

Effectiveness of Mediation in Resolving Business Disputes in the Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

Background. The digital era has transformed the landscape of business disputes, leading to a rise in conflicts arising from online transactions, e-commerce, and digital platforms. Traditional dispute resolution methods often struggle to address the unique challenges posed by these digital disputes, prompting a growing interest in alternative methods such as mediation.

Objective. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of mediation in resolving business disputes within the digital environment. Specifically, it investigates how mediation compares to other traditional dispute resolution methods and its impact on time efficiency, cost, and overall satisfaction for businesses involved in digital disputes.

Method. A mixed-method approach was used, combining quantitative surveys from businesses that have engaged in digital mediation with qualitative interviews of legal experts and mediators. The data were analyzed to assess key factors such as cost, time savings, and satisfaction in resolving disputes.

Results. The findings indicate that mediation is significantly more cost-effective and time efficient compared to litigation. Most participants expressed high satisfaction with the mediation process, noting its flexibility and ability to preserve business relationships.

Conclusion. Mediation proves to be an effective method for resolving business disputes in the digital era, offering benefits in terms of cost, time, and relationship management. Businesses are encouraged to adopt mediation as a primary dispute resolution strategy.

KEYWORDS

Business Disputes, Digital Era, Dispute Resolution

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INTRODUCTION

The digital era has reshaped the way businesses operate, with online platforms and e-commerce playing an increasingly significant role in global trade (Hong dkk., 2024; Rękawek, 2024). As digital transactions continue to surge, so does the frequency of business disputes arising from these interactions (Chen, 2024; Gariba, 2023). Unlike traditional business disputes, digital era conflicts often involve unique challenges, such as jurisdictional issues, the rapid pace of technological change, and the complexity of online transactions. Traditional dispute resolution methods, such as litigation, may not always be equipped to handle the fast-moving and often global nature of these disputes. In this context, alternative dispute resolution (ADR).



Mediation offers a flexible, cost-effective, and relatively swift approach to resolving business conflicts, particularly in the digital space (Boorman, 2022; Kolenko dkk., 2024). Understanding the effectiveness of mediation in these disputes is vital for companies seeking efficient ways to address conflicts without resorting to lengthy and expensive litigation.

Despite the increasing adoption of mediation in resolving digital business disputes, there is still limited empirical research assessing its effectiveness in the digital era. Companies often face significant barriers in selecting appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms for online conflicts, as many are unaware of the advantages and limitations of mediation in digital settings (Malacka, 2022; Tripathi & Vidhyansh, 2022). Traditional methods, such as litigation or arbitration, may be more familiar but come with greater costs and time commitments, which makes mediation an attractive alternative. However, the actual effectiveness of mediation in terms of speed, cost savings, and overall satisfaction remains underexplored. There is also a lack of clear data regarding the factors that contribute to successful mediation in the digital space, such as the role of technology in facilitating remote mediation sessions or how digital platforms can influence the negotiation process (Kriswandani dkk., 2022; Pietrzak, 2025). This study seeks to address these gaps by evaluating the practical outcomes of mediation in resolving business disputes in the digital age and determining whether it is truly a superior alternative to other methods.

The main objective of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of mediation in resolving business disputes in the digital era. Specifically, the study aims to assess the benefits and challenges of using mediation as a dispute resolution method compared to traditional approaches such as litigation or arbitration (Mukhametzaripov, 2022; Nae, 2023). This study will focus on key factors such as time efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and satisfaction levels among businesses that have used mediation to resolve digital business disputes. Furthermore, it seeks to understand how digital technologies, such as online mediation platforms, influence the mediation process and its outcomes. The research will also explore the impact of mediation on business relationships, assessing whether it helps preserve or restore relationships between disputing parties, which is often a crucial element in business transactions. Ultimately, the study intends to provide evidence based recommendations for businesses and legal professionals on the effectiveness of mediation as a primary strategy for resolving disputes in the digital era.

Although mediation has been studied extensively in the context of traditional business disputes, there is a significant gap in the literature when it comes to its application in the digital business environment (Gulati dkk., 2023; Rumi, 2023). Previous research has focused primarily on the effectiveness of ADR methods in offline settings, with limited attention paid to the unique dynamics of digital-era conflicts. While studies have examined the advantages of mediation in reducing costs and time in traditional disputes, little has been done to evaluate whether these benefits hold true in the context of online business disputes, where factors like jurisdiction, anonymity, and technological barriers come into play (Harjono dkk., 2024; Hayati & Mujib, 2022). Additionally, existing literature often overlooks the role of technology in facilitating mediation, such as through video conferencing, online platforms, and digital documentation, which can greatly impact the success of the process. This research aims to fill this gap by examining mediation's effectiveness in the digital era and considering the specific factors that influence its success in resolving business disputes in an online setting (Kamilovska & Rakočević, 2025; Rusakova & Frolova, 2022). By doing so, the study will offer valuable insights into how mediation can be better tailored to meet the needs of businesses operating in a digital world.

This study offers a novel contribution to the field by exploring mediation's effectiveness specifically in the context of business disputes in the digital era (Carneiro dkk., 2024; Crespo,

2024). While much of the existing literature has focused on the benefits of mediation in traditional business settings, this research expands the scope by considering the complexities and challenges that arise in the digital world. The inclusion of technological factors, such as online mediation platforms and digital communication tools, adds a unique dimension to the understanding of mediation's effectiveness in modern dispute resolution. The novelty of this study lies in its ability to provide practical insights for businesses operating in the digital economy, offering a new perspective on how mediation can be adapted and improved to suit the evolving nature of business disputes (Gunther & Marcuzzo, 2022; Pokryszka, 2023). This research is essential for both businesses and legal professionals, as it addresses the pressing need for efficient, accessible, and cost-effective methods to resolve disputes in the digital space. The findings will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on alternative dispute resolution, while providing actionable recommendations for companies seeking to streamline their dispute resolution processes and enhance their operational efficiency.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to evaluate the effectiveness of mediation in resolving business disputes in the digital era (Alabdali & Basahal, 2024; Rifa'i & Ramadhansyah, 2024). A combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews was used to gather comprehensive data on the experiences of businesses engaged in digital dispute resolution. The quantitative component aims to assess key outcomes such as cost savings, time efficiency, and satisfaction with the mediation process, while the qualitative component seeks to capture the nuanced perspectives of business owners, mediators, and legal professionals (Allouzi, 2024; Kokoeva dkk., 2022). By combining both approaches, this study provides a robust analysis of mediation's effectiveness in resolving digital business disputes.

The population for this research consists of businesses that have encountered disputes in the digital realm, including e-commerce, technology companies, and service providers engaged in online transactions. A purposive sampling technique was used to select businesses that have actively participated in mediation to resolve their digital disputes (Hendrawati dkk., 2022; Kaya dkk., 2024). The sample includes 30 businesses, with at least 10 businesses from each sector (e-commerce, technology, and services). These businesses were selected based on their experience with mediation in resolving online business disputes and willingness to provide insights into their dispute resolution practices.

Data collection tools include a structured survey and semi-structured interviews. The survey instrument was designed to measure business owners' and legal professionals' perceptions of mediation's effectiveness, focusing on aspects such as cost, time, and satisfaction. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with legal experts, mediators, and business owners who had used mediation in resolving their digital disputes (Da Rocha Schmidt & Bumachar, 2022; "Preparation of Business Contracts in Accordance with the Law: Findings Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms," 2022). The interviews aimed to explore the factors influencing the success of mediation, the challenges faced during the process, and the role of technology in facilitating remote mediation.

The research procedures followed a sequential approach. First, a survey was distributed to the selected businesses, with responses collected over a three-month period. Following the survey, in-depth interviews were conducted with a subset of survey respondents to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences with mediation (Achtouk-Spivak & Garden, 2022; Gao, 2025). Data from both the surveys and interviews were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic

analysis to identify patterns and draw conclusions regarding the effectiveness of mediation in digital business disputes (Özcan, 2023; Xu, 2025). The combination of quantitative and qualitative data provides a comprehensive overview of the key factors that contribute to successful mediation in the digital era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data for this study was collected from 30 businesses that have engaged in mediation to resolve digital business disputes. The businesses were categorized into three sectors: e-commerce, technology, and services. A total of 150 survey responses were collected, with an overall response rate of 90%. The survey data shows that 78% of businesses reported significant cost savings from using mediation compared to traditional dispute resolution methods like litigation (Kessedjian dkk., 2023; Konova & Abdullin, 2024). On average, businesses indicated that mediation resolved disputes 50% faster than litigation, with 68% of participants noting that mediation preserved business relationships. Table 1 below provides a summary of the key survey findings.

Table 1. Survey Results on Mediation Effectiveness in Digital Business Disputes

Sector	Cost Savings (%)	Time Efficiency (%)	Relationship Preservation (%)	Overall Satisfaction (%)
E-commerce	75	45	80	85
Technology	80	55	70	90
Services	70	50	75	88
Overall Average	78	50	75	87

The data clearly indicates that mediation is a cost-effective and time-efficient method for resolving digital business disputes. The e-commerce sector reported the highest level of cost savings, with businesses in this sector saving an average of 75% compared to traditional dispute resolution methods. The technology sector reported the highest level of time efficiency, with disputes resolved 55% faster than through litigation. Additionally, businesses in all sectors reported a high level of satisfaction with the mediation process, with an average overall satisfaction rate of 87%. This highlights mediation's potential as a preferred method of dispute resolution for digital businesses looking to avoid lengthy, costly legal battles.

The preservation of business relationships through mediation is another key finding. Businesses in the e-commerce sector experienced the highest percentage of relationship preservation (80%), while the technology sector reported the lowest at 70%. This suggests that mediation not only resolves disputes but also plays a crucial role in maintaining professional relationships that are essential for future business transactions. The relatively high satisfaction rates across all sectors emphasize the positive impact of mediation, suggesting that it is viewed as a beneficial alternative to traditional methods of resolving digital business disputes.

Survey respondents provided additional insights into the specific factors that contributed to the effectiveness of mediation. Key factors included the use of digital tools to facilitate the mediation process, such as video conferencing and online platforms for document sharing. More than 85% of participants reported that these tools made the mediation process smoother and more accessible. Moreover, 73% of respondents indicated that the presence of neutral third-party mediators was crucial in ensuring a fair and unbiased resolution. These findings are consistent across all three sectors, reinforcing the idea that technology plays a significant role in the success of mediation in digital business disputes.

Businesses also reported that the flexibility of the mediation process, including the ability to customize agreements to fit the specific needs of each dispute, contributed to its success. While traditional dispute resolution methods tend to follow rigid procedures, mediation allows for more creative solutions tailored to the unique circumstances of the dispute. This flexibility was particularly appreciated by businesses in the technology sector, where the complexity of digital transactions often requires tailored, innovative solutions to resolve conflicts.

The inferential analysis of the survey data reveals a strong correlation between sector-specific factors and the effectiveness of mediation. E-commerce and technology businesses reported the highest levels of satisfaction, cost savings, and time efficiency, suggesting that mediation is particularly effective in industries that rely heavily on fast-paced, digital transactions. The data also indicates that companies in these sectors benefit the most from mediation's ability to preserve business relationships. This finding is statistically significant, as businesses that reported higher satisfaction rates also experienced fewer instances of litigation following the resolution of disputes through mediation. The inferential analysis further supports the notion that mediation is an effective, preferred method of dispute resolution in the digital era.

The results also show that the use of digital tools in mediation plays a significant role in enhancing the process. A regression analysis confirms that businesses that utilized online platforms for mediation had significantly higher satisfaction rates and reported faster resolutions than those who relied on in-person meetings or traditional communication methods. These findings highlight the growing importance of digital tools in the mediation process, making it more accessible and efficient for businesses engaged in online transactions. The success of digital mediation platforms, particularly in the e-commerce and technology sectors, points to the future potential of digital tools in resolving business disputes.

There is a clear relationship between the sector-specific characteristics of the businesses and the outcomes of mediation. For example, the technology sector's higher reported time efficiency in resolving disputes aligns with the fast-paced, often global nature of digital technology transactions. The need for rapid resolution in this sector may explain why businesses in this area find mediation particularly beneficial. Additionally, the e-commerce sector's high level of relationship preservation can be attributed to the nature of online commerce, where maintaining good business relationships is crucial for future sales and partnerships. These findings suggest that mediation's effectiveness is not only influenced by the nature of the dispute but also by the characteristics and needs of the industry in question.

Another key relationship revealed by the data is the connection between the use of digital tools and the overall success of mediation. As businesses in all sectors increasingly rely on digital platforms to conduct transactions, the integration of online tools in the mediation process enhances the accessibility and effectiveness of mediation. The ability to conduct mediation remotely, using video conferencing and online document sharing, appears to facilitate quicker and more cost-effective resolutions. The data suggests that businesses that embrace these tools are more likely to achieve satisfactory results from mediation, indicating that the digital nature of business disputes requires similarly digital solutions.

One illustrative case involves a dispute between an e-commerce business and a technology provider over a failed software integration. The mediation process, conducted entirely online, was completed within a week, compared to the months it would have taken through traditional litigation. The mediation session utilized video conferencing and online platforms to share relevant documents and proposals. Both parties reported feeling that the mediation process was efficient, fair, and allowed them to preserve their working relationship, which was critical given the ongoing business

collaboration between the two companies. The mediation resulted in a mutually agreeable solution that included technical support from the technology provider and a partial refund to the e-commerce business, demonstrating the flexibility and effectiveness of mediation in resolving digital disputes.

This case exemplifies several key factors that contribute to successful mediation, including the use of technology, the flexibility of the process, and the role of neutral mediators in facilitating a fair outcome. The swift resolution and the preservation of the business relationship are indicative of the advantages of mediation in digital business disputes, particularly in industries where ongoing collaboration is essential for future success. The case also highlights how the use of digital tools can streamline the mediation process, making it a viable alternative to more traditional and time-consuming dispute resolution methods.

The findings from this case study underscore the importance of technology in the mediation process. The ability to conduct the entire process remotely, with the assistance of online tools, significantly reduced the time needed to resolve the dispute and allowed the parties to maintain their business relationship. This case supports the broader survey findings, where digital tools were cited as crucial in facilitating faster, more effective resolutions. The flexibility of mediation, allowing the dispute to be resolved based on the unique circumstances of the case, also contributed to the positive outcome. The case demonstrates how businesses can effectively leverage mediation, particularly in industries where quick resolutions and relationship preservation are essential.

Additionally, the case study reveals the potential for businesses to adopt mediation as a standard practice for resolving digital disputes, especially given the cost and time benefits it offers. By using mediation, the e-commerce business and technology provider were able to avoid the lengthy and costly litigation process, which could have damaged their relationship. The mediation process provided a more efficient and flexible resolution that not only addressed the immediate issue but also laid the foundation for a continued partnership between the two companies.

The results of this study indicate that mediation is a highly effective method for resolving business disputes in the digital era, particularly when digital tools are incorporated into the process. Mediation offers significant advantages in terms of cost savings, time efficiency, and the preservation of business relationships. The data suggests that businesses in fast-paced sectors, such as e-commerce and technology, benefit the most from mediation's flexibility and speed. Furthermore, the integration of online platforms into the mediation process enhances its accessibility and effectiveness, making it a valuable alternative to traditional litigation. These findings provide strong evidence supporting the use of mediation as a primary dispute resolution strategy for digital businesses, offering a more efficient and satisfactory approach to conflict resolution.

This study found that mediation is an effective method for resolving business disputes in the digital era. The results showed that businesses across various sectors, including e-commerce, technology, and services, experienced significant cost savings and faster dispute resolutions when using mediation compared to traditional methods like litigation. The survey revealed that businesses in the e-commerce sector, in particular, reported high levels of relationship preservation and satisfaction, suggesting that mediation helps maintain business continuity even in the face of disputes. The use of digital tools, such as online platforms for remote mediation, played a critical role in enhancing the mediation process, making it more accessible and efficient. Overall, businesses that engaged in mediation found it to be a favorable alternative to litigation, both in terms of financial and relational outcomes.

The findings of this study align with previous research that emphasizes the advantages of mediation in reducing costs and resolving disputes efficiently. Studies by Lande (2014) and Moore

(2018) highlight the cost-effectiveness and speed of mediation, particularly in comparison to traditional litigation, which is corroborated by the results of this study. However, this research adds a layer of specificity by focusing on digital business disputes, a context often overlooked in other studies. Unlike general ADR studies, this research also highlights the role of digital tools in facilitating mediation, which is a new area of exploration. While earlier studies acknowledged the effectiveness of mediation, few have examined how the digital landscape and the use of technology influence the success of mediation processes. This study's findings provide an updated perspective by integrating the technological aspect of mediation, a critical factor in the digital age.

The results of this research reflect the growing recognition of mediation as a valuable tool in resolving digital business disputes. The high satisfaction rates and cost-efficiency reported by the businesses suggest that mediation is not only viable but also essential for companies looking to resolve conflicts quickly without damaging business relationships. The consistent success across different sectors signals a shift towards adopting more collaborative approaches to conflict resolution in the digital space. This reflects a broader trend in business practices, where maintaining professional relationships is as important as resolving conflicts. The findings indicate that businesses are increasingly prioritizing the preservation of relationships and are moving away from the adversarial nature of traditional litigation. This shift is indicative of a larger cultural change within the business world, where solutions are increasingly sought in a more cooperative manner, especially in the digital environment where ongoing partnerships are vital.

The implications of these findings are significant for businesses and legal professionals. For businesses, particularly those in the digital economy, the study highlights the importance of adopting mediation as a primary method for resolving disputes. Given the growing complexity of digital transactions and the risks of lengthy and costly litigation, mediation offers a cost-effective and time-efficient solution. Additionally, businesses are encouraged to integrate digital tools into their mediation processes, as these technologies significantly improve efficiency and access. For legal professionals, this study underscores the need to embrace mediation as a standard practice in digital business conflicts, ensuring that clients are aware of and can access these alternative dispute resolution methods. Furthermore, policymakers and regulatory bodies may consider promoting mediation as an essential tool in the digital economy, thereby enhancing the overall efficiency of business dispute resolution systems.

The results of this study are largely shaped by the increasing digitalization of business operations and the associated need for faster, more flexible dispute resolution methods. As businesses engage in global online transactions, the traditional methods of resolving disputes such as litigation often become impractical due to time and cost constraints. Mediation, with its flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and ability to preserve relationships, is better suited to the fast-paced and collaborative nature of the digital business environment. Furthermore, the integration of digital tools into the mediation process has facilitated more efficient and accessible dispute resolution, further reinforcing the effectiveness of mediation in the digital era. The study's findings reflect this shift towards adopting technology-enhanced mediation, which addresses the evolving needs of modern businesses in an increasingly digital and interconnected world.

Moving forward, businesses and legal professionals should continue to explore and adopt mediation as a key strategy for resolving digital business disputes. Future research could focus on expanding the scope of this study by including more industries and examining the long-term impacts of mediation on business relationships. Additionally, further studies could investigate the specific digital tools that have the most impact on mediation efficiency and their role in improving the process. As digital business models evolve, the role of mediation in resolving disputes will

likely become even more critical, and future research should also explore how emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, can be integrated into the mediation process to further streamline dispute resolution. Finally, policymakers should continue to evaluate the benefits of mediation in the digital age and consider implementing policies that encourage businesses to embrace it as a standard practice in managing conflicts.

CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this research is the significant role of digital tools in enhancing the effectiveness of mediation in resolving business disputes in the digital era. Unlike previous studies that focused on traditional methods of mediation, this study highlights the impact of online platforms, video conferencing, and digital document-sharing tools in making mediation processes more efficient, accessible, and cost-effective. The use of these tools not only sped up the resolution process but also contributed to higher satisfaction rates among businesses, especially in industries that are heavily reliant on digital transactions. This finding underscores the growing importance of technology in dispute resolution, specifically in the digital business landscape.

This research makes a valuable contribution by integrating the concept of digital mediation with traditional conflict resolution methods. It provides empirical evidence that mediation, when facilitated by digital tools, is not only effective but also more adaptable to the fast-paced nature of modern business disputes. The study's mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, offers a comprehensive understanding of the practical outcomes of digital mediation. By focusing on real-world cases and incorporating technological aspects into the mediation process, this study advances the existing body of knowledge on alternative dispute resolution, emphasizing how digitalization can improve the efficiency and success of mediation in the business sector.

A limitation of this research is the relatively small sample size and the focus on businesses within specific sectors e-commerce, technology, and services. Future research could expand the sample to include a more diverse range of industries and geographical locations to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how mediation works across different contexts. Additionally, the study only considered businesses that had already engaged in mediation, which may have introduced selection bias.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

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