

Begin with two to three sentences to introduce the background of the problem.

Problem Statement

In the United States, the primary non-litigious method of resolving formal conflict is mediation. Mediation is a conflict resolution process facilitated by a neutral third party mediator (Boulle, Colatrella, & Picchioni, 2008). Mediators are professionals who assist disputing parties to reach mutually acceptable conflict resolution outcomes. Wissler (2002) noted a positive correlation between mediator experience and successful conflict resolution, confirming that a mediator's proficiency optimized after facilitating approximately 35 mediation sessions. The general problem is the supply of mediators outweighs the demand for mediation in the general population resulting in limited opportunities for mediators to gain experience (Velikonja, 2009).

State the General Problem.

Velikonja (2009) noted that most mediators are "constantly scrambling for work" (p. 258). Without available sessions, these mediators may struggle to reach the 35 mediation sessions known to improve performance.

Include scholarly support and a transition to the specific problem.

The specific problem is that in addition to limited opportunities to practice mediation, mediators are subject to long delays between mediations, resulting in lower practice frequency, and lower quality of work (Wissler, 2002). Velikonja (2009) reported that mediators often

State the Specific Problem Statement.

practice for years before mediating 35 cases. Wissler (2002) suggested successful conflict resolution outcomes increase if mediators have more, rather than less, mediation experience. The results of this study examining the relationship between mediation experience, practice frequency, time between mediations, and successful conflict resolution outcomes could have a significant influence on the formalization of mediator practice frequency and proficiency standards.

Conclude the problem statement with one or two sentences that addresses the impact or adversity of the specific problem.