Perception of Empathy in Mediation processes and the way it is transmitted through Online Platforms

How is empathy perceived in mediation processes and how is transmitted through online platforms?

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Abstract

The main aim of this research is to describe how empathy is perceived in mediation process and is transmitted through online platforms. In order to achieve this aim, the study attempt to adopt the objectives are outline the meaning of empathy in general, describe the role of empathy in Mediation process and examine how empathy in mediation delivered through virtual platforms. Hence, the study conducts quantitative survey with Ireland individuals who recently involved in dispute processes in online platforms. Therefore, researcher obtained informed consent to agree with their participation and also anonymity was ensured. The population of the study was chosen based on simple random sampling method. The participants were selected through social media and confirm their presence of survey through emails and phone calls. Questionnaire was designed based on the literature review and objectives framed and after data collection, the study conducts descriptive and inferential statistics through SPSS 25.0 version. The study confirmed that empathy is perceived better in mediation process and it is positively transmitted in online platforms. Though, negative emotions was noted but they convert into positive while making disputes. This confirms the role of empathy in mediation processes.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADR   Alternative Dispute Resolution

ODR   Online Dispute Resolution

ToM   Theory of Mind

IM   Instant Messaging

CMC   Computer Mediated Communication

ICT   Information And Communication Technology

AI   Artificial Intelligence

SPSS   Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of the research

In recent years, there has been higher research focus on about empathy in every discipline include medicine, neurology or psychology, but more commonly in the domain of social sciences as well as humanities (González, 2013). Empathy is described as the ability to consider another person's circumstance and point of view without regard for affective factors (Cobb, 1993). It plays a key role in mediation as they help to determine the nature and course of a dispute (Irvine and Farrington, 2017). Empathy is an important component of mediation, both in terms of the mediator's use of it and in terms of how the mechanism allows disputants to give and receive it. It is an important ability for mediators to communicate to parties that their emotions have been heard and understood, but it can also get them into trouble. Although there may be a theoretical distinction between empathy and sympathy, mediators' best qualities (caring and compassionate nature) may cause empathy and sympathy to combine, posing a threat to mediator neutrality (Duffy, 2010).

Technology is witnessed of being completely integrated in the day to day lives of individuals, until it is not anymore possible to keep the media isolated from everyday activities (Deuze, 2014). Simultaneously, the digital area has its own kind of peculiarities beyond any doubt, that comes from electronic tendency and subsequently hinders an individual's emotional dimension. Technological emotional regime is none other than a basic kind of regime relating the intensities of emotions wherein the range of emotions is taken to regards, whilst in case of traditional regime; it is generally a regime which involves emotional tendencies. According to Serrano-Puche (2015), it is obvious that the coexistence of the two emotional regimes produces interface amidst emotional logic of every single system or process. Such kind of coexistence turns the study of digital technology along with the emotions complex and broad, in the way that it can meet the implications existing in it in physical and digital platform as well. In recent years, disputes in online platforms is increasing due to the

higher use of technology among individuals. As a result, mediators play a significant role here (i.e. technology emotional regime). But to our knowledge, there is a lack of research towards how empathy is perceived in mediation process and specifically how it is transmitted through online platforms. Hence this study aimed to fill this gap.

1.2 Problem statement

Humans tend to have observed the ways wherein their understanding and affection can be expressed they have towards other people belonging to the same kind of species as the begging of presence and moreover this methods have seemed to be the research subject for over the period of decades. Although the study of a clear concept about the term "empathy" is observed to be under different connotations and subjectivity stated (Cuff *et al.*, 2016), it still doesn't get belittled from the significance of techniques relating social order like sociology, psychology and more, as it is actually where the human characteristic is necessary.

It is regarded that the implementation along with the development of empathy amid people has applied the practices of mediation as a significant part, as it has been considered that it is something which is not new to the process of mutual understanding and integration among the individuals seen in a dispute or conflict. It is quite true that this kind of resolution has been executed right from the old times. Present circumstances have resulted in the number of people depending on electric systems and devices through the help of virtual platforms, hence attaining the application of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in the process of delivering their methods via virtual media like videoconferences. Mediation is a type of ADR that has grown in popularity over the period. Indeed, the necessity for an ADR system has been felt strongly in order to reduce the number of conflicts in the online platform. Since the dawn of time, mediation has shown to be a highly effective technique in the ADR system. On the other side, there has not been much research into the association between empathy and online platforms. The studies on the expression of emotion and its relationship to

empathy on internet channels, such as social networking sites, has received little attention. Some research attempted to back up research results that online platforms, such as exchanging messages online, eventually contribute to empathy expressions (Rosen, 2012) and that there is a positive association among having a discussion online with others and expression of empathic (Ivcevic and Ambady, 2013). In the humanistic perspective, restricting the communication among people which involves the expression and projection of empathy; and for this specific purpose, the intention is to understand the way how empathy is seen in the processes of mediation and through which it is transmitted via online streams. Therefore the following aim and objectives was framed:

1.3 Research aim and Objectives

The main aim of this research is to describe how empathy is perceived in mediation process and is transmitted through online platforms. The objectives of this research are:

- To outline the meaning of empathy in general

- To describe the role of empathy in Mediation process

- To examine how empathy in mediation delivered through virtual platforms

1.4 Research questions

1. How is empathy perceived in mediation processes and how is transmitted through online platforms?

1.5 Significance of the research

Mediation has a better chance of resolving the conflict in an agreeable and on permanent basis. This, however, is dependent on a number of variables that impact the mediation process. Since there was an evolution and growth in the field of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), it has generally met resistance from the theorists as well as the practitioner's just like (Serrano-Puche, 2015). The interpersonal methods of mediation have been basically relied on a vital theme and it is none other

than on an elusive quality. The cold neutral world of internet, the debate went on and it was essentially lacking human touch. ADR is seemingly rising in faster way even prior to the COVID-19 outbreak that drove all kinds of professional activities like online and mediation (Ebner, 2021a). To alter an indescribable idea into applicable theory and practice, the chief human-touch extent like role of empathy in mediation process need to be researched and specifically how it is transmitted through online platforms. Therefore this research is significant to both practitioners and theorists in the same field. Moreover, to our knowledge, there is lack of research papers involved in considerate the role of empathy in mediation process and its transmission through virtual platforms. When reading the experts view in previous reports, it is essential to understand the role of empathy in mediation process thus create significance in research field. In which the participants involved are determined to discuss to reach a settlement through mutual talks, the mediation process could be most successful in facilitating a solution to the conflict that will be permanent, and this is achieved with the involvement of the participants directly.

1.6 Scope and limitations of the research

Individuals are familiar with the procedure for mediation. People, either deliberately or unconsciously, agree with the circumstance even in everyday life, whether it be at home or at work. If used to resolve disagreements of a less serious stake and nature, this technique of dispute settlement will produce far improved outcome for the parties who are concerned. The study's goal is to look into an alternative approach for resolving the disputes, which is mediation. The research will go into great detail on the process of mediation, the function of empathy in mediation, and how empathy is transformed in online platforms. It will also look at the reasons and issues that affect the process of mediation, as well as the practical concerns that may occur during mediation. There has also been an effort to come up with practical answers to these challenges and concerns. In general, high level of satisfaction has been given to the disputed groups by ADR, since it has given highly convenient solution. This process is quicker, cost-effective and highly approachable for sure, than that of the

traditional legal process/system. There is a lack of research in understanding the empathy role in such mediation and its transmission in visual platforms. Therefore this research will be a good scope for future researchers to knowing this concept from in-depth way. However, the study is restricted only in empathy, hence future researchers may consider other human touch in mediation include trust and social intuition.

1.7 Chapterisation

This research will be categorized into following structure:

Introduction covers the background information for the reader to understand the context and purpose of the research, the main aims and objectives, the method or research design used, the main findings and conclusions. In addition to this, this section covers research question, problem statement and outline of the research.

Chapter 1 — Review of the Literature will cover the major concept of the study, reviews associated with the concept of research and recognize the study gap from the previous researches. Generally this section will get the present arguments and theories outlined to the topic of research and even involve suitable theory.

Chapter 2 – Research Methodology and Methods will reflect the basic assumptions regarding the methodology of study. Therefore the design, sample, strategy of research and sample size along with the justification of selected approaches illustrating detailed weaknesses and strengths which are implemented in this dissertation will be specified by the investigator.

Chapter 3 – Presentation of the data will comprises the discussion about the section of Dispute Resolution and study method coupled with the applied methodology in an analytical manner.

Chapter 4 - Data Analysis/Findings will illustrated the observations in a reasonable and descriptive manner without giving generalized statements.

Chapter 5- Discussion will involve the outlining of particular theoretical outlook for the research in the previous chapters.

Conclusion will conclude the research by understanding the previous chapter's view.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This section will lead to the extension of the literature review detailing the essential concepts for the understanding of this research, relying on established works and in turn fulfilling its objectives. The elements that will be taken into account are the definition of empathy, empathy in mediation and how empathy is transmitted in virtual platforms according to previous researches. The number of conflicts that is resulting from electronic commerce is growing as the world's usage of the Internet grows. Many such platforms have been created to assist in the settlement of these conflicts which arises online, and also conflicts that arise offline. As the area of the Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) has expanded and developed over the years, professionals and scholars have also expressed opposition. The interpersonal mechanisms of mediation and negotiation have often been profoundly based on an intangible attribute or element called 'the human touch,' according to one central theme. The claim went that the harsh, emotionless world of the internet is fundamentally devoid of the human element. Well before the COVID-19 pandemic, ODR had been expanding very quickly, driving all aspects of practices such mediation and negotiation, digitally (Ebner, 2021b).

2.2. Empathy definitions

2.2.1. Empathy from a various perspectives

There are several concepts of empathy, and they have been used in studies in a variety of ways (Cuff *et al.*, 2016). However, some dimensions of empathy, including the cognitive empathy (the ability to consider other individual's emotions) and affective empathy, are frequently debated (the capacity to respond with appropriate emotion). Congruity in empathy is the prerequisite for the observer's empathetic emotion to match that of the experienced, which is a less well-known factor. For the purposes of this study, the empathy is describe as "(1) understanding what the other individual is

experiencing, (2) experiencing what the other person is experiencing, and (3) reacting empathetically to the suffering of the other individuals " (Levenson and Ruef, 1992). This term was chosen for the purposes of this study since it matched respondents' perceptions of empathy as they arose from the interviews. Empathy was described by respondents with both medical problems as that of the ability to consider and put themselves in the situation of the other person. Due to their common illness encounters, several people noticed how easy it was to do this with members of the forum. They were able to (1) feel and realize (2) attendees made the connection between behaviour and thought, needing empathy to be expressed with (3) a thoughtful approach. There are aspects within the findings of previous studies on internet forums, concentrating on a wide range of topics that correlate to this concept:

- Being able to consider how another person feels, including the individuals who have expressed very detailed understandings of dealing with specific circumstances (eg, (Mazanderani *et al.*, 2013; Allen *et al.*, 2016; Angouri and Sanderson, 2016)).

- Knowing and experiencing the sentiments of others, including the consumer's emotion recognition and feeling a resonance (eg, (Popham, 2017)).

- Empathetically reacting to another individual's pain, including the handwritten answers to problems posted on the forums, expressing empathy by providing shared consideration (Preece, 1999a), exchanging personal experience (Preece, 1999a), validating emotions (Attard and Coulson, 2012; Kingod *et al.*, 2017), or immediately reacting to help requests (Preece, 1999a; Seale *et al.*, 2010).

As a result, this study contributes to a better understanding of empathy in mediation. There are some earlier studies like (The Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley, 2020) gives the statement of empathy as understanding and appreciating the feelings of others. In the area of psychotherapy authors such as (Noce, 1999) can claim that empathy does not have a specific definition. In an experiment explained by (Waal, 2005), the behaviour of chimpanzees groups is

described that after suffering from hunger, they could access food, however this access attributed a release of pain through chains, however, there was one who observed what happened and tried to minimize the pain by protecting one of its own since the last was ill. This act was described as empathy and protection, thus noticing that understanding of the suffering of others.

As Noce (1999) mentions in her article that empathy is concerned with human beings and their development of understanding among themselves, empathy implies assumptions and assumptions that are fundamental in the nature of the human being as well as how and why it is relate to each other. Her discussion is about how mediation is based on bargaining focused on interests, this suggested by contemporary literature (individualist assumption). In the work of this author, it can be observed that empathy is an element that is frequently mentioned when it comes to mediation, and that it makes its appearance in the literature as a subject of understanding and interpretation of what conflict is about into Individualist and Relational frameworks. Although there is contemporary literature related to applied empathy between the mediator and the parties (mediator-party), this document is focused on the perceived empathy between the parties (party-party) as well as Della Noce expands with her article 'Seeing Theory in Practice An analysis of empathy in Mediation'.

As two connotations of empathy can be observed, (Duan and Hill, 1996) one which is affective (where emotional and feeling states are involved) and the other cognitive (where opportunities for understanding are identified under concepts), this document has a perspective on cognitive empathy since in mediation processes, it is dialogue and communication that take the reins where the parties, although they may express their emotions, the key point is if the other party can identify and understand it, this processing is cognitive.

2.2.2. Empathy and body language

When it is known that empathy comes to have an undetermined definition by various authors, as the authors Taylor *et al.* (1969) share the definition of empathy, it can be understood that empathy implies

the understanding procedure, gaining the understanding that occurs in a common time point between two individuals which allows emotionally understand the affective experience between the two individuals which allows emotional understanding the affective experience between the two it is considered that there are factors that make the understanding to which it refers can be captured (Taylor *et al.*, 1969).

As Preston (2007) details where there is a representation of a set of bodily expressions since by wanting to demonstrate that appreciation of the conditions of others, the human body communicates those emotional lines. Some details such as facial gestures, eye contact, and tone of voice can contribute to the effort of having knowledge and understanding of the problem that the person who shares it is going through.

In a workshop held by the University of California (Reilly *et al.*, 2012) it was possible to observe how empathy is expressed in art and through theatre, which leads to very positive results. Although the relationship between individuals was of a medical nature (patient-physio doctor), communication and empathic relationships were possible with body language. Their results were varied, however, it is important to consider that the perception of empathy is subject to the individual perspective of each human being, which makes it somewhat complex.

2.2.3 Empathic Communication Online

Participants should be open to disclose their stories and insights with those in the group (Zhao *et al.*, 2013) and build faith in how the platform works and with those who use it (Lovatt *et al.*, 2017) for internet forums to thrive. Empathy is thought to promote and inspire sharing (Zhao *et al.*, 2013), and as a result, it has been examined by investigators who want to learn more about the processes that make a platform effective as well as how technology can help with empathetic communication (Preece, 1999b). To date, empathy studies have mainly focused on determining if empathy exists in content published on online forums (Pfeil and Zaphiris, 2007) and how empathy is conveyed and

organized in user experiences (Pfeil and Zaphiris, 2007; Kaufman and Whitehead, 2018). Various levels of help offered by participants to members of the community in need have been studied, with empathic interactions believed to offer more support (Pfeil and Zaphiris, 2007; Fan *et al.*, 2014). Empathic connections express emotional depth via an empathy obtained from those who have shared their experiences of someone in a comparable position, as well as the ability to visualize and transform themselves into the feelings and circumstance of someone else (Fan *et al.*, 2014). Empathetic help necessitates commitment, comprehension, and compassion (Pfeil and Zaphiris, 2007).

Variables which may lead to higher rates of strengthen empathetic connections or empathetic exchanges have been established through research. When participants exchange their encounters, which including living through the same circumstance, empathy is greater or more obvious. Resemblance allows users to identify with one another more easily, increases the probability of an precise interpretation of the circumstance (empathetic precision), and promotes trust (Pfeil and Zaphiris, 2007; Angouri and Sanderson, 2016). Gender plays a role in these processes as well, with female-dominated groups having higher levels of empathy (Seale *et al.*, 2006). Women's interactions have a stronger empathic value and a lower factual information, while men's interactions have a less empathic value and a stronger factual information (Preece, 1999b). Another research found that the adolescents in their individual style send many emotional messages when compared to older adults, indicating that the age group plays a role in shaping the empathetic and emotional interaction digitally (Siriaraya *et al.*, 2011). Nevertheless, in this report, the older adults showed more consideration about others than their adolescent counterparts. Significantly, empathy is strongly affected by the subject of the interest, and it is most prevalent in the help groups (Preece and Ghozati, 1998). Empathic responses are most often triggered by the messages that express feelings and emotions (Pfeil and Zaphiris, 2007; Kaufman and Whitehead, 2018). The members' altruistic habits of sharing, including the exchanging private information, emotions, and encounters, often promote empathy (Zhao *et al.*, 2013), and shifting the emphasis from self-help to supporting peers (Popham, 2017). Empathy is often

reflected in answers to help requests (Bronstein, 2017). Self-disclosure is an essential aspect of digital communication (Pfeil and Zaphiris, 2007), since it reveals users' empathic experiences.

2.2.4 Theories of Empathy

There are 2 basic explanations regarding the attempts made in accounting for empathy and they are: Stimulation theory and Theory of mind (ToM). As per the study of Adams (2001); ToM is defined as the way attributions are made with regards to the other intentional states. This theory which is also referred as mindreading for most literature and it share similarity with cognitive empathy. Vladimíra *et al*. (2011) have observed that the potential of reading minds resulted in prosocial behavior. Other outlooks of empathy defined as highly affective traits indeed have additionally described ToM. Emotional attention, emotional contagion, positive sharing and feeling for others are found to be included in Affective traits that are calculated in terms of Emotional Empathy Scale created by Caruso and Mayer (1998). Nettle and Liddle (2008) observed that this ToM's cognitive aspect has a positive association with agreeableness. Agreeableness as well as social-cognitive ToM are associated with the linguistic abilities of an individual and also are significant in cognitively evaluating the mental conditions of other individuals along with relaying thinkings towards our empathic feeling (Nettle and Liddle, 2008).

Neuman (2010) made an attempt of discussing about empathy with respect to mindreading as same as that of ToM literature. For the purpose of expressing empathy with some other individual its important for us to have an understanding about how our individual experiences and perception be an hindrance to our comprehension of the emotional output of others. Neuman connected empathy to the way which individuals study a distant text or an unfamiliar text to the reader, for example a religious passage. He was desperate to understand how an individual would tend to approach such kind of text. Neuman whilst reading a distant text defined that an individual strives in flaunting oneself into a different language. An extract of a religious text namely Talmud, Neuman made a try

on describing how one among the characters has never shown a sense of empathy on a crying calf longing for help. It is been highlighted by Neuman that the tears of the calf did not seem to have seen and the reason was because the language used by the crying calf was quite distinct from the character which it did toward

There are times when we might get in contact with people who arrive from various background. They might also make use of different uncommon jargons in their language. There are chances of having differences in language with online users who hail from varied backgrounds, typing style or experience. Due to these elements, there can arise difficulty in communication. There can be more chances of getting involved in conversations and project empathy to one another when a person has the presence of mind to comprehend the experience and the language that is used by others. This idea can be put to use in our present proposal as evaluating the emotional status of another person through textual interactions is hard. These interactions can get easier with a person is speaking Face to Face or through a telephone (Cummings *et al*., 2002). Though, having a larger chances of being involved with another person via textual interaction might provide more scopes to set an emotional connect with another individual. It can be said that, conversations in social media might help in the understanding of textual exchange amidst users who are online. There are more chances of a person getting involved in a conversation when they understand the message. This in turn will rise the understanding of textual interaction through online mode and can also increase the projection of empathy.

The theory of simulation of empathy presents the manner in which our cognitive abilities feign reactions (Adams, 2001). As per the theory of simulation, empathy offers us an empirical entry into another person's mind. It is our manner of mimicking, copying and faking the actions as well as the emotional mind set of another person (Zahavi, 2008). Zahavi proceeds to explain that this states empathy to be our calibre in forecasting and projecting the actions of another person. The calibre to clarify the actions of another person is based on calibre to put ourselves through the situation of

another person. There is a need for the person to understand the written and posted messages of another person prior to deciding on their reaction. In regards to empathy in an online setting, having the ability to react to another person in an emotionally comprehending manner can be regarded to be similar to feigning another person's deeds. In these kinds of situation, the calibre to comprehend another individual's emotion might be focused online. There are more chances to express a person's feeling of regard, empathy and care if they are aware of the same language. This can be easily possible when a person is spending more time being involved in conversation. This will set a clear base for the kind of relationship that prevails in the usage of social media and the empathy that is displayed through it.

Social constructionism is nothing but a theory of knowledge in terms of communication and sociology which perceives the truth and actuality being constructed socially (Galbin, 2014). Based on this outlook, it is not possible to understand the actual account of true or false, wrong or right and even good or bad. The one and only possibility of understanding is that people are aware of the stories in terms of their dualities (Galbin, 2014). Knowledge grows from a communal system which is constructed socially, since the meaning is not actually a phenomenon of events or objects. It is rather a construction through the usage of shared and agreed meaning interacted in the form of language. It can otherwise be said that the content of our awareness & the mode of our association and getting to know others are nothing but a product of society and culture instead of possessing objective truth (Galbin, 2014). Hence individual rationality is never accepted or acknowledged as a characteristic of individual thinking instead it is viewed as a result of cultural convention. As per this outlook, language exhibits a potential of producing engagement and encouraging changes by developing realities (Galbin, 2014).

2.2.5 What leads to empathy?

Despite the varied kinds of definition that is present for empathy, it is been assumed that empathy is learnt in the initial few years of a person's life (Decety and Michalska, 2010; van Lissa *et al.*, 2014). Children who are between the ages of seven and 12 naturally tend to be more sympathetic towards another person's grief (Decety *et al.*, 2008). Upon the analyses of the fMRI scans, Decety *et al.* (2008) revealed that children display same reactions in certain parts of the brain as the adults do on witnessing a person undergoing suffering. Children too feel empathy from the conversation and scopes to get involved in conditions that let them reveal about their feelings (Taylor *et al.*, 2013). There are gender differences in the projection of empathy which is more favourable towards women over men and socializing can be stated as an element through which these changes take place (Eisenberg and Lennon, 1983; Wölfer *et al.*, 2012). There is empathy with both the gender. But the difference in them starts to emerge when both the genders begin to be groomed in a customary manner of "masculine" or "feminine" (Wölfer *et al.*, 2012). Empathy can also be inculcated in a person by moulding them from their youth. As a guardian or parent gets involved in a sympathetic action, or prosocial deed, the child begins to imitate them and copy them. Its main source of learning empathy is prosocial activities. There are more chances for children to become sympathetically concerned people if both their parents where actively involved with them. There are higher impacts on a child with their father's association in childcare, mother's patience on dependency and when their requirements have a varied reaction (Koestner *et al.*, 1990). It can also be stated that, empathy is aided with restrained projection of irritation and more chances of communication about feelings.

Koestner *et al.* (1990) claimed that the type of parenting with attribute that are similar to authoritative kind, seemed to be vital indicator on the development of a person's empathy. Furthermore, Diamond *et al.* (2012) recommend that the type of attachment can also have an impact of the calibre of a person to sympathize with another person. An example can be that both stress and avoidance is linked to a teenager's calibre to be sympathetic. Those parents who have high avoidance and stress might display

the affective situation of other to be accepted. On the contrary, those parents who have a secure attachment style mainly show the base for the teen's positive capacity. This is shown through care to the impacted state and cue of other people involved in a social condition. It can also be stated that, by looking after the sensitive needs of the child in the right manner and being a comfortable place for them to express themselves emotionally with positive conversations might lead to higher range of self-esteem in youths. Even adolescent teens might project more empathy.

In early periods of adolescence, family members are involved in growing empathy in young people with progressive prosocial aim (Malin *et al.*, 2014). Wölfer *et al.* (2012) revealed that empathy in adolescence is also built based on how they has been set or inculcated in the atmosphere of a growing teen. The calibre and strength to project and comprehend the status of another person's emotion is seen through the amount of adolescent's social connectedness. The empathy of a teen is impacted by their atmosphere and social connections. Teens who grew up in atmosphere with people who are more consenting and open in displaying their emotions actively are more prone to be sympathetic over teens who grew up in an environment where projection of emotions are restricted.

The research conducted by Barr and Higgins-D'Alessandro (2009) display the importance of the atmosphere in the inculcation of empathy in a person. If a school atmosphere possess an open and loving society, Barr and Higgins-D'Alessandro (2009) recommends that students feeling of connectedness and cooperation gets to become more sturdier. It has been stated from researchers who observed the students from a typical high school and from a "Just Community School" that democratic rules and deeds created more social and ethical progress and perspective taking. It has been mentioned through analyses that rating of school system is associated positively with empathy. It was also seen to be more in the Just Community School over the other typical high schools. There is a notion that school culture or the social atmosphere can cause more positive communication. This rises the chances of becoming more emotionally near. The atmosphere and the deeds in the atmosphere might impact a person's empathy.

There is link between a person's prosocial behaviour and empathy. For instance, it has been seen that there are more concerns of empathy for others when a person discloses a similar kind of experience that they have experienced (Hodges *et al.*, 2010). Observing others prosocial attitude raises the chances of a person behaving in a prosocial manner as well. The progress of empathy can be done in a child by making them conscious of their emotions and revealing their feelings. This empathy will cause them to have a more prosocial behaviour. Similarity as well as group membership can also impact the feeling of empathy (Maner *et al.*, 2002). Yet, we can project empathy to a person who might not be similar to us (Lamm *et al.*, 2010). By making use of fMRI comparisons, Lamm *et al.* (2010) contrasted the places of the brain of the participants rating to pain which are both similar to theirs as well as opposite to that of the people involved. They also revealed that the place of the brain where overlaid in participants viewing both kinds of images.

Not just that a person acts with sympathy to the people who are like them, but they also respond with sympathy to those people who are striking to them (Müller *et al.*, 2013). The participants who were involved in the research were tested to reveal how fast and accurate they were in mimicking the movement of a striking person and a non-striking person's actions. Upon completion of the sympathetic concern and perspective subscale from the Dutch type of Interpersonal Reactivity Index (De Corte *et al.*, 2007). Müller *et al.* (2013) in a recessing evaluation revealed that sympathetic concern was a vital forecaster for a person to imitate their most striking person ($b = −0.696$, $t(17) = 4.00$, $p < 0.001$, $R\,2 = 0.48$). Müller et al. failed to get any effect on a non-striking person.

The literature that has been stated here depicts that sympathy is impacted by social conditions. While a guardian or a parent gets involved in deeds of sympathy or prosocial activities, children copy and learn sympathy via prosocial attitude. Children get to learn ways to reveal their emotion and notice prompts to interact with others. From adolescence, teenagers are able to have the scope to sympathize with others. This also increases further with age. The state of affect can be realized as a person reads details through online sources despite the details mainly being textual. While a person makes use of

Facebook to post a comment or status, there is a need for others to react with sympathetic replies. This can be seen as an act of condolence to the person. There are numerous ways through which sympathy can be revealed in Facebook. Some of the ways are though posts, liking status(es), messaging in inbox etc.

2.3. Mediation

2.3.1 Concept of Mediation

Mediation is a non-binding approach for the settlement of dispute in which an unbiased third party assists the conflicting parties in reaching a mutually acceptable resolution (Garner, 2001). Other than that, mediation has also been described in a wider and generic manner to cover all kinds of decision making wherein the parties are aided by a third person who is outsider to the dispute, the mediator, the third person cannot take mandatory decisions for them though can aid them in number of ways. Adjudication, arbitration, expert judgment, and court hearings are examples of ways of resolving disputes wherein an external person is the formal decision maker for the parties (Boulle and Nesic, 2010). In plain terminology, the concept of Mediation is a venue that promotes a method for problem resolving and has been sanctioned by the courts over a period of time. Mediation is a structured negotiation facilitated by a moderator who has the required expertise, experience, and training to assist the parties in reaching an agreement. The notion of the mediation has crucial aspects that make it effective, such as confidentiality and the active engagement of the parties in the process. Mediation is a very successful and adaptable process. The meeting could be set up so that the parties have faith in the system, and then each side gives the mediator a short statement (Goodin, 1999).

According to a survey of U.S. corporate executives, several understood the benefits of mediation and favoured it over the other potential conflict settlement approaches in commercial transaction disputes. The executives surveyed in the research explicitly claimed that mediation protects business partnerships better than arbitration and that mediation saves time and resources

better than arbitration (Peters, 2010). Mediation may take the form of a casual meeting lasting a few hours or a planned settlement session lasting a whole day. This meeting will take place somewhere neutral, like that of the mediator's workplace. Mediation is nonbinding and optional for all sides, which means that the mediator cannot compel either side to take a specific plan of action or do anything that they do not want to do. This separates mediation from arbitration, in which the arbitrator, like a judge, may issue a verdict requiring the entities to take some kind of action.

2.3.2 Benefits of Mediation

Mediation has a number of benefits over other dispute resolution methods such as litigation, arbitration, and consultation without the need of a mediator. Mediators look at the root sources of conflict and work to find solutions. The entities should work together in order to achieve a fruitful conclusion. Second, mediation is a low-cost method of resolving a disagreement (Shamir and Kutner, 2003). It is far less costly than litigation and has a reasonably predictable bill, with all of the money going to the mediator. Third, compared to litigation, mediation could be a much faster operation. Mediations aren't time-consuming, and each consultation will last anywhere from two to three hours. This is particularly useful in family law situations, where long-running legal battles can have emotional and social consequences for the kids involved. Children's trials, that can involve months to plan and weeks to carry out, have been shown to have a negative impact and create resentment in children (Jordan, 2009). Fourth, mediation offers a virtual setting for conflict resolution. As all mediation is held within closed door meetings, personal details that would have to be disclosed to the jury, judge, or public throughout a trial stays confidential through mediation (Harkavy, 1999). Moreover, although the final verdict in a courtroom remains publically available, the parties' resolution can be kept confidential. Ultimately, mediations placed the decision-making power in the hands of the disputants. As there are no complicated rules of protocol or witnesses, the parties have a lot of leeway in adjusting the scope of the mediation to include whatever subjects they consider are relevant. While mediation has several advantages, this may not be the ideal method for resolving a

dispute since parties often require a legally valid resolution that creates commitments to deal with their problems. Given this, mediation may also help parties resolve disagreements while often reducing hostility and hatred.

2.3.3 Problem solving and transformative approach to mediation

Any effort of mediation must begin with the dispute. Nevertheless, it is clear from the debate among the problem solving approaches and transformative to mediation that there are differing perspectives based on the characteristics of the dispute and what constitutes constructive dispute. For anyone whose major goal is to resolve the disagreement and individuals whose major goal is to manage the dispute are clearly distinguished (da Rocha, 2019).

The practitioner attempts to a dispute settlement, according to Lederach (2015), are to aid that alleviate the face-to-face tensions instantly and, in certain situations, to assist mend the shattered relationships. These attempts are tied to the work of the problem solving mediator, as problem solving mediation is one of the aspect of resolving disputes. Negotiating, rational negotiating, creative solution for problem, and exchange may all contribute to a resolution, according to Spitka (2018). This exposes a major flaw in the technique of problem solving: the mediator for problem solving is overly directive in her or his efforts to attain an agreement. The mediator for problem solving directs the flow of discussion and content, focusing on points of agreement and remediable difficulties and bypassing sections where agreement is less possible (Burgess *et al.*, 1997). This directiveness, according to Bush and Folger (2004), prevents parties conflicting from regaining a feeling of individual power and gaining some level of compassion toward one another, leading in the prolongation of a negative dispute communication.

Transformative mediation, on the other hand, aims to turn encounter of dispute from a destructive and negative social force into a productive and good social force via its ability in generating two crucial dynamic effects: recognition and empowerment. In other terms, without empowerment and

recognition, the warring parties are unable to go forward and find harmony for long term with one another. Advocates of the problem solving method, on the other hand, see no problem with steering the mediation process. The study of Hoffman (1999) contends that inquiries of the mediators will invariably lead the procedure, and that focus must be on how and to what goal the mediator is guiding, rather than if it must be performed at all. The purpose, in his opinion, must be to resolve the conflict rather than to force the individual development on the disputants. Several researchers concur with him, given that problem solving is the most common technique to mediation nowadays. The research of Williams (1997) advocates the strategy by claiming that resolution fulfils the opposing parties, while the research of McKinney (1997) claims that the problem-solving strategy allows empowerment and acknowledgment in some ways. Despite the fact that he acknowledges that empowerment and recognition are very personal notions, he does not see how resolving the conflict will not strengthen the parties to a dispute. Nevertheless, because it is not required to resolve the current argument or dispute, the problem-solving technique does very little to tackle the bigger rooted problems that lead individuals to be in situation in the first place. While solutions that address specific needs offer immediate remedies to pressing issues, they are transient instead of everlasting. "Pacts are being targeted at ending the killing and shooting, a vital and admirable humanistic purpose," as per Lederach (2005). Nevertheless, even though the instances of ferocity have several year or even several decade limits, this is simply the tip of the issue and is recurrent in nature" (Lederach, 2005). The transformative method goes above negotiating immediate solutions and instead it focuses on creating something novel. The transformative approach, according to Lederach (2015), aims to establish productive alteration procedures via dispute.

Dispute is viewed as a chance to uncover the underlying factors that lead to the dispute situation in the first place, this enabling dispute as a chance to establish a more long-term harmony. Conversation is the most basic technique to generate positive change at all stages. Since it emphasis on the discussion, mediation is a one-of-a-kind method for the resolution of dispute. The transformative

approach is much more suitable in certain circumstances than the others; for example, in a disputes or a conflicts that require a speedy and definitive resolution without addressing the core reasons, the problem solving technique would be much more suitable. Despite this, the mediation process can have advantages that go beyond the outcome of a specific mediation, mainly when it comes to international mediation that is why the minimally implemented transformative strategy to mediation should be given more attention (Traore, 2020).

2.4 Empathy in Mediation

2.4.1. Empathy as a tool in Mediation

Within conflicts such as armed groups and social damage, ADR intervention has taken place in mediation processes and in this, (Baer, 2017) details that empathy is a very important element, although it is not to be considered a panacea, the contribution that given as a tool to deal with serious and delicate matters is highly useful. As Decety (2010) details empathy is the only feasible mechanism to be able to establish any intercommunication. The importance of this element in the field of mediation reaches a huge magnitude which is involved in many aspects of human interaction (Kelly and Kaminskienė, 2016).

Empathy has both the cognitive and affective aspects. In a review of the research on empathy, Levenson and Ruef (1992) define empathy as "understanding what the other individual is thinking, experiencing the same feelings as yet another individual, and reacting compassionately to an individual who is in need." "An emotional reaction of the spectator to someone else's affective state" is how affective empathy is characterized (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004, p. 164). Cognitive empathy, as described by the same researchers, is the understanding, comprehension, and anticipation of another person's state of mind. Lawrence et al. (2007) utilized items like "I am better at determining how someone would think" (cognitive empathy) and "Seeing someone weep really doesn't disturb me" to test various sorts of empathy (emotional reactivity, reverse-scored). These investigators

additionally utilized questions to test relevant interpersonal skills, like "I find it difficult to understand what to do in a social scenario" and "I find it difficult to understand what to do in a social setting" (Lawrence *et al.*, 2007). The study employed those items to determine a person's emotional quotient, or EQ. Reactive empathy, which corresponds to affective empathy like compassion and sympathy, is also a type of affective empathy (Lawrence *et al.*, 2007). These types of empathy demonstrate that empathy has an emotional, cognitive, and behavioral element, and they exist in the various theories that academics have created to describe empathy.

2.5. Empathy in Mediation processes delivered through online platforms

In the earlier research, the emotional projection in online conditions were noticed (Wolf, 2000; Cummings *et al*., 2002; Derks *et al*., 2007; Rosen, 2012). There are many research that evaluate emotion and computer mediated communication prelude the construction of social media sites such as Facebook. It also noticed the members of the newsgroups and listserves (Kraut *et al.*, 1998). The researchers involved in these studies draw a contrast with the participants that make use of email, phone or the mode of face to face communication. For instance, Cummings *et al*. (2002) questioned the participants to grade their email, face to face and phone bond. It was revealed through the research that face to face interaction was linked with stronger relationships. (Beta =.36), was succeeded by phone (Beta = .27) later email (Beta = .15). This might state that the medium of communication is linked with the strength of a person's bond with another person. This theory can also be used in electronic media, varied kinds of communication like computer against phones might also be linked with varied levels of sympathy. The things which fails to be noticed is that whether or not elements like these are noticed in current technology and also if these elements of experience with a technology impacts the empathy that one depicts on that particular technology. As an example, it can be stated that devices which are more affable can cause greater range of sympathy being projected or displayed.

There are chances of some link being present between using social media and getting emotionally involved with another person. Holistically, people who make use of Internet for the cause of socializing are more prone to be involved socially offline also (Kraut and Kiesler, 2003). Despite, the link with social media usage and sympathy being a new topic for research, there are certain pragmatic research which state that the link between sympathy and computer mediated communication (CMC) in the type of instant messaging is also an element of social media sites such as Facebook. People who tend be more inclined in using social networks and actively do instant messaging, are more superior in projecting their sympathy online (Rosen, 2012). On the downfall, the research of Rosen that lead to the fascinating question regarding the link with social media and empathy is decrease to an experimental claim. It is because, he failed to state the measure of sympathy that were utilized in getting his conclusion.

This has constantly prevailed in the research conducted by Feng et al. (2004),who found that the response kind and communication kind were highly in link with interpersonal trust online. The participants involved in the study were requested to get involved in a role play exercise that had reading of dialogues in four varied kinds or styles of interaction Feng et al. (2004) made use of Instant Messaging (IM) chat box to explore the four varied communication modes in contrast to the terms of the range of trust that a person had over online modes. The four communication pattern was oriented on the design of 2 x 2. In this design the comparison of the people were based on whether they displayed their sympathy correctly or not and whether they reaction was helping or not. There was a link with the two variables, in a way that dialogues which stated right empathy and helpful response was linked to higher trust scores over the remaining three kinds. There are examples of sympathy being present on social networking sites such as Facebook. The way a person makes use of the site might depict the level or kind of sympathy that is delivered on Facebook.

Elementary social and personality procedure is active in social networking sites. These procedures are similar to those noticed in face-to-face atmosphere (Gosling *et al.*, 2011). For instance, some

extraverts go in seek of social engagement online similar to their process in offline (Gosling *et al.*, 2011). Adding to it, in the description of literature on face to face communication and computer mediated communication (CMC) (Derks *et al.*, 2008a) revealed that those engaging in CMC incline to have habits of sharing their emotions with others who are similar to the people involved in F2F communication. It was also concluded that, there are more chances for people to communicate through F2F over CMC. The communication of feelings was constantly depicted in CMC, via the modes of chats, online dating sites and blogs. In these kinds of CMC, people generally depend on emoticons for the purpose of providing aid to their friends, and convey their feeling and emotions in a more effective manner (Derks *et al.*, 2008a, 2008b; Lo, 2008). As an example, Derks *et al.* (2008b), revealed that an optimistic message supported with a smile emoticon has higher chances of being more positive over an optimistic message that doesn't have any smile emojis. They also stated that a negative message supported by a frowning or sad emoji is more negative in contrast to a negative message which lacks a frowning emoticon. There is a huge role for social context in both F2F and CMC media as people in both the backgrounds display wide precision in selecting social prompts in negative situations over that of the positive ones. It is also in regards to the people who accommodate their emotional languages in order to befit the social condition of daily dialogues (Derks *et al.*, 2007).

Ivcevic and Ambady (2013) observed that behaviour is quite closely consistent amidst participants, if they are offline or online. For example, people with great range of extraversion possibly hold bigger online social networks. Furthermore, people who are willing to have one-to-one communications as well found to be having more number of posts in Facebook through their friends compared to the people who are not so agreeable. Similarly, individuals who got much emotional support and assistance in their day-to-day life had more number of friends on Facebook, this even includes even getting emotionally conveyed messages from friends on their FB walls over people have less support. Ivcevic and Ambady (2013) even examined what kind of similarities does online and offline interaction shares with regards to the amount of conversations reported by the participants. For

instance, they got to know that extraverts are seemingly involved in more communications online as well as offline than the introverts or less extraverts.

Rosen (2012) discovered that people who are interested in spending more time using social networks and those who often use instant messaging were considerably better in exhibiting virtual empathy. In a research of around 1400 youngsters, Rosen carried out online analysis and surveys by enquiring about empathy with real world, empathy the way it is projected online and their thoughts of supporting as well as the kind of devices used on everyday basis. Youngsters in the research who seemed to be way better in exhibiting empathy online were as well better in showing empathy in one to one conversation. It can otherwise be stated that instant messaging and social networking were the crucial predictors when it comes to exhibiting virtual sympathy that as a result possess the capability of predicting empathy in terms of real world. Rosen ended up with a conclusion that empathy online which he refers as "virtual empathy", is nothing but a true concept and despite being insignificant compared to real world empathy, it still holds a space for association amidst expression of emotion, emotional support and online interaction. Besides that these claims are never been properly supported or validated.

Mediation being very much focused on changing or solving conflict with the help of dialogue and it must be not restricted to be understood or known within social constructivism paradigm by precise language association of language. In addition to that, it offers a way to the fundamental values and notions which gives shape to different kinds of mediation techniques. The problem-solving and transformative methods to mediation possess different concepts and ideas basically when it comes to the questions like what capabilities do humans possess and what is all about productive conflict and what third party groups must do in the process of intervention. Choosing any technique to mediation is nothing but to select a set of values; and also to get those values enacted via company for mediation (Bush and Folger, 2004).

During the last decades, it is evident the great steps that have been implemented in order to reach solutions for individuals relationships. Cases in which mediation has been necessary to follow these advances, although, there are many who have opposed this idea or at least, they were sceptical, it has been possible to discover interesting advantages according to (Rule, 2000), and under observations of why one or another way of carrying out a mediation process would be chosen (either in person or virtual). On the other hand, it will be necessary to consider that these procedures were more of a commercial nature.

As mentioned, the current circumstances have led to dependence on the use of communication technologies, which is why conflict resolution procedures (arbitration, litigation, and their hearings as well as mediation) have also had to choose to implement these deliveries. Although in the past the use of virtual platforms such as videoconferences were subject to specific cases in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) today, it is a way to continue with the procedures avoiding documentation queues and stagnation. Cheng (2020) also details that there are recommendations for the use of these virtual options, emphasizing that they work as optimally as possible so that the parties have access to transmit, hear and be heard and thus continue the mediation as if it were in person.

Conflicts which were typically settled by trial have shifted to Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in recent years. Mediation, consultation, and arbitration are examples of ADR mechanisms that have gained popularity due to their ability to prevent expensive and time-consuming court battles. In ADR systems, disputing parties communicate face to face and communicate with one another in an effort to settle their disagreement. Although it is well known that high emotional intelligence is critical for mediators and lawyers (Duffy, 2010; Kelly and Kaminskienė, 2016), it is unavoidable that the control of feeling and the emotional intelligence of parties will play a role in settling conflicts.

ODR refers to ADR mechanisms that make use of developments in information and communication technology (ICT) to represent a presence online (Legg, 2016). ICT in ODR will have an effect on

how the decisions are taken and how the negotiation is communicated. Systems facilitating disputant decision making vary from relatively passive technologies such as electronic document transfer through displays and mail to artificially intelligent systems that provide stakeholders with help based on sophisticated models of the conflict and/or reasoning. Furthermore, an ODR's support for disputants as a communication medium varies from text-based asynchronous communication, including the email, chat rooms, and established replies, to sequential video and phone conferencing assistance, enabling disputing parties to hold face-to-face and real-time meetings. The AI model of patient-provider conflicts embedded in the ReConsider ODR scheme (Muecke, 2011) used in this analysis facilitates conflict resolution without the need for a human mediator. Asynchronous text-based communication with specified responses is used to communicate between the disputants.

As per the statement of Muecke (2011), Smart ODR mechanism that allows disputing parties to rethink their opinions by addressing problems and subissues in a standardized manner before the entities come to an agreement or admit their inability to find a compromise. The app assists two parties in resolving their disagreement in an asynchronous manner, without the need for a human mediator. Instead, the computational model directs the concurrent discussion by making conclusions utilizing Bayesian inferencing, as defined in the following parts. The software requests disputants to pick a location from the most common set of options when it first starts. If the disputants contradict, less common propositions are proposed, and so forth, until a very fine-grained degree of compromise is achieved, or the computational model has no more levels.

ODR offers greater access to the courts and cost-effective dispute settlement in general (Poblet and Casanovas, 2007) and it has been used to resolve conflicts among sellers and buyers in e - commerce websites (For instance, SquareTrade by eBay), settlements in divorce (Abrahams *et al.*, 2012), claims for insurance (For instance, Cybersettle and SmartSettle), as well as to assist in the settlement of financial disputes in family law (Bellucci, 2008).

The accommodation of emotion is a problem that emerges with ODR. Most disagreements are considered to be emotionally charged. Fisher and Shapiro (2006) offer an in-depth analysis of the emotions that participants in face-to-face conflict resolution feel, as well as strategies for managing emotion. The function of emotion in ODR, especially Smart ODR models that do not require a human mediator, has not yet been studied. Understanding the role of emotion is particularly crucial when dealing with highly emotional conflicts among health care providers and patients (Menkel-Meadow, 2017).

Empathy is known to affect face-to-face conflict resolution processes and outcomes (Ogilvie and Carsky, 2002; Der Foo *et al.*, 2004; Boland and Ross, 2010). It is characterized as the capacity to identify and maintain one's personal feelings as well as cope more effectively with other individual's emotions (Goleman, 2012). The tendency to settle a face-to-face conflict is directly linked to the Empathy of disputing parties, according to Boland and Ross (2010). Nevertheless, the degree to which this applies to Smart ODR without the use of a mediator has never been investigated.

2.6. Summary of the Literature review

The definition of empathy adheres as a concept of being an element high in subjective value, its perception would vary between persons, and however, they could be considered factors of communicative (verbal) and gesturing (non-verbal) expression.

Empathy is of great importance in mediation since it allows the exchange of experiences in the mediation participants, making this mechanism contribute to dealing with sensitive issues.

It is observed that progress nowadays has developed ways to resolve disputes such as in the international commercial field.

It is known that mediation (in its various specializations) was also led to implement the delivery of its processes by virtual platforms due to current circumstances. But that in turn, possible advantages and recommendations have been discovered so that these implementations are effective.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The research method allows the researchers to examine and analyse the data obtained as well as provide an overall framework for achieving the objective of the study (Sekaran, 2003). Hence this chapter compacts with the quantitative research with case study approach, research approches, research philosophies, strategies, choices, time horizon, data collection and analysis as well as research limitations are detailed to align the path that this research are deliberated. Also, issues related to validity, reliability, accessibility, ethics and procedure of the current study are explained in detail.

3.2. Philosophies

The collection, identification, and adoption of primary data is encouraged by this philosophy. However, picking the appropriate philosophy is critical since it directs the investigator in the appropriate track. Furthermore, the researcher's philosophy reveals how they view the world and how they intend to approach the topic (Saunders *et al*., 2012). From the perspective of an epistemological position, researcher interested in exploring understand the how empathy is perceived and how these were carried out in virtual media. Epistemology is concerned with addressing questions like what constitutes or should constitute suitable knowledge in a certain subject, as well as the sources and constraints of that knowledge. There are numerous preconceptions centered on social science research, whereas epistemology has two distinct approaches on 2 distinct philosophical problems, which are classified as interpretivist and positivist perspectives (Saunders *et al*., 2012). The prior tactic to knowledge is founded on fundamental beliefs and principles, while the latter ignores subjective interpretations. This method used a quantitative technique to evaluate theories and seek to find a coincidental relationship between the control and the predictor (Holloway and Wheeler, 2002). Since the present study aimed to explore how the social world is interpreted by the mediators. This approach would further enable the researcher to understand the experiences from the perspective of

people in Dublin region, as a result, the personal experiences of the participants can be explored from the perspective of human nature. Therefore, this study would adopt positivism approach.

3.3. Approaches

3.3.1. Quantitative: Deductive Approach

As stated by Saunders *et al*. (2012), the relationship between research and theory can be treated in a variety of ways. In this aspect, the present research used deductive method. This approach allows the researcher to understand the association of variables and obtaining general conclusions. A hypothesis is formed on the basis of the review of literature and then evaluated utilizing survey technique in the deductive approach, which is also known as a "top-down" technique (Saunders *et al*., 2009; Gabriel, 2013). In general, Bell *et al*. (2018) associate the qualitative research with inductive approach with and the quantitative methodology with deductive approach selection. Hence this research use deductive approach. The purpose of the investigation is to be able to understand the how empathy is perceived; the study is carried out in Dublin; and the results obtained was described under this context. Further, this research also enabled the researcher to explore a new phenomenon in this case online dispute resolution and come with new conceptual meaning attached to it with specific reference to empathy and mediation. It has a quantitative character since it takes into account the perceptions of the population about the study variable, being that empathy would be conceived with differences between individuals of the population.

3.4. Strategies

3.4.1. Case Study

Unity:	Population over 18 years of age living within the urban area in Dublin
Element:	Population over 18 years of age who reside within the urban area and who have been part of a Mediation process in the past
Extension:	Dublin city area
Temporal period:	December 2020 to May 2021

A research strategy can be regarded of as a method for conducting research in an attempt to answer a certain research question (Saunders *et al*., 2012). The above mentioned strategy is directed towards a phenomenon of study of interest raised in a group with homogeneous characteristics (Gagnon, 2010) and that share similar traits on a certain context. For this part, the study units (population individuals) was evaluated in detail. The type of study in the case study was descriptive since it seeks to provide a deep-level understanding of the phenomenon of interest, since it allows an observation and analysis from a singular element towards the integration of the whole (Gagnon, 2010). In general, a descriptive method describes occurrences, a specific issue or problem, and population characteristics (Collis and Hussey, 2009). This approach is frequently used in conjunction with either exploratory or explanatory study. The goal of the study was to better grasp the conceptual definition and meaning of empathy in the setting of online platforms. As a result, in order to fully comprehend and investigate the phenomenon, researchers used a descriptive and explanatory method. The explanatory technique aids in determining the relationship between variables and forecasting future occurrences (Saunders *et al*., 2012).

3.5. Choices

3.5.1. Mono-method

This research has a quantitative nature since remembering the approaches and strategies that are adopted to the variable which is Empathy is perceived not in the same way according to the population. Therefore, for this reason the research adopt mono-method, using only a quantitative approach. Quantitative research, according to Creswell (2011), is any data gathering or data processing technique that uses numerical data. As the goal of this study was to describe and investigate a relatively novel event using a survey approach, a quantitative technique driven by a positivist philosophy was appropriate (Saunders *et al*., 2012). Based on the information gathered during the survey, the investigator set out to investigate a new phenomenon and, as a result, either develop a new hypothesis or contribute to the knowledge base of current theories. In this case, the research is aimed to identify how empathy is perceived in mediation processes and how it is transmitted in online platforms through quantitative survey. According to a research by Given et al. (2008), the present methodology allows for profound empathy via survey with participants in the absence of compelled options.

3.5.2 Sample size, target population and sampling

The sample size of the study will be around 60-80 mediators. The respondents will be people who involved in mediation process in recent years in online platforms. The respondents was chosen on the basis of simple random sampling method, this method helps the researcher to choose sample randomly. To guarantee that every individual in the population had an equal probability of being selected, a simple random sampling method was applied.

3.6. Time Horizon

The time period that the research takes place between December 2020 and May 2021, what a Cross-sectional design infers because it would be carried out in a unique event and Simple Cross-sectional design to take a group of the population. However, when considering the responses and participation of the population, their experiences of having participated in a mediation process in the last two decades was considered.

3.7. Data Collection and Analysis

3.7.1. Survey

Primary data collection method was applied in this research. It was acquired from the primary information source. The primary data were more dependable and had a greater degree of decision-making conviction, with the trustworthy assessment providing a direct link to the events' occurrence.

Questionnaires are the most common method for gathering primary data in practical research since the investigator may choose the sample size and number of questions to present (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). In this research, every participant was asked to answer the same set of questions, which was randomized to avoid bias. Originally, the survey questionnaire was created and mixed together depending on consistent patterns from certain topics. As a result, the questionnaire yielded useful information that was needed to fulfil the dissertation's aims. A five-item Likert scale was used to create the surveys. Each item was measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating "strongly disagree" and 5 indicating "strongly agree." The answers were totalled to get a score for each of the parameters. Secondary sample for this research was gathered from publications publicly available via libraries and repositories, and also company websites, annual reports and historical papers.

3.7.2 Reliability Analysis

Most often, the Cronbach's alpha value is used to determine the reliability of internal consistency (Cronbach and Warrington, 1951). In most research contexts, a reliability value of 0.70 or more is regarded "acceptable" (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011).

3.8. Research Limitations

- Since the survey strategy with the deductive approach, although it may generate less clear results, has also two weaknesses according to Gagnon (2010): reliability and the lack of integration and complete structure from its processing guide. However, it is considered appropriate since it assumes the study on the individuals who have experienced being in mediation processes and, in turn, if these processes were delivered virtually and in person to obtain a comparison between these two transmission ways.

- When trying to study the element of empathy that under the literature is susceptible to be perceived differently according to each individual is a research limitation.

- The study of empathy, according to several authors, implies an arduous and complex study as it has a positivist focus, it can generate certain risks when covering survey with individuals as well as when examining the results.

- Limitations of finding population who have participated in a prior Mediation process also exist.

- Obtaining reliable answers from different people (Empathy), is a limitation. Although techniques can be implemented to achieve a more precise results.

- Few of them are not willing to give answers to some questions will be limitation of this study.

3.9 Data Analysis

The primary and secondary data presented earlier in this section were used to conduct quantitative data analysis. Data coding of answers and assessment were completed prior to analysis. The data were entered to SPSS 25.0 program as the data acquired from questionnaires in order to conveniently evaluate the data collected. This function entailed recognizing, categorizing, and allocating a numerical or character sign to data, which could only be performed in one method (Luck and Rubin, 1987; Wong, 1999). All of the replies in this research were pre-coded. They have been chosen from a series of answers, each with a number that corresponded to a certain option. This procedure was followed for every previous question that required it. Following that, the data was loaded into a statistical analysis software tool, SPSS version 25.0 on Windows 10, for further processing. The software reviewed and evaluated the outcomes of many variables utilized in the study questionnaires. The findings will be greatly aided by the analysis using SPSS software. It had helped to validate the data and ensure that the SPSS results were appropriate. Data exploration has been done using descriptive statistics and graphical analysis as part of the data analysis.

3.10 Summary

The main purpose of this survey design sets out to test whether empathy play an important role in mediation process and examine to show how it is transmitted in online platforms. Since it is unique concept so it is quite comfortable to conduct quantitative survey than qualitative. In the concluding section of chapter four, the hypotheses and results are presented.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

The collected data and analysis used to test the hypothesis are discussed in this chapter. The information represents the participants' perspectives on empathy in the mediation process as well as its dissemination across online platforms. Just 102 people responded to the questionnaire, which was distributed to 150–160 people. The outcomes of each question are included after the primary data has been analysed. The first section includes demographic data analysis, diagrams, and explanations. SPSS 25.0 is used for the study, which involves regression, correlation, reliability, and descriptive statistics.

4.2 Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha has been the most widely utilized internal consistency metric ("reliability"). In a survey/questionnaire that is based a scale, when there are multiple Likert questions, it is most typically used to determine if the scale is credible (Gliem and Gliem, 2003; Bryman and Cramer, 2009). Cronbach's alpha is a measure of how reliable the questionnaire is. It usually ranges from 0 to 1. The better the internal consistency of the elements (factors) in the scale, the closer the Cronbach is to 1.0. Cronbach's alpha coefficient rises in proportion to the number of questions (factors) or the average inter-item associations (Salkind, 2007; Lavrakas, 2008).

Table 1: Reliability analysis

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.867	15

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

As per the table 1, there are 15 items in the questionnaire, which is based on Likert scale. The outcome from the reliability analysis shows that Cronbach's Alpha is 0.867. The Cronbach's Alpha greater than

0.7 is considered reliable (Ursachi *et al*., 2015). Since Cronbach's Alpha value 0.867 is greater than 0.7, the questionnaire is reliable.

4.3 Frequency Statistics

Descriptive statistics is the study of quantitatively characterizing the properties of a data set. Descriptive statistics includes frequency analysis. The frequency of an occurrence is defined in analytics as the number of times it appears. Frequency Analysis is a branch of analytics that examines measures of central tendency, percentiles, dispersion, and other statistics related to the number of recurrence (frequency) (Cooksey, 2020).

Table 2: Age

	Frequency	Percent
25-30 Years	35	34.0
31-36 Years	44	42.7
Above 36 Years	24	23.3
Total	103	100.0

Table 2: Age

The table 2 show the statistics for the age of the respondents. From the 103 respondents, majority of 42.7 percent of the respondents are between the age group 31-36 years, 34 percent the respondents are between the age group 25-30 years and remaining of the 23.3 percent the respondents are above 36 years. According to the finding above, most of the people act as mediators belong to 31-36 years. The same is graphically represented as bar graph in figure 1.

Figure 1: Age
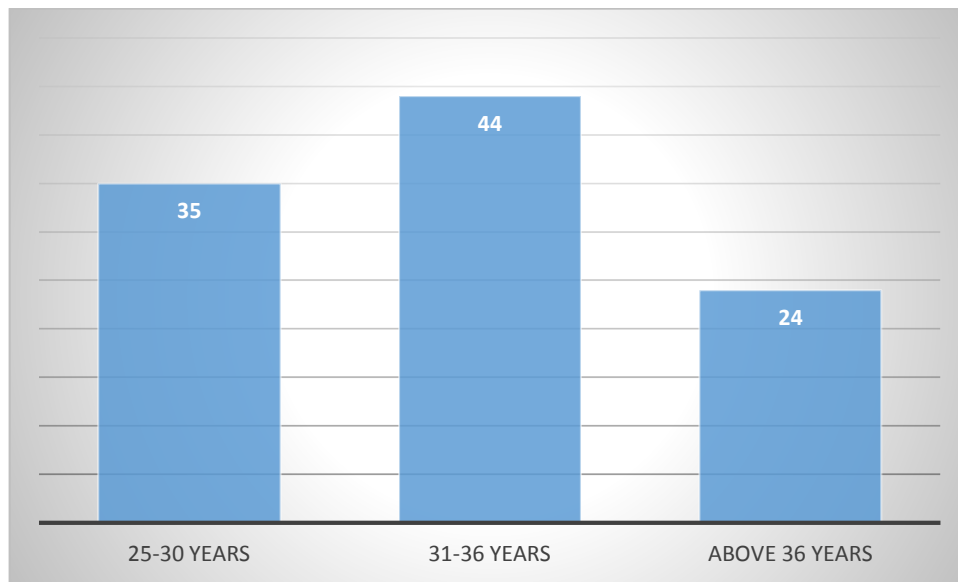
Figure 1: Age

Table 3: Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	56	54.4
Female	47	45.6
Total	103	100.0

Table 3: Gender

The table 3 show the statistics for the gender of the respondents. From the 103 respondents, majority of 54.4 percent of the respondents are male and remaining of the 45.6 percent the respondents are female. From the finding, it is noted that most of the males involved in mediator role than female. The same is graphically represented as pie chart in figure 2.

Figure 2: Gender
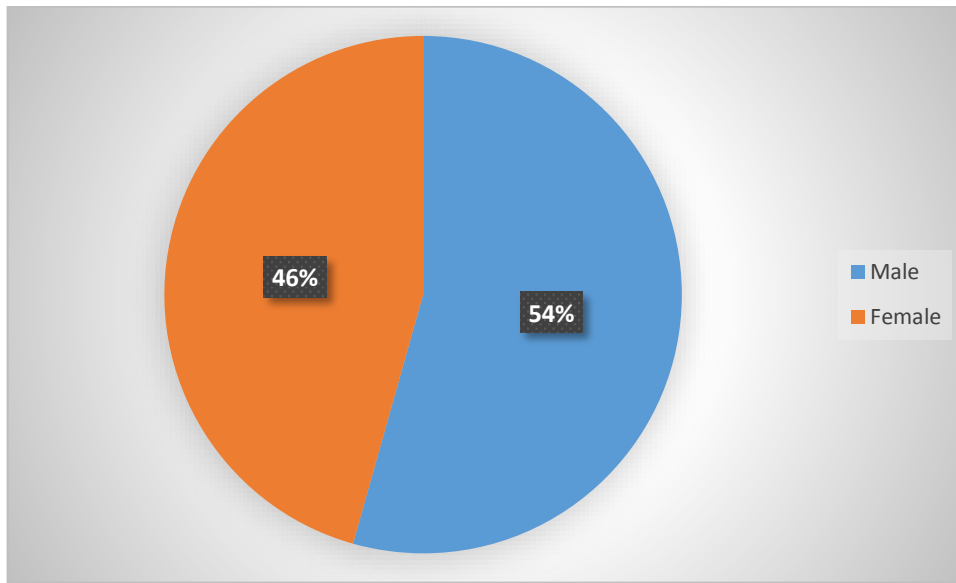
Figure 2: Gender

Table 4: Education

	Frequency	Percent
Graduate	68	66.0
Post Graduate	32	31.1
Others	3	2.9
Total	103	100.0

Table 4: Education

The table 4 show the statistics for the education qualification of the respondents. From the 103 respondents, majority of 66 percent of the respondents are graduates, 31.1 percent of the respondents are post graduates and remaining of the 2.9 percent of the respondents completed other education qualification. The same is graphically represented as bar graph in figure 3.

Figure 3: Education

Figure 3: Education

Table 5: Relationship Status

	Frequency	Percent
Single	25	24.3
Married	60	58.3
Divorced	13	12.6
Widowed	5	4.9
Total	103	100.0

Table 5: Relationship Status

The table 5 show the statistics for the relationship status of the respondents. From the 103 respondents, majority of 66 percent of the respondents are graduates, 31.1 percent of the respondents are post graduates and remaining of the 2.9 percent of the respondents completed other education qualification. The same is graphically represented as bar graph in figure 4.
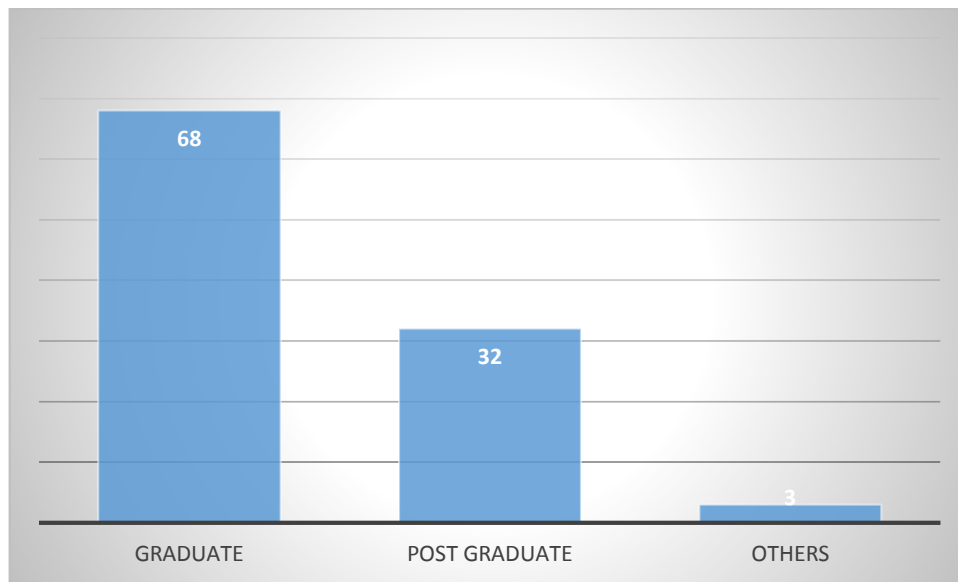
Figure 4: Relationship Status
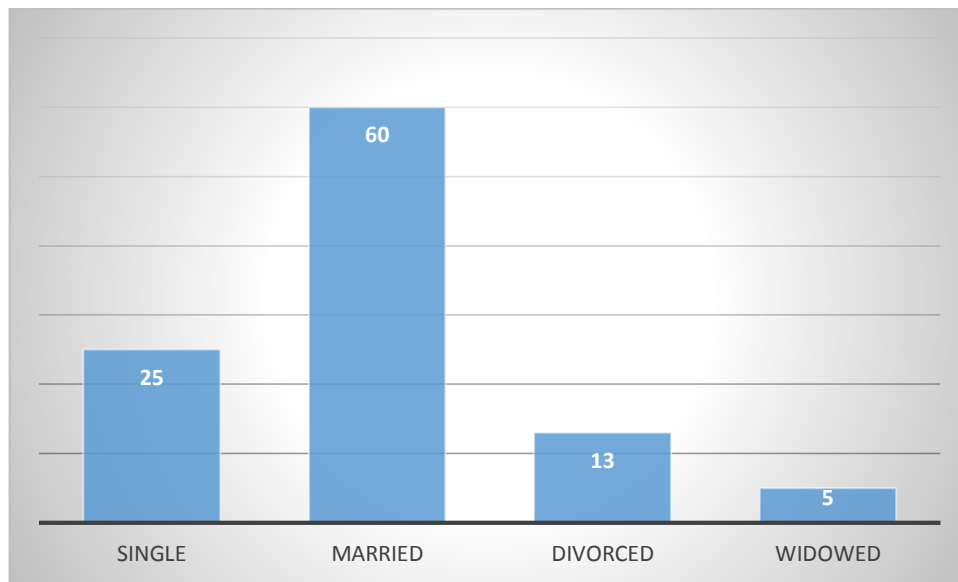
Figure 4: Relationship Status

Table 6: Use online platforms like social media and other websites

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	103	100.0

Table 6: Use online platforms like social media and other websites

The respondents were asked if they use online platforms like social media and other websites and the statistics for the same is shown in table 6. All the 103 respondents out 103 said that they use online platforms like social media and other websites.

Table 7: Duration of using online platforms

	Frequency	Percent
Past one year	7	6.8
1-3 years	46	44.7
More than 3 years	50	48.5
Total	103	100.0

Table 7: Duration of using online platforms

The respondents were asked how long they have been using the online platforms and the statistics for the same is shown in table 7. From the 103 respondents, majority of 48.5 percent of the respondents were using it for more than 3 years, 44.7 percent of the respondents were said to be using it for 1-3

years and the remaining of 6.8 percent of the respondents were using it only for past one year. The same is graphically represented as bar graph in figure 5.

Figure 5: Duration of using online platforms
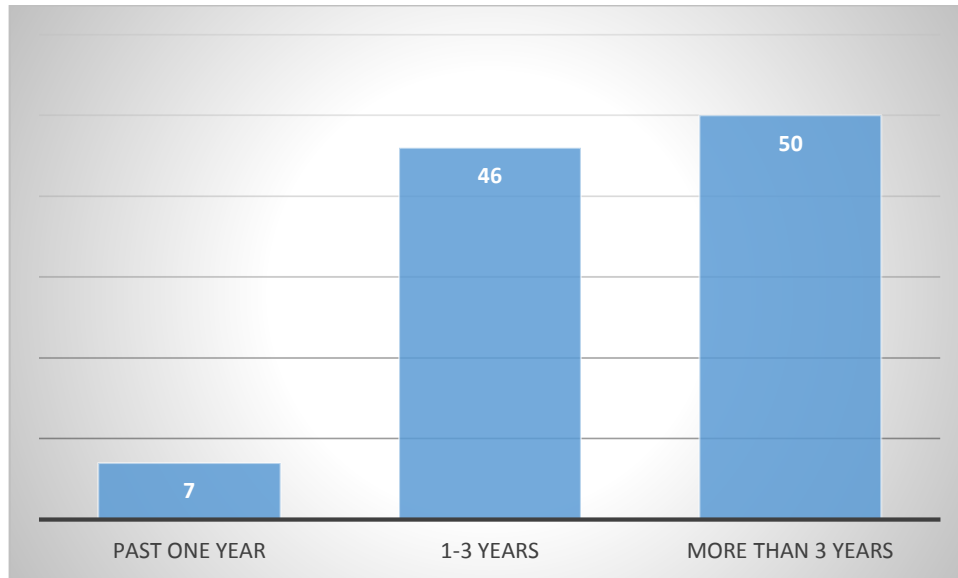
Figure 5: Duration of using online platforms

Table 8: Time spent weekly for online platforms

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 hour	2	1.9
1-2 Hours	24	23.3
3-4 Hours	35	34.0
More than 4 Hours	42	40.8
Total	103	100.0

Table 8: Time spent weekly for online platforms

The respondents were asked the amount of time they spend weekly on online platforms and the statistics for the same is shown in table 8. From the 103 respondents, majority of 40.8 percent of the respondents said that they spend more than 4 hours in a week, 34.0 percent of the respondents said that they use for 3-4 hour in a week, 23.3 percent of the respondents said that they use for 1-2 hour in a week and the remaining of 1.9 percent of the respondents said that they use the online platform for less than 1 hour in a week. The same is graphically represented as bar graph in figure 6.

Figure 6: Time spent weekly for online platforms
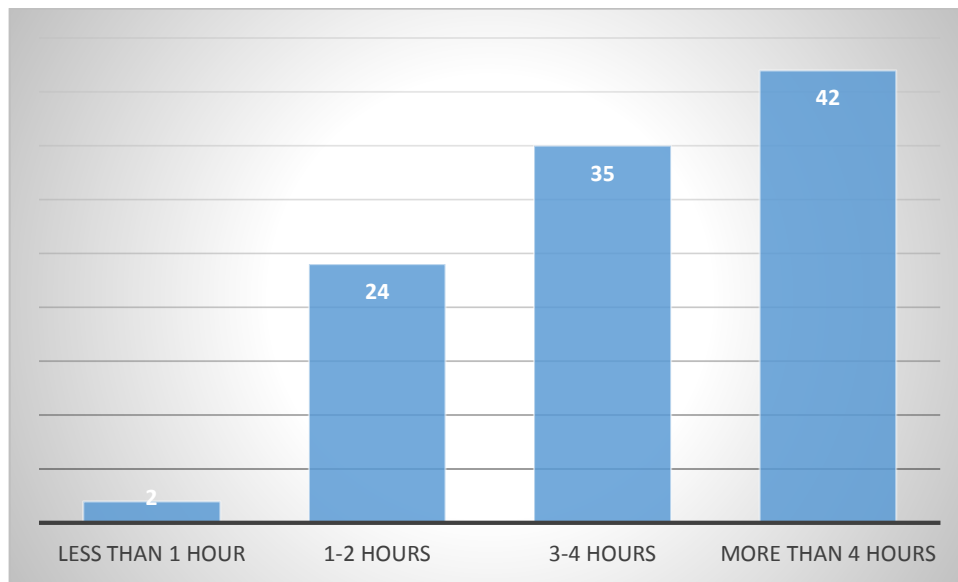
Figure 6: Time spent weekly for online platforms

Table 9: Frequency of posting in online platform

	Frequency	Percent
Rarely	62	60.2
Frequently	41	39.8
Total	103	100.0

Table 9: Frequency of posting in online platform

The respondents were asked the how often they post in online platform and the statistics for the same is shown in table 9. From the 103 respondents, majority of 60.2 percent of the respondents said that the frequency of them posting anything online is rare and the remaining 39.8 percent of the respondents said that they post very frequently. The same is graphically represented as pie chart in figure 7.

Figure 7: Frequency of posting in online platform
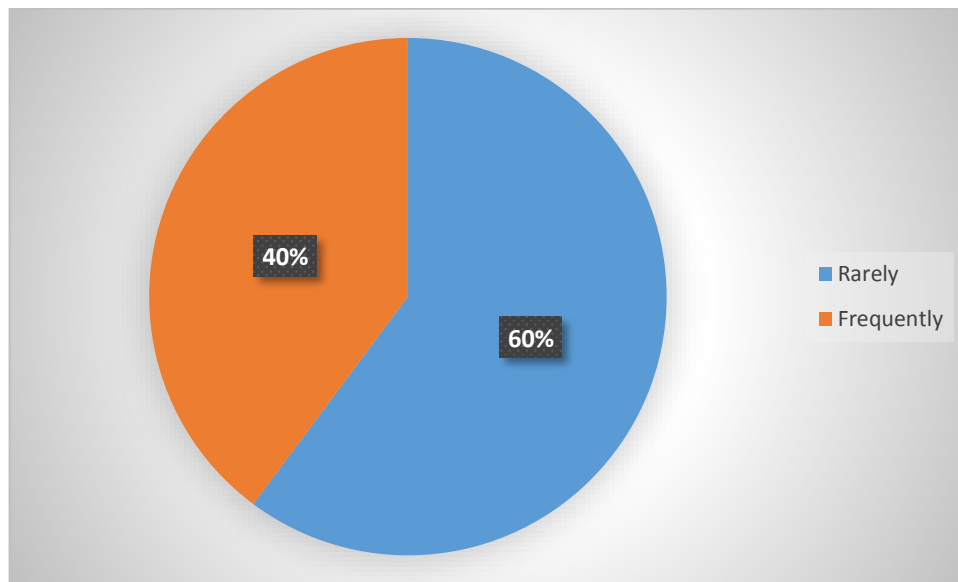
Figure 7: Frequency of posting in online platform

Table 10: Checking online platform the last thing before going to bed

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	54	52.4
No	49	47.6
Total	103	100.0

Table 10: Checking online platform the last thing before going to bed

The respondents were asked if checking online platform the last thing before going to bed and the statistics for the same is shown in table 10. From the 103 respondents, majority of 52.4 percent of the respondents said that they checking online platform the last thing before going to bed and the remaining 47.6 percent of the respondents said that checking online platform is not the last thing before going to bed. The same is graphically represented as pie chart in figure 8.

Figure 8: Checking online platform the last thing before going to bed
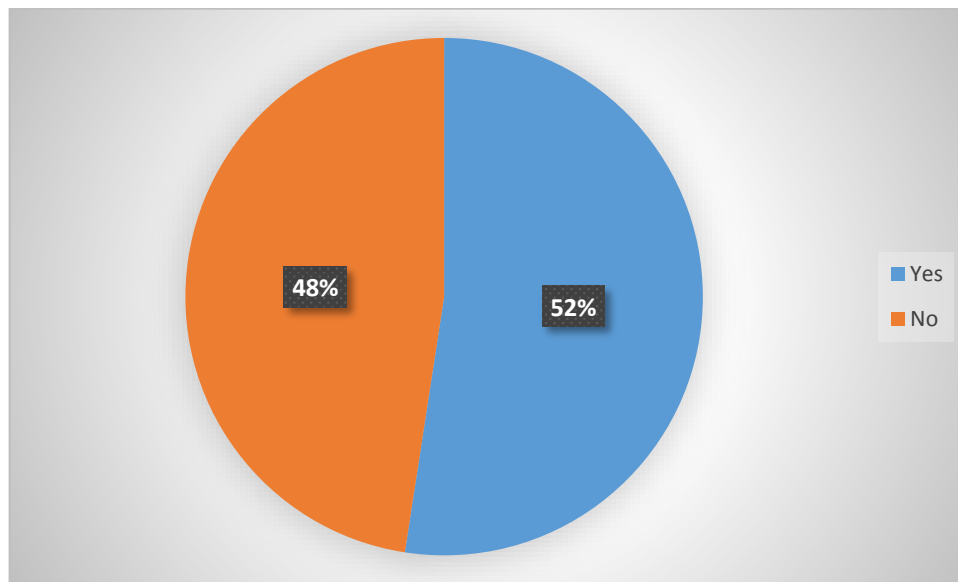
Figure 8: Checking online platform the last thing before going to bed

Table 11: Involved any disputes in online platforms recently

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	103	100.0

Table 11: Involved any disputes in online platforms recently

The respondents were asked if they have involved any disputes in online platforms recently and the statistics for the same is shown in table 11. All the 103 respondents out 103 said that they have involved any disputes in online platforms recently.

Table 12: The reason behind last dispute involvement

	Frequency	Percent
I justified my opinion strongly	70	68.0
I object other's opinion	15	14.6
Nothing in specific	18	17.5
Total	103	100.0

Table 12: The reason behind last dispute involvement

The respondents were asked what the reason behind involvement was in last dispute and the statistics for the same is shown in table 12. From the 103 respondents, majority of 68 percent of the respondents said that the reason behind they involvement in dispute it to justified their opinion strongly, 17.5

percent of the respondents said there is no reason in specific and remaining 14.6 percent of the respondents said to object other's opinion. The same is graphically represented as bar graph in figure 9.

Figure 9: The reason behind last dispute involvement
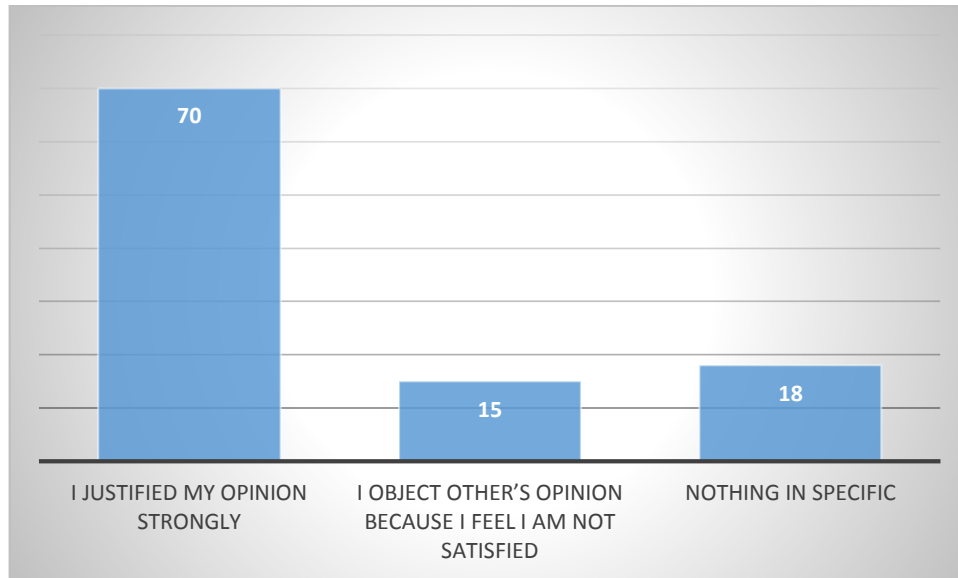
Figure 9: The reason behind last dispute involvement

Table 13: Resolve the issue raised

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	58	56.3
No	45	43.7
Total	103	100.0

Table 13: Resolve the issue raised

The respondents were asked have resolved any dispute in online platform and the statistics for the same is shown in table 13. From the 103 respondents, majority of 56.3 percent of the respondents said they resolved the issue raised and remaining 43.7 percent of the respondents said that they have not resolved the issue raised. The same is graphically represented as pie chart in figure 10.

Figure 10: Resolve the issue raised
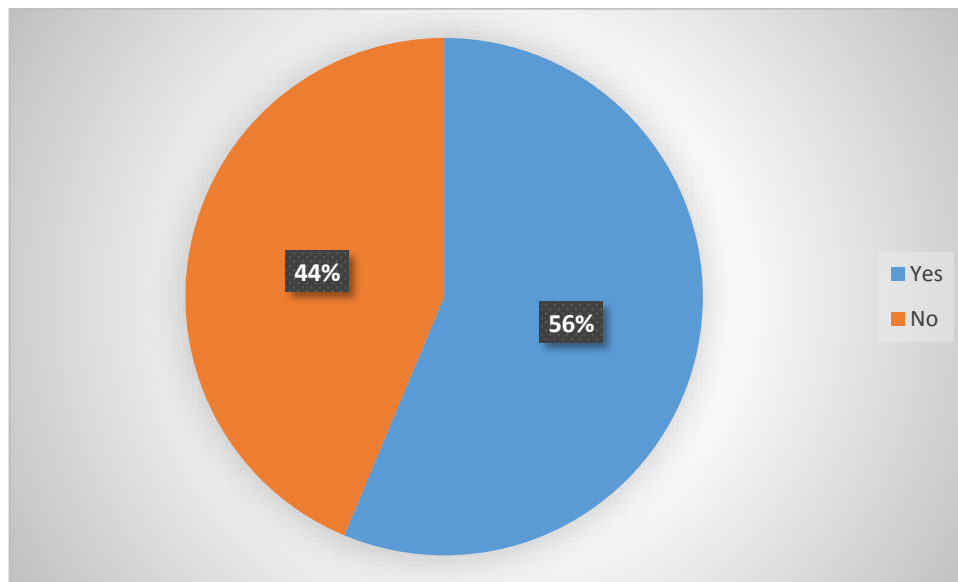
Figure 10: Resolve the issue raised

Table 14: Disputes management technique

	Frequency	Percent
Focus on the problem not the person	22	21.4
Never make sweeping generalizations or rash judgements	21	20.4
Show an equal level of respect for all sides	28	27.2
Be professional and forthright	10	9.7
Thoroughly understand what is being said	15	14.6
Explain how you feel about a situation rather than attack	7	6.8
Total	103	100.0

Table 14: Disputes management technique

The respondents were asked what technique the use to resolve any dispute and the statistics for the same is shown in table 14. From the 103 respondents, majority of 27.2 percent of the respondents said they show an equal level of respect for all sides, 21.4 percent of the respondents said they focus on the problem not the person, 20.4 percent of the respondents said they never make sweeping generalizations or rash judgements, 14.6 percent of the respondents said they thoroughly understand what is being said, .97 percent of the respondents said they be professional and forthright and

remaining 6.8 percent of the respondents said they explain how you feel about a situation rather than attack. The same is graphically represented as bar graph in figure 11.

Figure 11: Disputes management technique
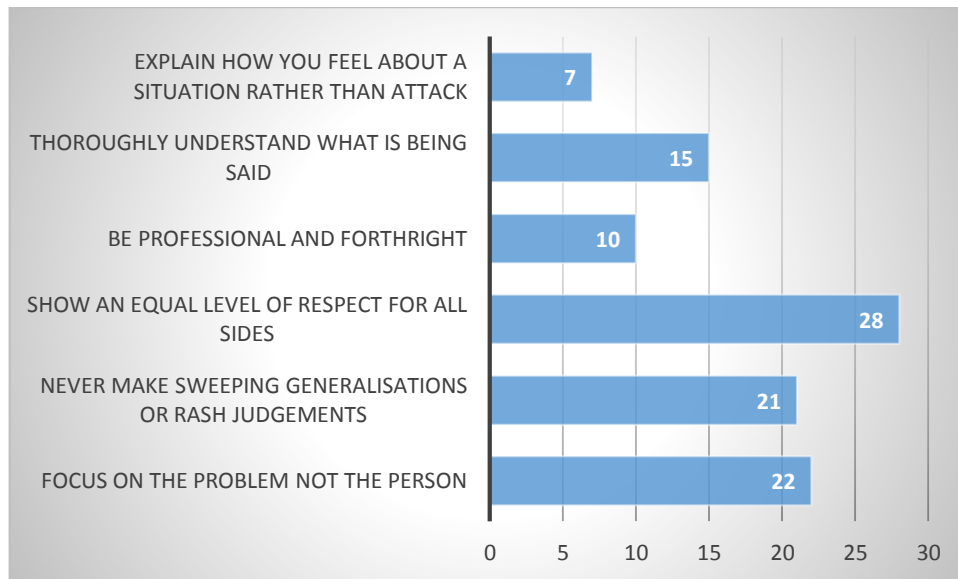
Figure 11: Disputes management technique

Table 15: The way technology use enhance the positive emotions of its users

	Frequency	Percent
Build love and joy	49	47.6
Change positive thinking	41	39.8
Create positive attitude	13	12.6
Total	103	100.0

Table 15: The way technology use enhance the positive emotions of its users

The respondents were asked in what way technology use enhance the positive emotions of its users and the statistics for the same is shown in table 15. From the 103 respondents, majority of 47.6 percent of the respondents said they build love and joy, 39.8 percent of the respondents said they change positive thinking and remaining 12.6 percent of the respondents said they create positive attitude. The same is graphically represented as bar graph in figure 12.

Figure 12: The way technology use enhance the positive emotions of its users

Figure 12: The way technology use enhance the positive emotions of its users

Table 16: The way technology use enhance the negative emotions of its users

	Frequency	Percent
Block trust building	35	34.0
Stop the people being empathetic	45	43.7
Blur rational thinking	23	22.3
Total	103	100.0

Table 16: The way technology use enhance the negative emotions of its users

The respondents were asked in what way technology use enhance the negative emotions of its users and the statistics for the same is shown in table 16. From the 103 respondents, majority of 43.7 percent of the respondents said they stop the people being empathetic, 34 percent of the respondents said they block trust building and remaining 22.3 percent of the respondents said they blur rational thinking. The same is graphically represented as bar graph in figure 13.

Figure 13: The way technology use enhance the negative emotions of its users

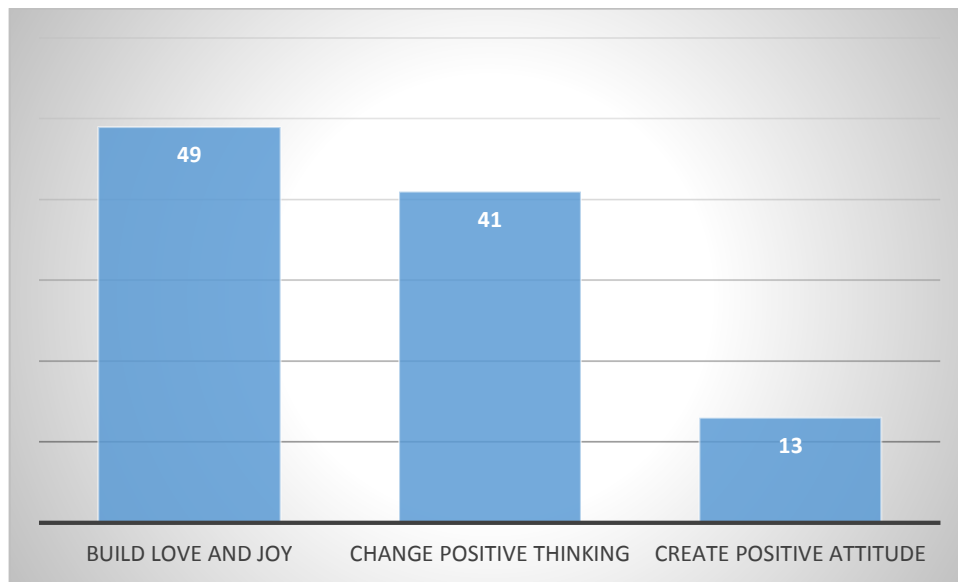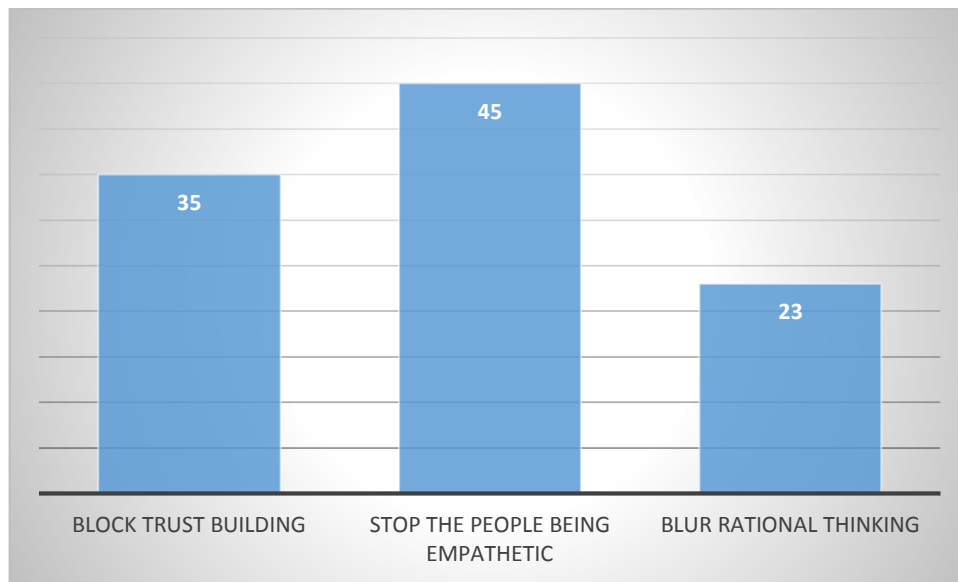*Figure 13: The way technology use enhance the negative emotions of its users*

Table 17: The online platform the enhance empathy

	Frequency	Percent
Social Media	56	54.4
Blogs	30	29.1
Forum	13	12.6
Others	4	3.9
Total	103	100.0

Table 17: The online platform the enhance empathy

The respondents were asked which online platform the enhance empathy and the statistics for the same is shown in table 17. From the 103 respondents, majority of 54.4 percent of the respondents said social media, 29.1 percent of the respondents said blogs, 12.6 percent of the respondents said forums and remaining 3.9 percent of the respondents said other online platforms. The same is graphically represented as bar graph in figure 14.

Figure 14: The online platform the enhance empathy
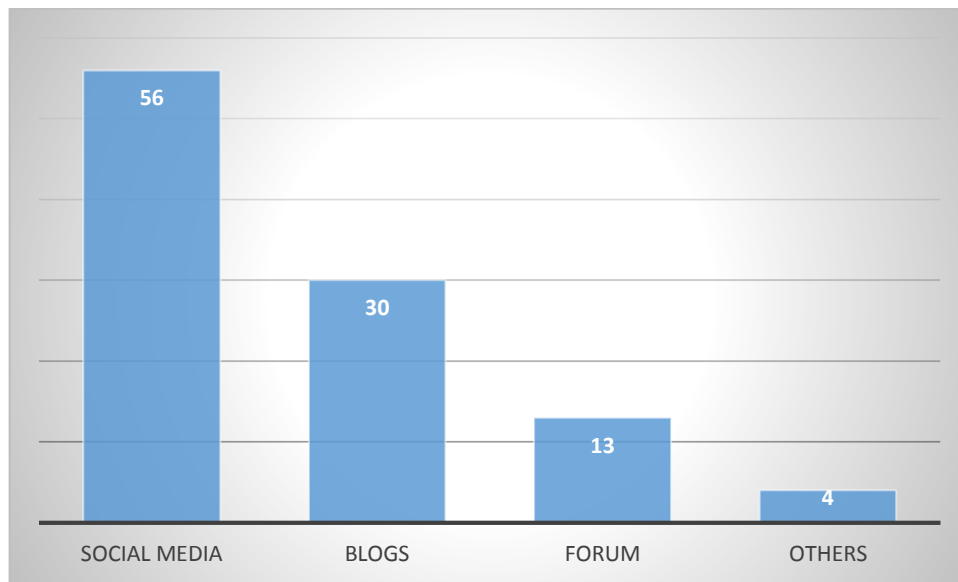
Figure 14: The online platform the enhance empathy

Table 18: People should be careful in conversing with others in online platforms

	Frequency	Percent
Try to avoid conflict	58	56.3
Enhance positive emotions	25	24.3
Use proper words in debates or messages	17	16.5
Others	3	2.9
Total	103	100.0

Table 18: People should be careful in conversing with others in online platforms

The respondents were asked what people should be careful about while conversing with others in online platforms and the statistics for the same is shown in table 18. From the 103 respondents, majority of 56.3 percent of the respondents said should try to avoid conflict, 24.3 percent of the respondents said should try to enhance positive emotions, 16.5 percent of the respondents said should use proper words in debates or messages and remaining 2.9 percent of the respondents said others.

Figure 15: People should be careful in conversing with others in online platforms
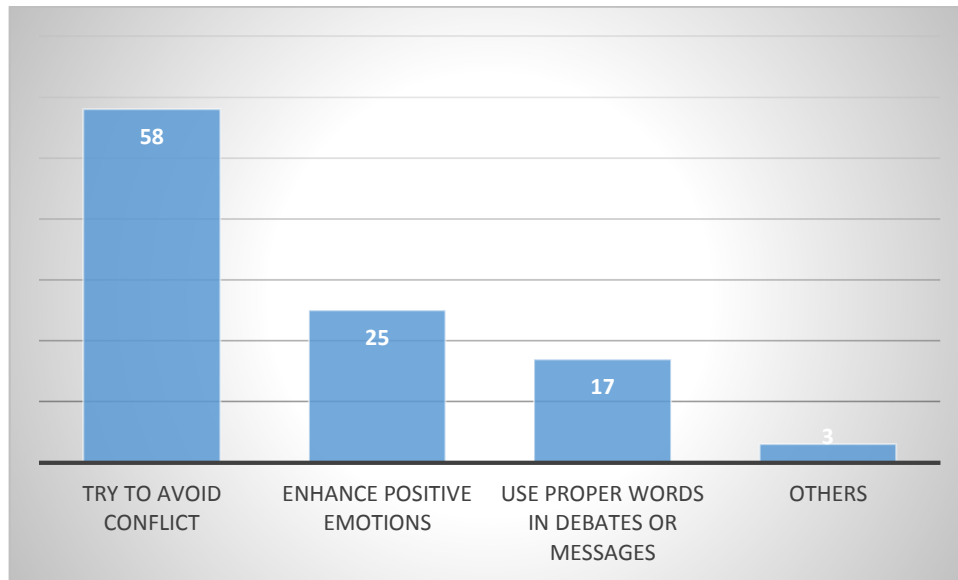
Figure 15: People should be careful in conversing with others in online platforms

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical approach for determining how closely two factors are associated to one another or the extent to which they are associated. Correlation coefficients must always fall between -1 and 1. Correlations can be divided into three categories (Mukaka, 2012; Nickolas, 2021):

1. Negative and positive correlations: Negative correlation occurs when one factor advances in a positive direction while a second variable advances in a negative direction. Positive correlation occurs when two factors increase at the same rate.

2. Linear, nonlinear, and curvi-linear correlation: Linear correlation occurs when both factors vary in the same proportion. Both factors are identified to be in curvi-linear correlation if they do not vary in the same proportion.

3. Simple and multiple correlations: A simple correlation occurs when two factors in a correlation are studied. Multiple correlations are used when multiple variables are investigated for association (Mukaka, 2012; Nickolas, 2021).

Table 19: Correlation between Empathy and Online Platform

		Online Platform
Cognitive Empathy	Pearson Correlation	.685[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
Affective Empathy	Pearson Correlation	.572[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		

Table 19: Correlation between Empathy and Online Platform

Table 19 show the correlation between Empathy (Cognitive and Affective) and Online Platform. The Pearson Correlation coefficient of Cognitive Empathy is 0.685 and Affective Empathy is 0.572. Moderate degree of correlation is defined as a range of correlation coefficients between 0.50 - 0.75 (Calkins, 2005). The correlation coefficients of both Cognitive Empathy and Affective Empathy ranges between 0.50 - 0.75. Thus there is a moderate degree of correlation. Since the correlation coefficients value is positive, the relationship between the variables is also positive. The p value show whether there is significant correlation between the variables. If the p value 0.005 or less, then there exist a significant correlation between variables (Andrade, 2019; Di Leo and Sardanelli, 2020). The p value of Cognitive Empathy is 0. 001 and Affective Empathy is 0. 001. For both the variables the p value is less than 0.005, thus the correlation between variables is significant. Therefore there is exist a significant positive correlation between Empathy (Cognitive and Affective) and Online Platform.

4.5 Regression Analysis

After correlation, linear regression is the next phase. When we want to forecast the value of a factor based on the value of another factor, we apply this method. The most fundamental and widely employed form of predictive analysis is linear regression. The goal of regression is to look at two things: (1) is it possible to forecast an outcome (dependent) factor using a set of predictor factors? (2) Which factors in specific constitute significant predictors of the outcome factor, and how do they influence the outcome factor (as evidenced by the size and sign of the beta estimates)? These

regression estimations are being used to illustrate how one dependent factor interacts with one or more independent factors (Sweet and Grace-Martin, 2008; Jain, 2018).

Table 20: Association between Empathy and Online Platform

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		R Square	F Value	p value
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	.794	.300			
Cognitive Empathy	.551	.090	.510	52.100	.001
Affective Empathy	.242	.084			
a. Dependent Variable: 19. Online Platform					

Table 20: Association between Empathy and Online Platform

Table 19 shows the association between Empathy (Cognitive and Affective) and Online Platform. Once all independent variables are maintained fixed, unstandardized coefficients show how the dependent variable fluctuates with an independent variable (Mahbobi and Tiemann, 2015). The beta value for Cognitive Empathy is 0.551 and Affective Empathy is 0.242. This implies that for each increase in Empathy (Cognitive and Affective), there is an increase in Online Platform. The R^2 value also known as the coefficient of prediction is the ratio of variation in the dependent factor that can be enlightened by the independent factors, as shown in the "R Square" column (Laerd Statistics, 2020). The R Square value is 0.510. The F-value in the table determines if the entire regression model fits the data well (Sureiman and Mangera, 2020). The statistically the independent factors significantly forecast the dependent factor, F = 52.100, p = .0001 (less than 0.005), as shown in the table implies that for the data the regression model is a good fit.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The present study aimed to carry out the research in the perspective of investigating how empathy is perceived in mediation process and is transmitted through online platforms. Therefore, the analysis of descriptive and inferential statistics was carried out in chapter 4 and from that, this chapter undergoes discussion of findings based on objectives framed. Further this chapter attempt to conclude the whole research and gives some suggestions for future research.

5.2 Summary of the findings

- From the 103 respondents, majority of 42.7 percent of the respondents are between the age group 31-36 years. From this, it is noted that middle aged people are mostly utilising online platforms, they involved in mediation process than young and older people.

- Highest of 54.4 percent of the respondents are male. It is noted that male are act as major mediators than female in online platforms. It is not surprising fact, they are probably like to convey their opinion strongly than majority of the women in this competitive world.

- The study findings highlights that majority of 66 percent of the respondents are graduates, therefore they interestingly involved in online disputes.

- Majority of 58.3 percent of the respondents are married.

- All the participants in the research said that they use online platforms like social media and other websites. It is not surprising because in recent years the increasing use of internet among people is increasing due to the technology development. As a result, there are lot of social media sites are developed and still establishing in various forms.

- Most of 48.5 percent of the respondents were using it for more than 3 years. As already discussed, the increasing internet technology induce the individual to use social media sites.

- Approximately, 40.8 percent of the respondents said that they spend more than 4 hours in a week. Fortunately, most of the participants are using less hours in online platforms.

- In the research, most of 60.2 percent of the respondents said that the frequency of posting anything in online is rare and the remaining 39.8 percent of the respondents said that they post very frequently. By chance, they are using less number of hours in a week reflect in their posting in online platforms.

- Majority of 52.4 percent of the respondents said that they check online platform as the last thing before going to bed. This attitude among individuals should be changed. And most of them use online platforms during night-time, this was evidently understood in this research.

- All the 103 respondents said that they were involved in any disputes in online platforms recently. Researcher chose the respondents based on their voluntary participation in the research and moreover who are mostly and recently involved in disputes was selected. Therefore it is not astounding thing.

- The best part of 68 percent of the respondents said that the reason behind they involvement in dispute is to justified their opinion strongly. Of course, this is suitable, each and every person have the rights to share their opinion strongly and openly with proper justification. It is good the respondents participated in the research, who are probably strong in given justification to their opinion.

- Majority of 56.3 percent of the respondents said they resolved the issue raised. Happily, majority of the respondents has involved in the research are well known to solve the problems that raised during mediation in online platforms.

- Majority of 27.2 percent of the respondents said they show an equal level of respect for all sides. This is respectable; people should always give respect and act as better listener while

any conversations happen or either in chatting or other conversation or debates in online platforms that would increase the mutual relation between one another. This evidenced that people participated in the research adopt the better dispute management technique by give equal respect to others. Further they mainly focus on the problem not the person and also most of them never make sweeping generalizations or rash judgements. In addition, they act as best listeners.

- Majority of 47.6 percent of the respondents said they build love and joy. It is reputable as it is essential among people to build love and joy in the surrounding environment. This confirms that the use of technology enhance the positive emotions of its users.

- Majority of 43.7 percent of the respondents said they stop the people being empathetic. It is evident from the finding, technology use enhance the negative emotions of its user hence they stop the others being empathetic.

- The study further shows that 54.4 percent of the respondents said social media enhance empathy and after that blogs play a major role in enhancing empathy among individuals.

- Majority of 56.3 percent of the respondents said they try to avoid conflict and also advised to enhance positive emotions.

- The findings further confirmed that there exists a significant positive correlation between Empathy (Cognitive and Affective) and Online Platform.

5.3 Discussion

RQ1: How is empathy perceived in mediation processes and how is transmitted through online platforms?

In order to understand the above question, researcher attempt to describe the empathy role in mediation process. The findings of the study confirmed that most of the respondents apply empathy in mediation process. Empathy involves in two ways, one is affective and another is cognitive. These two empathy are established in mediation processes while using online platforms. Since there are two connotations of empathy (Duan and Hill, 1996), one affective (where emotional and feeling states are involved) and the other cognitive (where opportunities for understanding are identified under concepts), this document takes a cognitive empathy perspective because in mediation processes, dialogue and communication take the reins where the parties, regardless of their emotional and feeling states.

In this research, most of the male respondents are highly participated; hence, it is clear that those people are actively involved in disputes. But contradictory to our finding, previous studies like (Preece, 1999b) stated that Women's interactions have a stronger empathic value and a lower factual information. Women's experiences are more empathic and have less factual details, whereas men's interactions are less empathic and have more factual information and similarly, female-dominated groups having higher levels of empathy (Seale *et al.,* 2006).

With respect to age group, middle-aged people as 31-36 years are majorly involved. Another study discovered that millennials, as opposed to older adults, send far more emotional messages in their individual style, implying that age plays a role in shaping empathetic and emotional interactions online (Siriaraya *et al.*, 2011). Nonetheless, older adults were more considerate of others than their younger peers.

Respondents said that the reason behind they involvement in dispute is justified their opinion strongly. But some studies shared different views as Empathy is highly influenced by the topic of one's concern, and it is most common in support groups (Preece and Ghozati, 1998). Messages that convey thoughts and emotions are the most common triggers for empathic responses (Pfeil and Zaphiris,

2007; Kaufman and Whitehead, 2018).Members' altruistic sharing patterns, such as exchanging private knowledge, feelings, and experiences, often foster empathy (Zhao *et al.*, 2013), shifting the focus from self-help to peer support (Popham, 2017). Empathy is often expressed in responses to requests for assistance (Bronstein, 2017). Self-disclosure is an essential feature of digital communication because it exposes users' empathic interactions (Pfeil and Zaphiris, 2007).

Majority of the respondents has involved in the research are well-known to solve the problems that raised during mediation in online platforms. In this aspect, previous studies like Preston (2007) describes that there is a reflection of a series of bodily gestures since the human body expresses certain emotional lines by having to show that appreciation of the circumstances of others. Facial expressions, eye contact, and voice tone may all contribute to the effort of having experience and comprehension of the issue that the person sharing it is experiencing.

Respondents also said they show an equal level of respect for all sides. This evidenced that people participated in the research adopt the better dispute management technique by give equal respect to others. Mediation is a low-cost way to resolve a conflict (Shamir and Kutner, 2003). These activities are related to the problem-solving mediator's practice, as problem-solving mediation is one branch of conflict resolution. Bargaining, principled negotiation, innovative problem solving, and trade-offs can all contribute to a settlement, according to Spitka (2016: 25). This exposes a major flaw in the problem-solving approach: the problem-solving mediator is too directive in his or her efforts to find an agreement.

In this aspect, the problem-solving mediator directs the discussion's process and content, focusing on areas of agreement and resolvable problems while avoiding areas where agreement is unlikely (Bugess and Burgess 1997). According to Bush and Folger (2014: 14), prevents opposing parties from regaining a sense of personal power and achieving a sense of empathy toward one another, resulting in the continuation of a negative conflict interaction.

Transformative mediation, on the other hand, aims to transform conflict interaction from a negative and destructive social force into a positive and productive social force by generating two critical dynamic effects: empowerment and recognition. The study findings confirmed that they mainly focus on the problem not the person and also most of them never make sweeping generalizations or rash judgements. In addition, they act as best listeners. The transformative approach goes beyond negotiating immediate solutions and instead focuses on creating something different. The transformative strategy, according to Lederach (2014: 23, 25, 101), aims to build positive change mechanisms through conflict. Conflict is seen as a means of identifying the deeper dynamics that contributed to the conflict in the first place, making it a means of achieving a longer lasting peace. Dialogue is the most fundamental way to foster positive change at all levels. Because of its emphasis on negotiation, mediation is a one-of-a-kind instrument for dispute resolution.

The transformative approach is more suitable in some cases than others; for example, in conflicts or disputes that need a swift and final resolution without addressing the underlying causes, the problem-solving approach will be more appropriate. Despite this, the method of mediation may provide benefits that go beyond the outcome of a specific mediation, particularly when it comes to international mediation, which is why the less enacted transformative approach to mediation should be given more consideration.

It is reputable and essential among people to build love and joy in the surrounding environment. This confirms that the use of technology enhance the positive emotions of its users. However, they stop the people being empathetic shows the negative aspect of users. It is evident from the finding, social media enhance empathy and after that blogs play a major role in enhancing empathy among individuals. Majority of respondents said they try to avoid conflict and also advised to enhance positive emotions. This findings was in line with previous researcher's view as (Reilly *et al.*, 2012) noticed how empathy is reflected in art and theatre, resulting in very positive outcomes but the study

does not show its role in any online platforms. There are many researchers in earlier covered the positive empathy and its transmission in general conversations not in online platforms. Empathic relationships convey emotional depth through empathy gained by others who have experienced similar experiences with others, as well as the ability to imagine and turn themselves into someone else's thoughts and situation (Fan *et al.*, 2014). Empathetic assistance necessitates dedication, understanding, and compassion, as shown by how empathy is conveyed in art and theatre, with rather positive outcomes (Pfeil and Zaphiris, 2007).

According to the results of the study, Empathy (Cognitive and Affective) showed a positive association with online platforms. This was evident in the previous researchers view as Empathy is thought to encourage and motivate sharing (Zhao *et al.*, 2013), so it's been studied by researchers interested in learning more about the processes that make a forum successful, as well as how technology can aid empathetic communication (Preece, 1999b). Empathy research has primarily focused on assessing whether empathy occurs in content published on online platforms (Pfeil and Zaphiris, 2007), as well as how empathy is communicated and organised in user experiences ((Pfeil and Zaphiris, 2007; Kaufman and Whitehead, 2018).

Overall results recommend that People who are active on social media sites have higher empathy scores. These results go beyond Askalani (2012), research and indicate that empathy is linked to how much time one spends on Facebook, how likely one is to reach out to others on Facebook, and how interested one is on Facebook. In that both studies show socially positive characteristics associated with Facebook use, the current study adds to the work of Ellison et al. (2007). According to the Ellison et al. report, Facebook use had a positive relationship with self-esteem and life satisfaction.

The current study discovered that Facebook strength was also linked to empathic concern. The current study also adds to the body of empathy research done by Davis (1980), who developed the IRI, by using the Interpersonal Reactivity Index. Rosen (2012) as well as Ivcevic and Ambady (2012)

conducted previous studies that found positive associations between empathic speech and the frequency at which people instant message. This study backs up Rosen's findings by demonstrating a connection between using the Facebook chat feature (instant messaging) and online expressions of empathy.

5.4 Conclusion

The study findings confirmed that there exists a significant positive correlation between Empathy (Cognitive and Affective) and Online Platform. The findings concluded that people attempt to build love and joy in the surrounding environment. This confirms that the use of technology enhance the positive emotions of its users. It is evident from the finding, technology use enhance the negative emotions of its user hence they stop the others being empathetic. The study further shows that social media enhance empathy and after that blogs play a major role in enhancing empathy among individuals. Further study highlights that respondents attempt to avoid conflict and also advised to enhance positive emotions.

5.5 Recommendations of the study

o The study belongs to quantitative basis; hence, future study should conduct qualitative research in order to deeply understand the opinion of people directly.

o This research consider only empathy, future researchers may also attempt to understand emotional intelligence also to get more insights about it.

o Future researchers may attempt to include mixed method, i.e. both qualitative and quantitative approach.

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Appendix

The aim of the project is to investigate how empathy is perceived in mediation processes and how it is transmitted through online platforms.

Request/Invitation: I would like to invite you to take part in a survey.

What would be required? As a participant in the study, you would be required to answer the given questions.

- o I consent

Questionnaire

1. Age
    - o 25-30 years
    - o 31-36 years
    - o Above 36 years

2. Gender
    - o Male
    - o Female

3. Educational qualification
    - o Higher secondary
    - o Secondary
    - o Graduate
    - o Postgraduate
    - o Others

4. Relationship status
    - o Single
    - o Married
    - o Divorced
    - o Widowed

5. Did you use online platforms like social media and other websites?
    - o Yes
    - o No

6. How long have you been using online platforms?
    - o Past one year
    - o 1-3 years

o More than 3 years

7. On average, how much time do you spend weekly for online platforms? (in hours)

    o Less than 1 hour

    o 1-2 hours

    o 2-4 hours

    o More than 4 hours

8. How often do you post on social media?

    • Never

    • Rarely

    • Frequently

9. Is checking online platform the last thing you do before going to bed?

    • Yes

    • No

10. Do you involve any disputes in online platforms recently?

    o Yes

    o No

11. What is the reason behind it?

    o I justified my opinion strongly

    o I object other's opinion because I feel I am not satisfied

    o Nothing any specific

12. Did you resolve the issue raised?

    o Yes

    o No

13. How did you manage the disputes? (Tick if your answer is more than one)

    o Focus on the problem not the person

    o Never make sweeping generalisations or rash judgements

    o Show an equal level of respect for all sides

    o Be professional and forthright

    o Thoroughly understand what is being said

    o Explain how you feel about a situation rather than attack

14. How do you think the technology use enhance the positive emotions of its users?

- o Build love and joy
- o Change positive thinking
- o Create positive attitude
- o Others (if any)_____

15. How do you think the technology use enhance the negative emotions of its users?

- o Block trust building
- o Stop the people being empathetic
- o Blur rational thinking

16. According to you, what are all the technologies enhance empathy?

- o Social Media
- o Blogs
- o Forum
- o Others

17. What do you think people would be careful in conversing with others in online platforms?

- o Try to avoid conflict
- o Enhance positive emotions
- o Use proper words in debates or messages
- o Others

18. Cognitive Empathy

	SD	D	N	A	SA
I know why my friends are cheerful even when they don't say why					
I can understand how characters in an exciting story feel					
When someone is in a good mood I can tell by how they look and behave					
I know when my family members are pleased by how they talk					
I can put myself in someone else's shoes when they describe being happy					

19. Affective Empathy

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Watching little puppies playing makes me feel happy					
It makes me feel cheerful to see children running around having fun					
Hearing the cheer of a sports crowd gives me a thrill					
When I see people in a movie having an adventure, I get excited					
I feel pleased when someone tells me some good news they have just had					

20. Online Platform

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Online platforms helps me to feel less lonely					
I use online platforms to pass time when I am bored					
Online platforms lets escape my worries					
I start using online platforms when I have nothing better to do					
Online platforms allows me to explore what is out there					