the dynamics of conflict and its social bias in understanding human relationships for conflict resolution and in the mediation process, including forgiveness as personal development.

Concerns

In case you have any doubts or concerns in relation to this research, you are welcome to contact the research candidate Gardênia Vasconcelos(gardeniavcs@gmail.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.

- **Gender:**

1. Male
2. Female

- **Age:**

1. 18 to 25 years
2. 26 to 30 years
3. 31 to 40 years
4. 40 years or above

Conflicts	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The democratic method of mediation which is based on forgiveness can be	1	2	3	4	5

considered as an effective way for reaching conflict resolution.					
2. Forgiveness, as well as conflict tactics like avoidance, aggression, and compromise, can help disputants in reaching a resolution under their conflicts effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Mediation process based on forgiveness under conflict resolution can help disputants in regaining a balanced and a more positive view of each other.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The use of forgiveness under the mediation process for resolving conflicts can help in enhancing the relationship quality between the parties.	1	2	3	4	5
Mediation	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5. Facilitative mediation can be considered a highly useful process that can help the parties in a given conflict to reach a mutually agreeable resolution.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Evaluative mediation is a highly effective conflict resolution process since it assists in providing a helpful second opinion to the disputants when their “ <i>first</i> ” expert fails to solve their dispute.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Transformative mediation can effectively help in resolving disputes	1	2	3	4	5

since it empowers parties to take responsibility for their own dispute and motivates them to work collaboratively to reach a resolution.					
8. Mediation is a highly effective democratic method for dealing with conflicts since it can help in promoting forgiveness and motivate parties to reach a resolution.	1	2	3	4	5
Forgiveness	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9. Discomfort, avoidance, and lack of communication between the disputants are likely to persist when forgiveness is found to be missing under the mediation process for conflict resolution.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Forgiveness can be effectively integrated into the process of mediation for resolving deep-rooted conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5
11. In the mediation process, forgiveness can effectively help the parties under a given conflict to give up their resentment towards each other.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Forgiveness in the mediation process can help in encouraging the parties under a given dispute to rebuild their relationship with each other.	1	2	3	4	5

Please answer the following questions:

Q1. In what ways forgiveness can be used under the mediation process for dealing with conflicts?

Q2. In your opinion, what strategies can be applied by the disputants or parties to resolve their conflicts effectively?

Q3. What potential benefits can be obtained by the parties under a given conflict if they use forgiveness within their conflict resolution or mediation process?

Q4. Do you think taking help from a third party is an effective way of resolving conflicts? Please elaborate.

Q5. In what ways can forgiveness assist parties under a given conflict to rebuild their relationships with each other?

Appendix 2: Figures and Graphs

Figure 6:

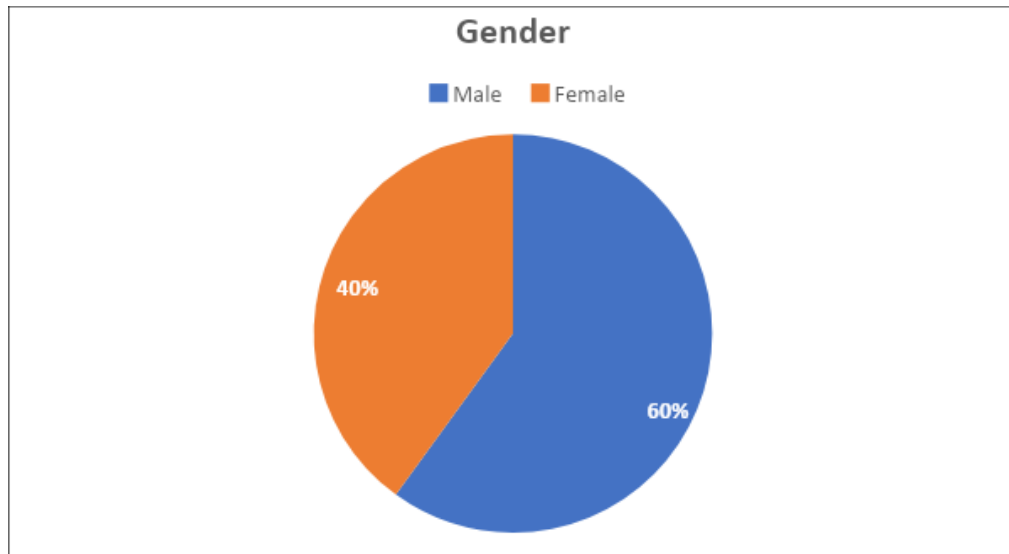


Figure 7:

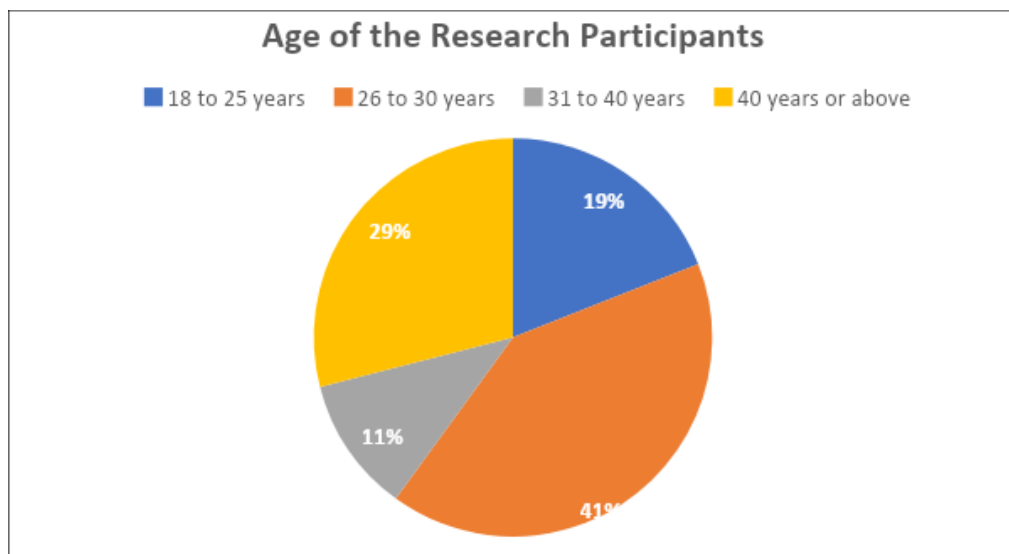


Figure 8:

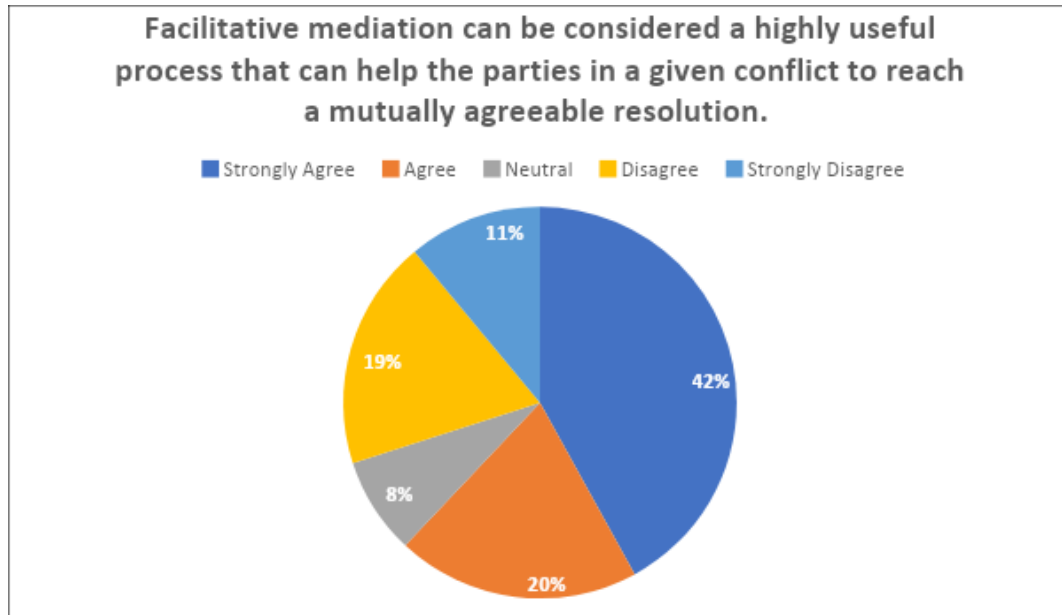


Figure 9:

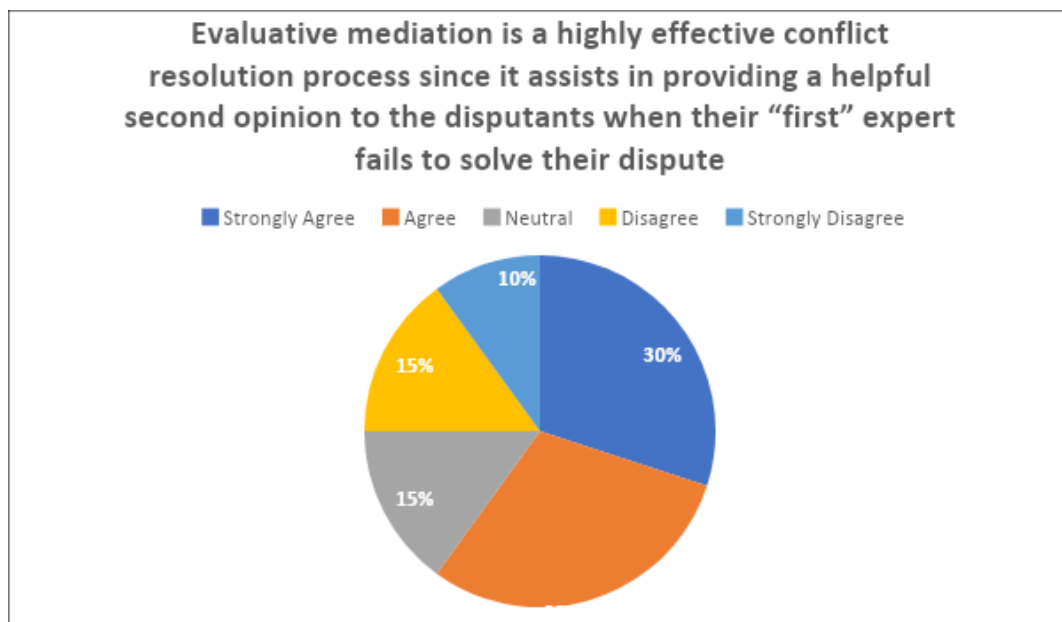


Figure 10:

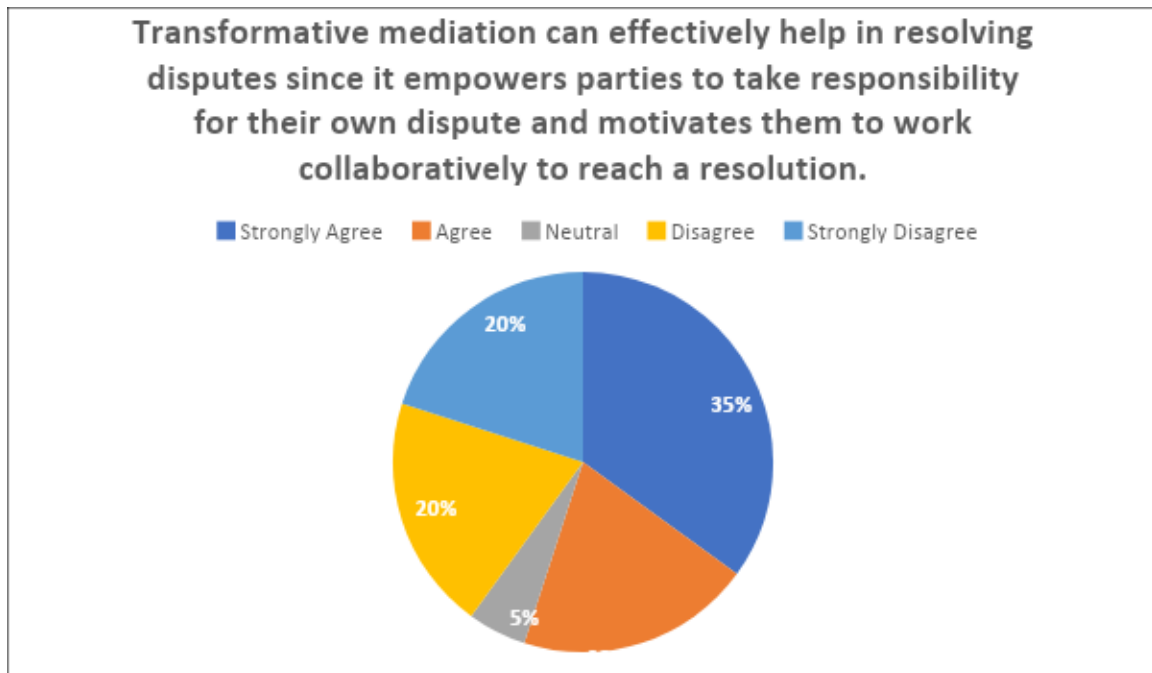


Figure 11:

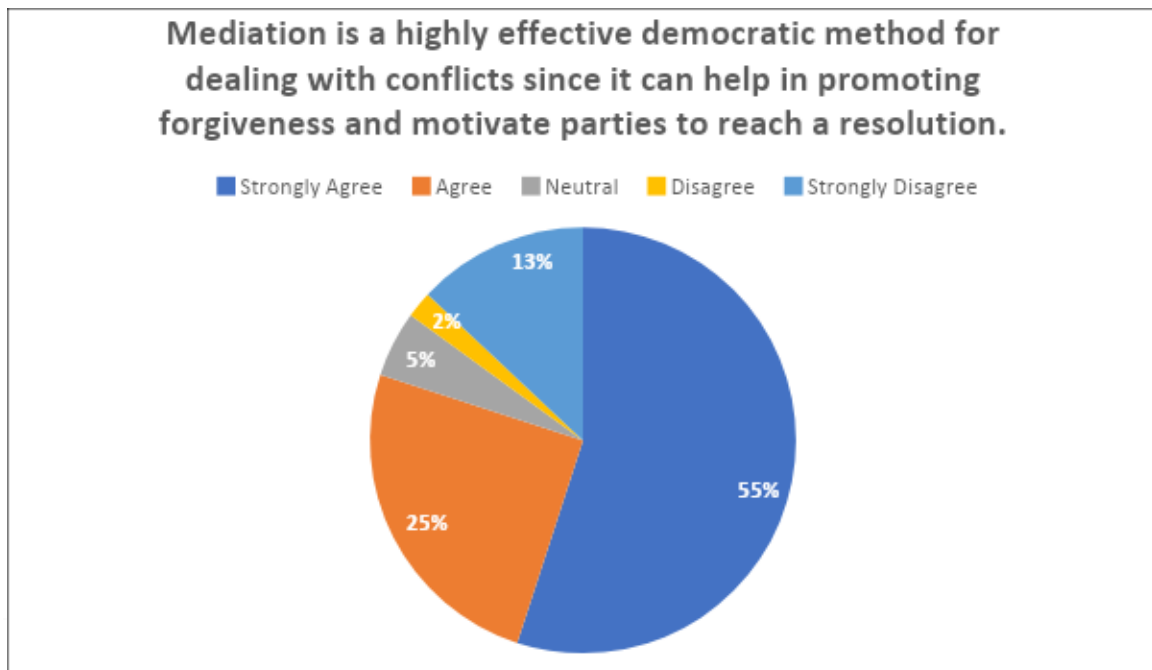


Figure 12:

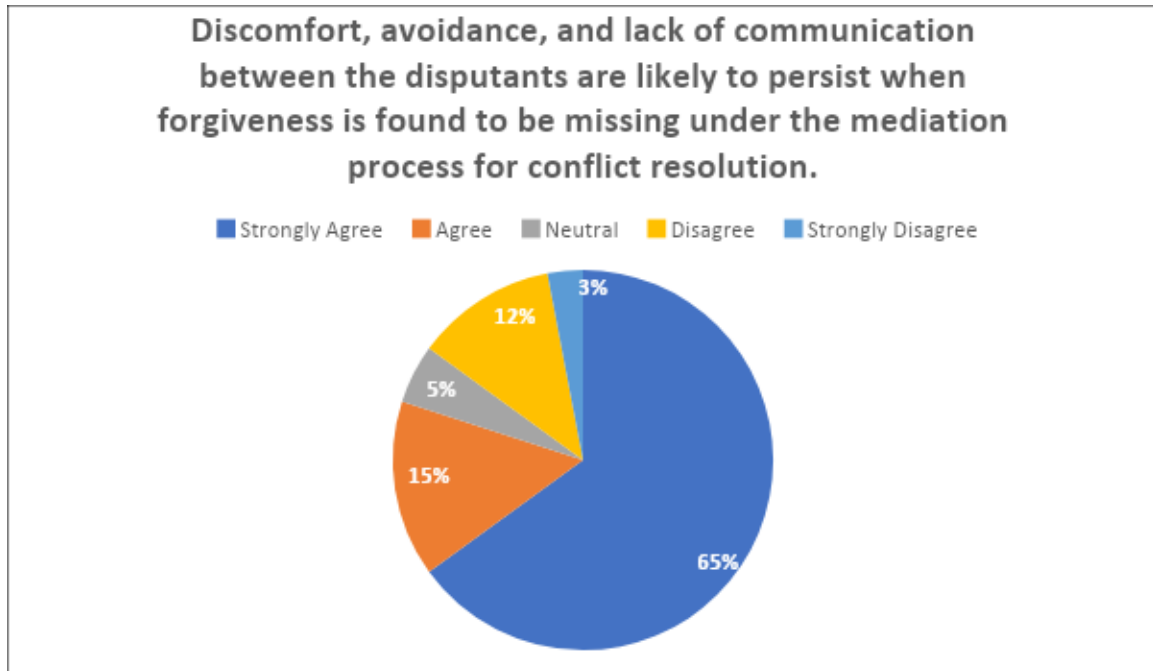


Figure 13:

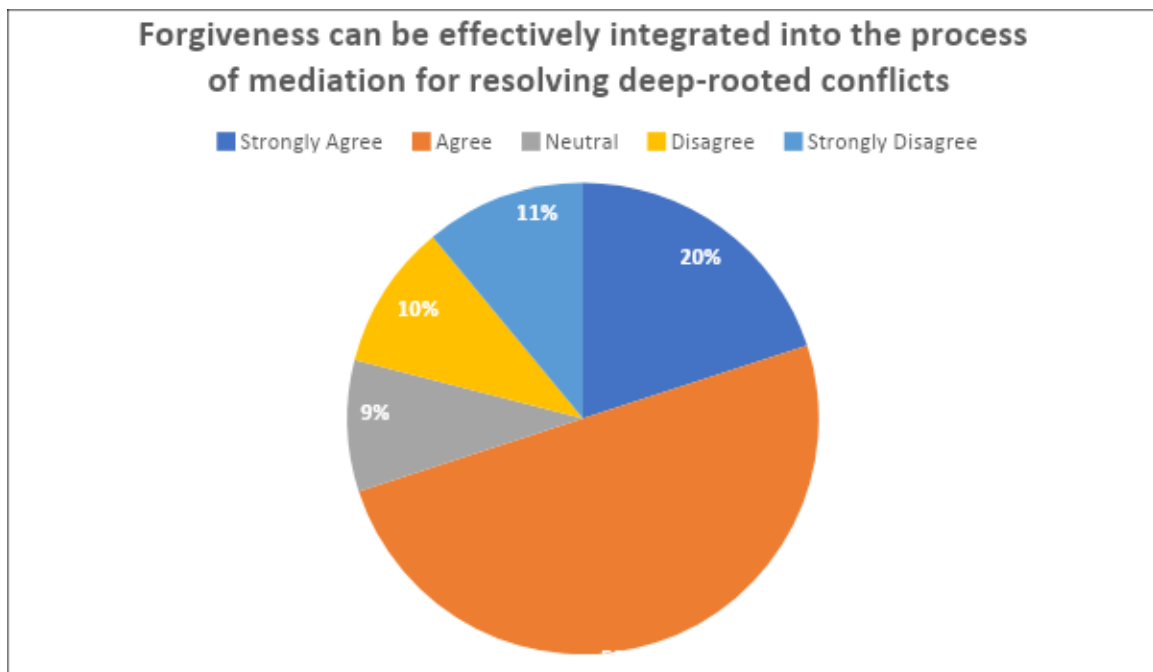


Figure 14:

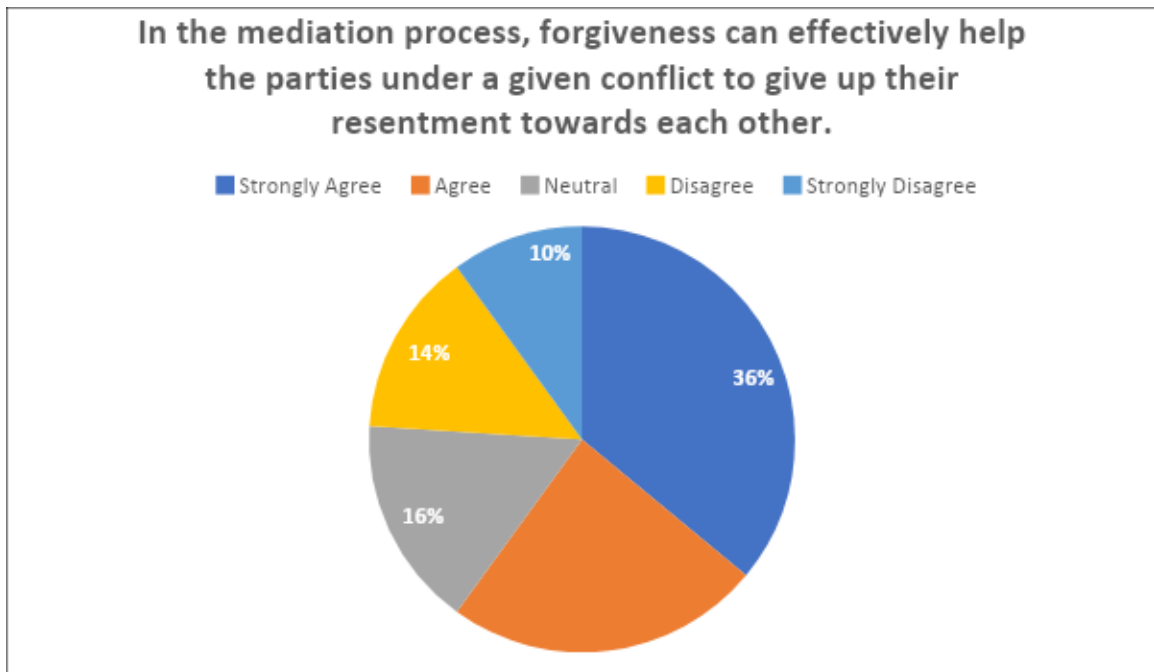


Figure 15:

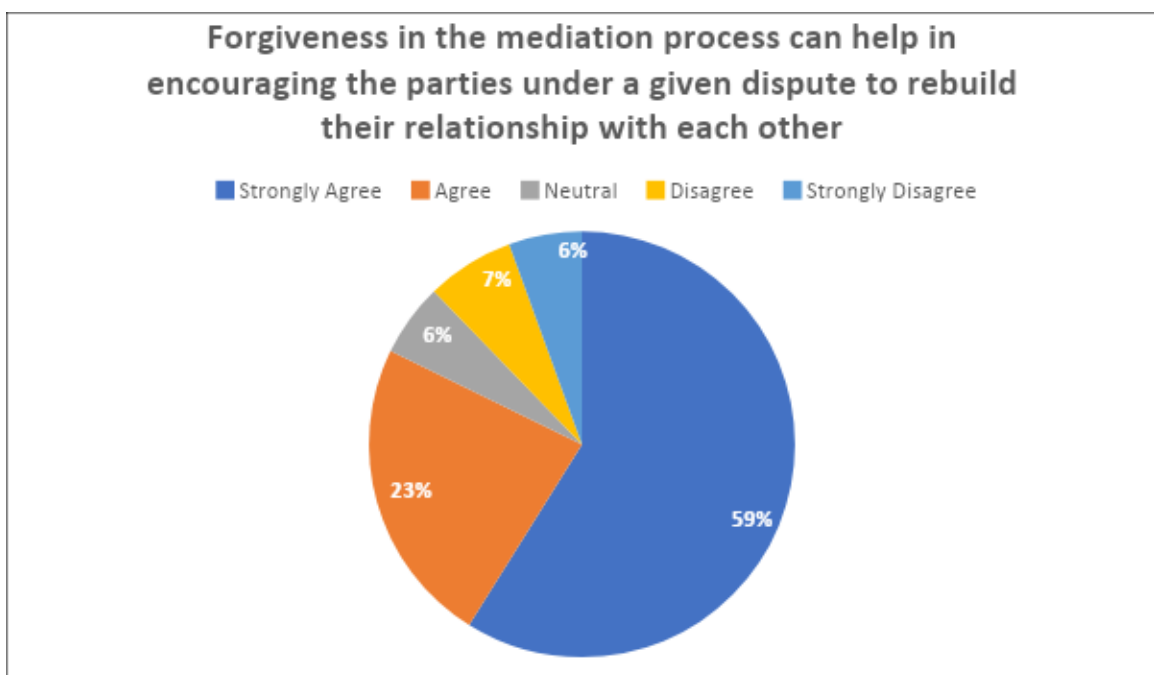


Figure 16:

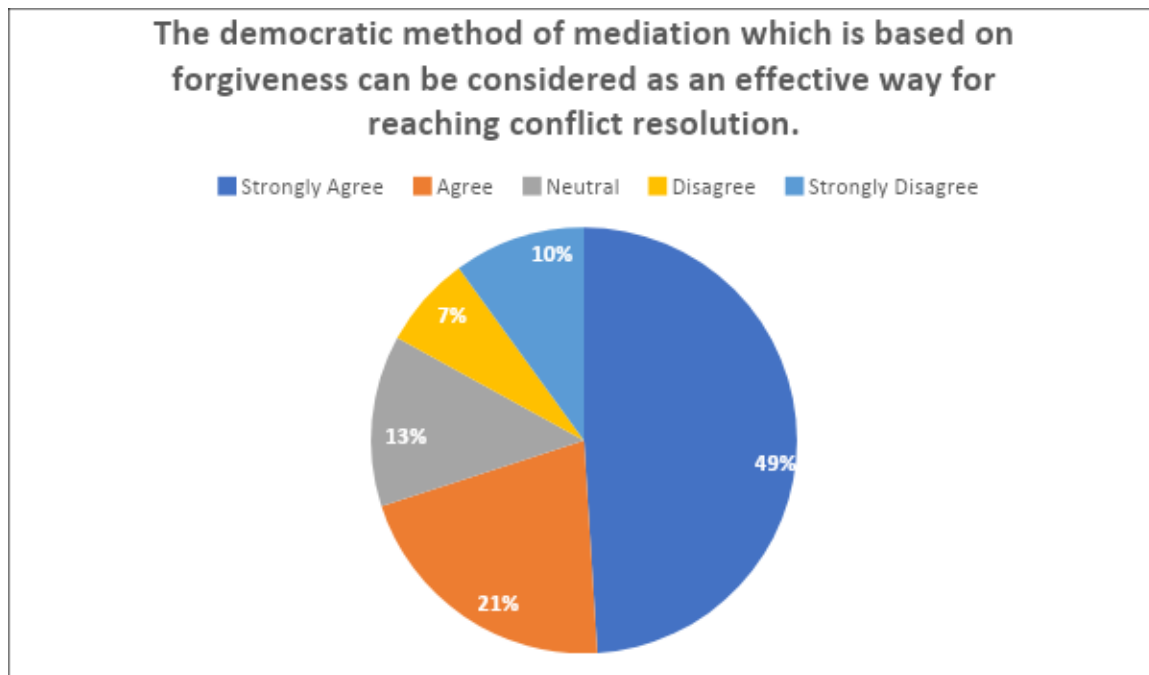


Figure 17:

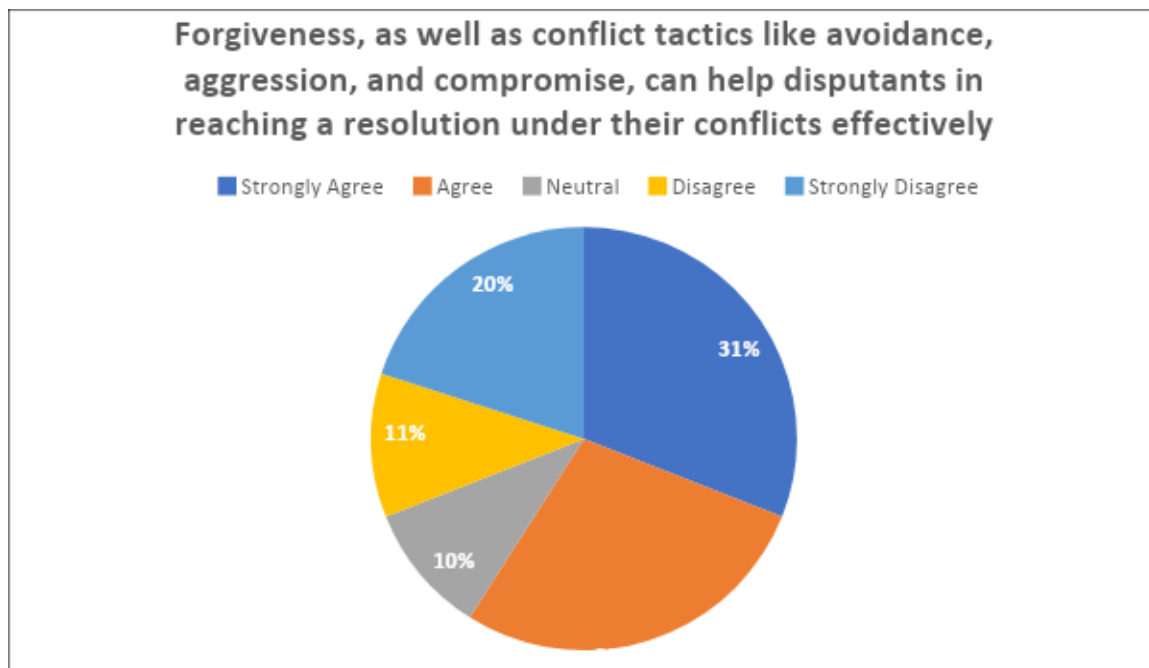


Figure 18:

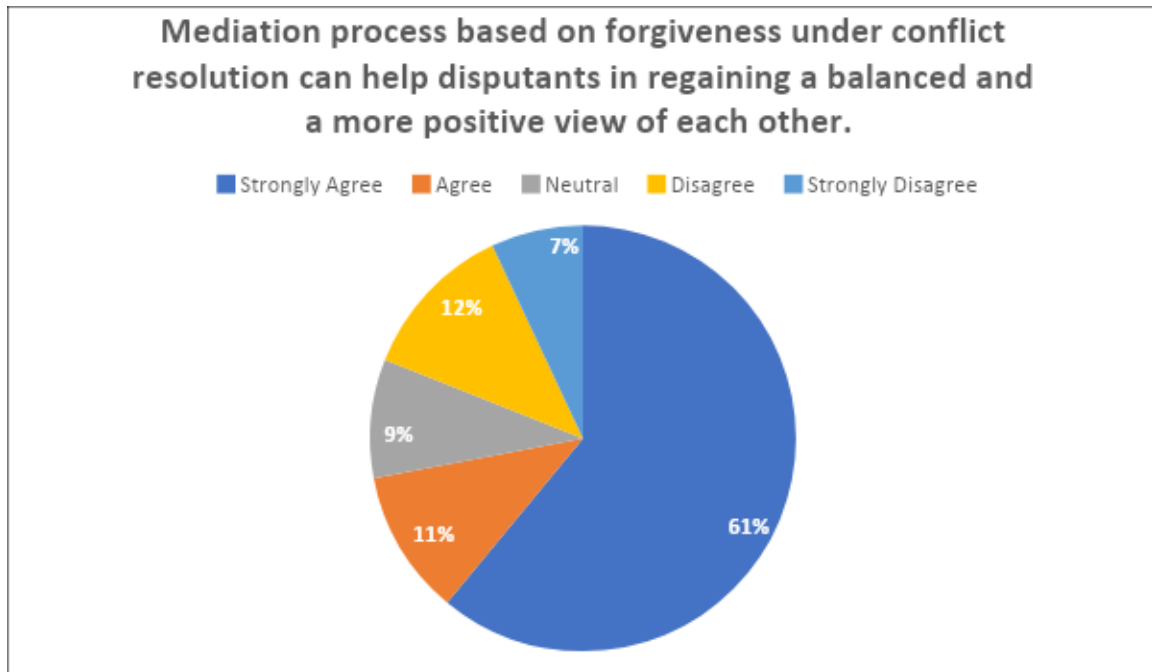


Figure 19:

