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The Relationship between Authentic Leadership Competencies and Supervisors' Conflict Management Styles

Master's Thesis

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I have written this Research paper/Bachelor Thesis independently. Any ideas or data taken from other authors or other sources have been fully referenced.

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Abstract

This research examined the relationship between authentic leadership competences and supervisors' conflict management styles. Using the quantitative research approach and cross-sectional survey design, 189 employees were conveniently sampled from Nigeria's banking and finance, health, and construction sectors. Pearson correlation was used to examine the relationship between authentic leadership competences and supervisors' conflict management styles variables. The results showed that authentic leadership competences had a positive and significant relationship with the integrating, compromising, and accommodating conflict management styles. On the other hand, AL competencies had a negative and significant relationship with the competing and a negative but not significant relationship with avoiding style of conflict management. Managerial implications, recommendations for future research and limitations are discussed below.

1. Introduction

Leadership in an organisation is essential as good leadership and management contribute to organisational efficiency and productivity, and poor leadership results in reduced efficiency and productivity. Organisational success, employee well-being, and a team's performance depend on quality leadership. Hogan & Kaiser (2005) highlight that leadership involves convincing individuals to commit their time and set aside their interests to support group interests. *Leadership* is defined as building and maintaining a team that performs effectively relative to its competition (ibid).

Different types of leadership behaviours or leadership styles have emerged in the modern world. From transformational leadership, ethical leadership, servant leadership to charismatic leadership styles, it all points to one thing- a positive construct of who and what a leader should be. What characteristics each leadership style encompasses and how it affects, or influences organisations or workplaces result in staff efficiency and enhanced productivity. Authentic leadership (AL) is an emergent leadership style that focuses on leaders' self-awareness and positive behaviours that enable efficiency and self-development (Copeland, 2016). Considering this assertion, this study seeks to explore whether leader authenticity could influence his/her conflict management style since authentic leaders are known to make objective and fair decisions additionally as their ability to regulate their emotions (Akuffo and Kivipold, 2019). These attributes are fundamental in managing conflicts, and it is vital to explore how these attributes may help manage conflict efficiently within the organisation.

Conflict is ever-present, especially in a diverse workplace. When not handled constructively, it can lead to workplace inefficiency and less productivity. How different leaders choose to manage conflict and what management style they employ is essential to avert a toxic workplace. Slabbert (2004) indicates that conflict within organisations is regarded as a threat and, if not managed constructively, can impact interpersonal relations and decision-making, affecting the way the organisation operates.

Conflict management involves dealing with and removing the cause of conflict. Thakore (2013) suggests that conflict management refers to strategies and methods of containing, managing, strategies, and approaches of resolving conflict with the sole purpose being the containment of the destructive components of conflict. In organisational conflict, hostility and a toxic work

environment reduce organisational productivity and efficiency(ibid). He further mentions that conflict management aims to help conflicting parties find a solution- for this, an effective conflict management strategy accomplishes two things – minimising disruption stemming from conflict and providing a satisfactory and acceptable solution(ibid).

Singleton et al. (2011) highlight that conflict management is a coping response to conflicting relationships and situations that includes several activities, including communication and problem-solving. They mention conflict as a natural consequence of daily interactions and workplace conflict because of lack of adequate communication between employees or between employees and bosses. They also attribute causes of conflict to power struggles and leadership styles. Yin et al. (2020) identified five conflict management styles (CMS) based on Blake-Mouton's managerial grid Theory. They include avoiding, accommodating, competing, compromising, and collaborating.

Several studies have explored the relationship between leadership styles and conflict management, but few have explored AL and CMS's relationship. Friesenhahn (2019) analysed the relationship between authentic leadership and job satisfaction as mediated by conflict management styles. His study examined the mediating effects of CMS on AL and follower job satisfaction. He highlights that leadership and leadership style may result in positive organisational outcomes and one outcome of effective leadership is job satisfaction.

The result from Friesenhahn (2019) analysis which had discovered that authentic leadership acted as a mediator between CMS and job satisfaction. It was discovered that the relationship between obliging, dominating, avoiding were and job satisfaction were fully mediated by AL. Demirdag & Kalafat (2016) also assessed AL and CMS relationship in their article. Their study mainly aimed to determine the relationship between conflict management strategies and authentic leadership attitudes of primary school administrators. Their study results showed that administrators' leadership levels were the highest on self-awareness and lowest on relational transparency. It further showed a positive and significant correlation between relational transparency and the obliging and collaborating style, a negative and significant relationship between relational transparency and the integrating and avoiding styles. It was also noted that CMS levels were the highest on dominating and lowest on avoiding and showed low levels of relationship between primary school administrator's conflict management strategies and authentic leadership attitudes.

Studies have shown that transformational and authentic leadership share some similarities (Brown and Trevino, 2006) and due to the limited studies on the relationship between Al and CMS. The study relied on some studies that have explored the relationship between transformational leadership and CMS to build a foundation to understand whether AL might influence CMS in the same manner. One of such studies is that of Doucet et al. (2009) which analysed the impact of leadership styles such as transformational and transactional Leadership on workplace conflict and its relationship with conflict management. They explored the four dimensions of transformational leadership- idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualised consideration, and its influence on workplace conflict(ibid). Their analysis identifies that these dimensions of transformational Leadership can diminish conflict amongst employees through integrative and collaborative conflict management styles. Doucet et al. (2009) argued that by emphasising organisational interests over self-interest (Bass and Riggio, 2006), transformational leaders are prone to highlight that shared vision between conflicting parties and move employees towards more integrative and collaborative solutions. Likewise, their study indicated that transactional leadership had a positive correlation with the compromising style of conflict management. The focus of transactional leadership is on rewarding good performance. Hence their analysis reveals that transactional leaders manage conflict by looking for expedient compromises that are rewarding to employees and are satisfactory to all conflicting parties.

Also, Hendel et al. (2006a) explored the relationship between transformational Leadership and conflict management styles using nurses in general hospitals in Israel. They discovered that the correlation with head nurses who displayed transformational leadership traits chose constructive conflict management styles such as the collaborating style. These studies have explored why different types of leaders choose to manage conflict in the styles they do. However, considering AL is an emergent concept, little has been done to understand this relationship. This current study contributes to the literature on the relationship between AL and supervisors' conflict management styles.

This research aimed to explore the relationship between authentic leadership competencies and supervisors' conflict management styles. Due to the similarities between transformational leadership and authentic leadership, this study argued that authentic leaders would use similar conflict styles, just like transformational leaders. Therefore, authentic leadership would have a

similar influence on CMS, just as transformational leadership. Considering that little research has been done to understand the relationship between this emergent leadership style, this research explored how AL relates to CMS.

Aim of Research Paper

The research explored the relationship between authentic leadership competencies and supervisors' conflict management styles. To accomplish this aim, the following research tasks were outlined.

- To review literature on authentic leadership competencies and supervisors' conflict management styles.
- To review literature on the relationship between authentic Leadership competencies and supervisors' conflict management styles.
- To describe the methods employed in the data collection.
- To provide an analysis of the relationship between authentic leadership competencies and supervisors' conflict management styles.

- To discuss the analysed results within the context of the proposed hypotheses.

2. Literature Review

According to (Datta 2015), leadership can influence individuals to achieve shared objectives, with the primary function being to produce change. There are different types of leaders- ranging from transformational to transactional. Each leadership style affects organisational effectiveness or performance in different ways. The world is changing rapidly. Today's organisation requires influential leaders that understand this complexity and are willing to ensure that organisations do not get left behind in this rapid change.

One of the factors that can help organisations adapt to the immediate business environment is satisfied and committed employees willing to go the extra mile to make the organisation more competitive. Leaders' behaviours can achieve such employees' behaviours to manage employees within the organisation, which would affect employee's attachment to the organisation. Therefore, leaders need to employ free and fair means to manage employees to maximise each employee's effort. In this light, this study explored how authentic leaders manage conflict within the organisation since conflict is ever-present in every human endeavour.

2.1 Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership is the root concept and foundation for any positive form of leadership (May et al., 2003; Ilies et al., 2005). It is the degree to which managers are aware of and exhibit a pattern of openness by sharing information, accepting others' input, revealing their values, emotion, and goals in a way that enables followers to assess their behaviour (Walumbwa et al., 2010).

To be authentic means to be natural, original, genuine, and not a copy (Shamir and Eilam, 2005). It includes possessing personal experiences (values, thoughts, beliefs, feelings) and acting in accordance with one's authentic self (Černe et al., 2013). Authentic leadership therein points to the fact that leaders behave according to their beliefs and values. It suggests a lifestyle rooted in originality and awareness of oneself and personal identity, that in the face of external pressure, is still firm in their choices and values.

Avolio & Gardner (2005) trace the foundations of authentic leadership to authenticity, which has its roots in Greek philosophy- meaning to oneself be true. They focus on Carl Rogers and Maslow's works, which focused on developing self-actualised individuals - individuals who are in sync with

their fundamental nature. They point that the basis of AL involves being true to oneself(ibid). They highlight that authentic leadership consists of positive psychological capital, self-awareness, positive moral perspective, self-regulation, and process and behaviours(ibid).

Walumbwa et al. (2008, p. 94) defined authentic leadership as "a pattern of leader behaviour that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalised moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development."

Luthans and Avolio (2003) used positive descriptive words such as being genuine, reliable, trustworthy, honest, and veritable as synonymous with the word authentic. They indicate that positive psychologists associate authenticity as owning one's experiences and acting according to one's true self (Luthans and Avolio, 2003). They added that this definition of authenticity is needed in contemporary times where the environment is fast-paced and ever-changing- "...where the rules that have guided how we operate no longer work, and where the best leaders will be transparent with their intentions, having a seamless link between their espoused values, actions, and behaviours" (ibid).

While most research points to a more theoretical approach to authentic Leadership, Avolio & Wernsing (2008) take a more practical approach to describing authentic leadership. They identify examples of authentic leaders that have emerged over time. Examples include Martin Luther King Jr, Eleanor Roosevelt, and in these modern times, Warren Buffet. Avolio and Wernsing (2008) highlight that these individuals had things in common that pointed to their authenticity. Each guided at the core was grounded in doing good for the others while being guided by inner conscience- a sense of self-awareness of their morals and beliefs that precedes their need for self and self-interest but instead places the group's collective aim, as necessary.

They highlight that authentic leadership leads from core theory tied to high morals, values, and beliefs. This core served as the foundation for leaders like Martin Luther King, who fought for equality and peace amongst all races until death (Avolio and Wernsing, 2008). He believed in equality and peace principles and fought for this as his core principles- even in the face of threats and political backlash; he remained true to himself and his principle of fighting for all races' overall good. Of course, an essential addition by Avolio and Wernsing (2008) is that authentic leaders

revisit their theory of self that represents their beliefs and value. This revision process and self-awareness allow authentic leaders to improve themselves better, so the collective can also be better.

George (2007) described authentic leaders as a person who brings people together around a shared mission and values and empowers them to serve their customers while creating value for stakeholders. The belief that authentic leaders inspire their subordinates to transform and grow into leaders is in line with the studies of Ilies et al. (2005) that identify authentic leaders as being faithful to him/herself and the exhibited behaviour positively transforms or develops subordinates into leaders themselves.

Darvish & Rezaei (2011) assesses the impact of authentic leadership on employee job satisfaction. Their analysis seeks to identify this impact and prove the relationship between authentic leadership dimensions and team commitment. Their sample was obtained from an Iranian telecommunication company with eighty employees; their results indicate that follower perceptions of the leaders' authentic Leadership were positively related to individual follower job satisfaction and team commitment. Also, it shows that greater levels of authenticity in leaders directly impact higher satisfaction and commitment. When organisational leaders know and act upon their actual values, beliefs, and strengths while helping others do the same, higher levels of employees' well-being will build up, positively impacting follower satisfaction and commitment (ibid).

Analysis obtained from the research above indicates the positive effect authentic leaders have on employees and organisational efficiency. It would point to the direction that authentic leaders are inherently able to lead and manage organisations. The studies point to the notion they look to create an honest and open environment that, even in the face of conflict, aims to inspire individuals to focus on the shared vision and collaboratively find solutions that allow for organisational growth.

2.2 Authentic Leadership Competences

Like transformational leadership, authentic leadership has components that most researchers and academics cite in discussing authentic leadership. These components are self-awareness, self-regulation, relational transparency, balanced processing, and relational transparency. However, Akuffo & Kivipõld (2019) provide a dichotomy of the components into two - the internal and external competencies. Internal competencies are leaders' ability to be conscious of their strengths

and weaknesses, regulate emotions, and make judgments based on their moral and ethical backgrounds(ibid). They measure internal competencies with internalised moral perspective, self-awareness, and self-regulation. On the other hand, external competencies cover the leader's ability to be objective and fair in their employees' interactions(ibid). External competencies include relational transparency and balanced processing.

Self-awareness

Darvish & Rezaei (2011) define self-awareness as one's awareness of and trust in one's characteristics, values, motives, feelings, and cognitions. It is described as the ability to understand how one understands the world and how it impacts oneself and indicates an awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Self-awareness has been described as an emerging process by which leaders come to understand their unique capabilities, knowledge, and experience (Avolio & Gardner, 2005, p. 324) and is linked with self-reflection- a process by which authentic leaders reflect through introspection to achieve clarity with respect to their core values, identity, and goals (Gardner et al., 2005).

Balanced Processing

Balanced processing has been described as 'the heart of personal integrity and character,' thereby significantly influencing a leader's decision-making and strategic actions (Ilies et al., 2005) by objectively analysing all relevant data and information an unbiased decision (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Self-regulation

Beddoes-Jones and Swailes (2015) used words such as discipline, energy, flexibility, emotional control, patience, and resilience to describe authentic Leadership's self-regulation dimension. It involves establishing congruence between one's internal standards and anticipated outcomes (Gardner et al., 2005, p. 355) and the discipline to convert core values into consistent actions (Darvish & Rezaei, 2011).

Internalized Moral Perspective

According to Kernis (2003), internalised moral perspective involves acting according to one's values, preferences, and beliefs. Authentic leaders possessing internalised moral perspective capabilities will say what they mean and mean (Darvish & Rezaei, 2011) what they say, which is in accordance with their values and beliefs.

Relational Transparency

Finally, relational transparency refers to presenting one's true self (authentic) to others (Walumbwa et al. 2008). It encompasses the capabilities of leaders to be open and truthful self-disclosure (Ilies et al., 2005) and transparency in revealing one's values, emotions, and identities to followers (Mazutis & Slawinski, 2008). This transparency enables trust, intimacy, teamwork, and cooperation among subordinates (Gardner et al., 2005).

In summary, authentic leadership competences are the very basis for authentic leaders to foster self-development and growth amongst organisational members. Most importantly for this study, it is the tenet through which leaders who exhibit these capabilities can choose to constructively settle conflict as the components point to a shared vision and an aim to encourage organisational cooperativeness and efficiency and in the face of conflict will be the driving factor for authentic leaders to manage it in a way that puts the shared vision, employee growth and organisational cooperativeness at the centre.

2.3 Supervisors' Conflict Management Styles

Yin et al. (2020) point out that teams consist of individuals with different backgrounds, knowledge, ways of thinking, and constructive conflict management that positively affect the team's long-term development. During interaction, especially in decision making, interpersonal conflict arises. As indicated in the introduction, conflicts are inevitable due to individual differences. They, however, state that previous studies have explored the role of conflict and conflict management in workplaces, and the results indicate that CMS has a substantial impact on the stability and development of teams(ibid).

Rahim & Bonoma (1979) identify five styles of conflict management. The typologies presented by them are integrating, obliging, compromising, dominating, and avoiding. The table below describes each style.

Table 1: Summary of Conflict Management Style Definitions

Conflict Management Style	Definition	Level of assertiveness and cooperation
Accommodating/obliging	Rahim identifies the accommodating or obliging style as a management style that focuses on downplaying the differences and emphasising the commonalities between parties. It includes putting down one's needs and concentrating on the needs and interests of the other party.	Unassertive and cooperative
Competing /dominating	The competing or dominating style is a win-lose situation whereby one forces his behaviour to win one's position. A competing person only focuses on his objective and ignores that of the other party.	Assertive and uncooperative
Avoiding	This style is associated with withdrawal or sidestepping conflicting situations. An avoiding person fails to satisfy his concerns as well as that of the other party	Unassertive and uncooperative

Collaborating /integrating	Integrating or collaborating style involves openness, exchanging information, and examining differences to reach a solution acceptable to all parties. When people use the integrating style, they have concerns for themselves and others, Furthermore, they are problem-solving and solution-oriented (Rahim, 2000).	Assertive and cooperative
Compromising	The compromising style of CMS involves finding a mutually acceptable solution to the conflict that satisfies both parties. Both parties are willing to give up something to achieve this solution.	Mid assertive and cooperative

Source: Rahim & Bonoma (1979) and Saaed et al. (2014)

Table 1 above contains five different conflict styles outlined by (Rahim & Bonoma, 1979). They point to the two-dimensional framework of CMS that comprises the five styles. Rahim & Bonoma also talk about another two dimensions, which are a result of concern for self and concern for others- an indicator that a person having great concern for self will satisfy their needs in conflict resolution. In contrast, in the case of concern for others, conflict resolution will be made, considering others' needs and concerns. Saeed et al.(2014a) in their study highlight that these five styles are derived from the two dimensions of assertiveness and cooperativeness which can be seen in Table1.

Table 2: Model of Conflict Management Style with corresponding concern level

		CONCERN FOR SELF	
		HIGH	LOW
CONCERN FOR OTHERS	HIGH	COLLABORATING	ACCOMODATING
		COMPROMISING	
	LOW	COMPETING	AVOIDING

Source: Rahim & Bonoma (1979)

Table 2 above gives the visual description of which styles have a deep concern for self and others and has a low concern for self and others, which is in the middle of the spectrum. It is identified that the integrating style shows a deep concern for self and others. It describes handling conflict in a way that encourages cooperative behaviour and seeks to find mutually favourable solutions. It involves open communication, flexibility, and creativity to reach an acceptable solution for all parties (Montes et al., 2012).

Rahim & Bonoma (1979) express that the obliging style shows a low concern for self and profound concern for others. It is characterised by an incomplete evaluation of alternatives and a one-sided process of giving in which decreases decision making (Kuhn and Poole, 2000). An obliging leader neglecting his or her concern to satisfy the other party's interests. Avoiding just like obliging is characterised by a low concern for self and great concern for others. It describes a behaviour that

seeks to minimise addressing conflict and is associated with withdrawal or sidestepping the situation (Rahim, 2002).

The dominating/ competitive style is centred around a deep concern for self and low concern for others. It is a confrontative approach that ends in one side conceding to the other. Putnam and Wilson (1982) assert that tactics commonly used to resolve conflicts in this style include directive communication about the issue, a persistent argument for one's position, and any attempt to take control of the interaction. Finally, conflict management's compromising style involves appealing to fairness and trade-offs that result in a mutually acceptable outcome, thereby offering a quick, short-term solution (Montes et al., 2012). It is in the middle of the dimension across concern for self and others. It typically ends in a situation where both parties give up important goals or needs to reach an outcome suitable for both parties (Poole et al., 1991).

Huan & Yazdanifard (2012) identify the advantages and disadvantages of using the various conflict management styles. They identify the effect the use of these styles has on workplace dynamics as well as workplace relationships. The collaborating, compromising, and accommodating point to a situation where relationships are maintained due to these styles, with the collaborating style actualising satisfaction and happiness amongst all parties (Montoya-Weiss et al., 2001). According to Huan (2012), collaborating also involves more time and effort than other styles as its central aim is to satisfy all parties and reach a generally acceptable outcome. At the same time, compromising requires a short time for the conflict to be resolved. Finally, avoiding, and competing leads to a turbulent team relationship (Montoya-Weiss et al., 2001). The dominating more so points to a situation of aggression and anger. Research suggests that using this style leads to decreased team performance (Cohen & Bailey, 1997).

The purpose of conflict management is to deal with the differences of organisation signs and facilitate constructive change towards a responsive and equitable system (Fisher, 2000). To reiterate, conflict exists in all human relationships (Landau et al. 2001). Therefore, organisations must manage it such that efficiency, performance, and employee motivation do not decrease. For this to happen, proper management style must be used by supervisors.

2.4 The Relationship Between Authentic Leadership and Supervisors' Conflict Management Styles

This section of the review draws on studies that have analysed the relationship between authentic Leadership and supervisors' conflict management styles. This relationship is vital to ascertain which of the authentic leadership competence can help manage conflict smoothly within the organisation. It is based on the idea that conflict always existent in organisations. A positive approach entails transparency of one's position and balanced processing- the ability to listen to others' perspectives even if it differs from one's view.

Fotohabadi & Kelly (2018) found a correlation between authentic leadership and conflict management styles. Their hypotheses sought proposed a positive relationship between AL and accommodating, collaborating, and compromising (CMS) and a negative relationship with avoiding and competing. With a sample size of 65 from executives that held leadership roles, the result of their study showed a positive relationship with the constructive CMS styles. It showed a high relation between AL and compromising, collaboration and accommodating styles and a negative relationship with avoiding and competing. The results suggest that when a leader is more authentic, he or she manages conflict constructively. Following this, they highlight that authentic leaders create conducive environments that allow teams to achieve high impact results in shorter periods of time (Runde, 2012).

Fatohabadi & Kelly (2018) further pointed out that conflicts are bound to occur in organisations, and it is dependent on the leader's ability to recognise and manage it that determines the outcome- if it is constructive or destructive. Constructive conflict leads to positive change in organisations and therefore, increased workplace efficiency.

Considering that most literature are centred on other leadership styles such as transformational and transactional, and their relationship to supervisors' conflict management styles, looking into these studies and their findings prove important for this study especially considering that transformational and authentic leadership share some similarities and the expected relationship between AL and CMS should follow the outcome of transformational Leadership and its relationship to CMS.

Saeed et al. (2014b), tested this relationship in their study to validate their hypothesis that transformational leadership style would have a positive relationship with constructive styles of

CMS (collaborating and accommodating), a negative relationship with destructive CMS styles (dominating and avoiding) and the second hypothesis that transactional leadership style is predicted to have a positive relationship with the compromising style of conflict management. With a number of 150 managers, consisting of 34 women and 116 men from the private-sector manufacturing industries in Pakistan, and 150 completed questionnaires, Saeed et al, were able to draw their analysis where the result of the multiple regression showed a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership behaviour and constructive conflict management style- collaborating and accommodating; and a negative relationship with the destructive styles- dominating and avoiding. This relationship is consistent with research that highlights that transformational Leadership is an effective and facilitative leadership style that is positively related to subordinate satisfaction, motivation, and performance (Gasper, 1992). It also suggests that in situations of organisational conflict and disruptions, transformational leaders seek new ways of working and positively manage conflict amongst employees. The results of the second hypothesis also substantiated that transactional leadership style would exhibit a positive relationship with compromising style of conflict management style. The findings are consistent with the theory that transactional Leadership is an exchange process based on fulfilment of contractual obligations and contingency rewards (Bass and Avolio, 1994). The compromising style of managing conflict in the organisations involves give-and-take to attain a mutually acceptable agreement. Research has indicated that transactional leaders identify and clarify for subordinates their job tasks and communicate to them how successful execution of those tasks will lead to receipt of desirable job rewards (Bass and Avolio, 1994).

With transformational and authentic Leadership bearing some similarities, the study, and results from Saeed et al. (2014), would suggest that authentic leaders would choose to settle conflicts in organisations through the collaborating and accommodating styles of conflict management. Authentic leadership is based on the tenet of a willingness to engage with others on controversial issues and communicate their position regarding the issue (Leroy et al. 2012). With the focus on encouraging growth and efficiency, authentic leaders would choose to settle conflict in a way that aligns with their values and beliefs which are rooted in in doing good for the others while being guided by inner conscience- a sense of self-awareness of their morals and beliefs that precedes their need for self and self-interest but instead places the group's collective aim as necessary (Avolio & Wernsing, 2008).

Hendel et al.(2006b) in their study also explored the association between transformational Leadership and the choice of strategy in conflict management. Their sample consisted of 60 head nurses from five general hospitals in Israel with a total of 54 usable responses obtained and convenience sample used, they set out to answer the question of an existence of a correlation between leadership styles and conflict management. It was discovered that the nurses displayed a transformational style of Leadership and often chose the collaborating style of handling conflict. They highlight that transformational leaders are focused on the future and hence value creativity and innovation and can create environments that enable collaboration towards change (Wolf et al.,

It is, therefore, based on the findings above that the author proposed a positive relationship between authentic leadership competences and constructive forms of managing conflict - collaborating, accommodating, and compromising styles and a negative relationship with the competing and avoiding styles of managing conflict. The two hypotheses below were to guide the study.

H1: Authentic leadership competencies has a positive relationship with accommodating, collaborating, and compromising styles of managing conflict.

H2: Authentic leadership competencies has a negative relationship with avoiding and competing styles of managing conflict.

3. Methodology

3.1 Population and research design

The sample of this study were drawn from different public and private industry sectors in Nigeria, but most notably the finance, health, construction, and energy sector. Samples were drawn from these sectors   because they involve high amounts of teamwork that would involve a team supervisor and teammates, thereby making these sectors the most suitable for this study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. A cross sectional survey design was used in this study.

This design assist to provide useful insight into the chosen population's characteristics and identify the correlations for further research. The design also affords the chance to collect the necessary data from different respondents at a single point in time and allows for observation of the variables without influencing them.

3.2 Sample size and sample technique

The sample technique used for this study was convenient sampling. Convenience sampling is a research method adopted by researchers where research data is collected from a conveniently available pool of respondents. For this study, respondents in the various industry sectors in Nigeria were readily accessible and available for research. The ease and low cost of getting respondents also prompted the choice of this sampling technique.

Data was gathered from employees working in different industries such as banking and finance, energy, health, construction, and transport. The survey is a cross sectoral survey as it is intended to reflect skills and knowledge set across various industries. The questionnaire was electronically administered to respondents and returned via a survey application. In total, 224 responses were received. During the data preparation stage, responses were termed void because they were neither fully nor partly employed. In total, 35 responses were eliminated, thereby leaving the total number of valid responses after elimination to be 189. Table 3 below gives the descriptive analysis of the respondents. It took 35 days to gather the responses from the respondents.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of respondents

Participant	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	136	72.8
Male	53	28.0
Total	**189**	**100**
Age		
21-30	101	53.4
31-40	62	32.8
41-50	22	11.6
51-60	4	2.1
Total	**189**	**100**
Education		
Secondary Education	3	1.6
Vocational Education	1	0.5
Ordinary National Diploma	2	1.1
Higher National Diploma	1	0.5
Bachelor's Degree or equivalent	115	60.8
Master's Degree or equivalent	64	33.9
Doctoral Degree or equivalent	3	1.6
Total	**189**	**100**
Employment Status		
Full-time	164	86.3
Part-time	25	13.2
Total	**189**	**100**

Source: prepared by the author

3.3 Measures

The study used two different questionnaires – the first questionnaire measured authentic leadership competencies while the second measured the supervisors' conflict management styles. Details of the questionnaires are explained below.

Conflict Management Styles

Rahim (1983) designed the Supervisor CMS questionnaire to ascertain subordinates' perceptions concerning their supervisor's conflict-handling style. His questionnaire was divided into five different dimensions with a total of 28 items on a five-point Likert Scale, strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, moderately agree=3, agree=4, strongly agree=5. The various dimensions are dominating style with five items, avoiding style with six items, integrating style with seven items, obliging style with six items, and compromising style with four items. The alpha values for the various dimensions are dominating .90, avoiding .78, integrating .95, obliging .85, and compromising .78.

Authentic Leadership Competencies

The AL questionnaire with a combination of items from Walumbwa et al. (2008), Neider and Schriesheim (2011), and Beddos-Jones and Swailes (2015). The questionnaire had 27 items, with items scored as: not at all = 0, once in a while = 1, sometimes = 2, fairly often = 3, frequently, if not always = 4. The questionnaire had five factors: relational transparency with six items, self-awareness with six items, balanced processing with 4 items, internalised moral perspective with six items and self-regulation with five items.

The Table 4 below presents the Cronbach Alpha values obtained in this study.

Table 4: Cronbach's alpha values

	Cronbach's Alpha
RT	.90
SR	.87
SA	.93
IMP	.92
BP	.91
DOM	.92
AVD	.72
INT	.96
COM	.92
ACC	.94

Source: prepared by the author

It can be seen that all dimensions of AL and the styles of conflict management had alpha values above the benchmark of .70 (Nunnally, 1978), which indicates that the instruments were reliable and consistent.

4. Results and interpretations

The study aimed to explore the relationship between authentic leadership competencies and conflict management styles. Table 4 present the means, standard deviations, and correlation matrix of the first section of the analysis. The Pearson correlation coefficient indicates the strength of the relationship that exists among the variables.

The results show that authentic leadership competencies- self-regulation (SR), self-awareness (SA), internalized moral perspective (IMP), balanced processing (BP) and relational transparency (RT) had a positive and significant influence on integrating/collaborating, compromising and accommodating styles of CMS. In contrast, authentic leadership competencies had a negative influence on the dominating and avoiding style of CMS. The results indicates that most variables are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), implying a positive linear relationship exists in the relationships tested, while on the other hand, a statistical significance can be seen between the variables and the dominating style but not with the avoiding style.

The highest of the correlations was observed between AL competence - balanced processing (BP) and CMS Integration (INT), ($r= .83$, $p < 0.01$), followed by AL's relational transparency on INT ($r=.73$, $p < 0.01$) and self-awareness, self-regulation, and internalized moral perspective on INT ($r=.72$. $p < 0.01$). The Table 5 below presents the means, standard deviation, and correlation among the variables.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics and correlations among study variables

	Mean	*SD*	*Age*	*Edu*	*RT*	*SR*	*SA*	*IMP*	*BP*	*DOM*	*AVD*	*INT*	*COM*	*ACC*
Age	1.62	0.77	1											
Edu	2.20	1.55	-0.02	1										
RT	2.54	1.03	-0.12	0.02	1									
SR	2.32	1.08	-0.07	-0.003	0.75**	1								
SA	2.20	1.16	-0.01	0.08	0.83**	0.77**	1							
IMP	2.47	1.07	-0.18	-0.04	0.80**	0.79**	0.81**	1						
BP	2.30	1.17	-0.99	-0.03	0.80**	0.77**	0.85**	0.84**	1					
DOM	3.26	1.13	0.19**	0.11	-0.31**	-0.31**	-0.31**	-0.31**	-0.37**	1				
AVD	2.65	0.87	0.03	0.02	-0.13	-0.11	-0.61	-0.09	-0.07	0.38**	1			
INT	3.26	1.15	-0.10	-0.04	0.73**	0.72**	0.72**	0.72**	0.83**	-0.43**	-0.07	1		
COM	2.83	1.01	-0.16	-0.02	0.63**	0.67**	0.63**	0.63**	0.71**	-0.40**	0.07	0.78**	1	
ACC	2.67	1.04	-0.13	-0.02	0.59**	0.60**	0.55**	0.56**	0.61**	-0.38**	0.02	0.70**	0.85**	1

Notes: $*p < 00.5$, $**p < 0.01$, $+p \leq 0.1$, SD –standard deviation RT = relational transparency, SR= self-regulation, SA= self-awareness, IMP=internalized moral perspective, BP= balanced processing, DOM= dominating, AVD= avoiding, INT= integrating, COM=compromising and ACC= accommodating.

To determine the consistency of the questionnaire, a reliability tests was conducted. Table 4 above shows Cronbach's alpha values of the AL dimensions and CMS. It can be seen that all dimensions of AL and the styles of conflict management had alpha values above the benchmark of .70 (Nunnally, 1978), which indicates that the instruments were reliable and consistent.

H1: **Authentic leadership competencies have a positive relationship with accommodating, collaborating, and compromising styles of managing conflict.**

Table 5 shows the r values for each of the variable correlation, with the highest correlation between balanced processing and integrating (r=.83, p<0.01). Table 5 also indicates that the correlations between the AL competencies and accommodating, collaborating, and compromising were positive and statistically significant at 0.01. The result of the correlation supports the hypothesis that AL competences have a positive relationship with the accommodating, collaborating, and

compromising styles. In other words, leaders with authentic leadership attributes are more likely to use these constructive means of managing conflict because they understand that poor management of conflict can have dysfunctional effect on the smooth operations of the organisations.

H2: **Authentic leadership competencies have a negative relationship with avoiding and competing styles of managing conflict.**

The correlation between the AL dimensions and the dominating style of managing conflict can also be seen from Table 4 which also shows the highest correlation to be between balanced processing and the dominating style of conflict management (r= -.37, p<0.01). However, Table 5 also shows that all correlations between AL dimensions and dominating style of managing conflict were negative and statistically significant at 0.01. The result also indicates that for the avoiding style of managing conflict, all dimensions had a negative relationship but not significant. This also supports the second hypothesis that AL dimensions have a negative relationship with avoiding and dominating/competing styles of managing conflict, though the relationship with avoiding style was not statistically significant.

5. Discussion of the research findings

This paper contributes to the literature by exploring the relationship between AL competencies and supervisors' conflict management styles. The discussion section is divided into two thematic areas in accordance with the proposed hypotheses. The discussion section would be concluded with managerial implications, limitation, and conclusion for the study.

H1: **Authentic leadership competencies have a positive relationship with accommodating, collaborating, and compromising styles of managing conflict.**

The results from the correlation for this hypothesis supports previous research that organisational leaders use the integrating type most frequently, then the compromising style (Fotohabadi & Kelly,2018. The result showed a positive relationship between AL competencies- self-regulation, self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, relational transparency, and balanced processing with the integrating, compromising and accommodating styles. The output from self-regulation can be as a result of the fact that when one considers that self-regulation properties include words such as patience, emotional control, flexibility (Beddoes-Jones and Swailes, 2015), it connotes that authentic leaders would, therefore, in the face of conflict be patient enough to understand the situation and would not let their emotions take control of the problem which is in line with Fotohabadi & Kelly (2018) research where it is noted that managers leverage on the AL attribute of self-awareness and self-regulation to determine the best course of action.

 This might explain the significance of the SR attribute to all constructive styles of CMS but most on the compromising style, as this style indicates that all parties are leaving satisfied as there is a mutually acceptable solution. Balanced processing, also having a significance on the integrating, accommodating, and compromising styles, show that authentic leaders would seek unbiased ways to settle a conflict. Balanced processing involves actively listening to another point of view even when that view is in opposition to yours, thereby leading to an objective analysis of all information, which would account for the high significance of the collaborating and compromising style as this takes into consideration all parties involved and is not biased to any or one party. The result showed that relational transparency has a significance on the collaborative style. Relational transparency is the ability of authentic leaders to be open, transparent, and fair. Authentic leaders would manage

conflict openly and fairly and would gravitate towards a collaborative style as Rahim & Bonoma 1979 highlight collaborative style to show a significant concern for self and others, it would indicate that authentic leaders would draw to a solution that respects their opinion as well as the opinion of others as well as a solution that is fair for all parties. Rahim (1983) highlights the importance of leaders being equipped with various strategies to handle conflict, since constructive conflict management is tied to employee performance, commitment, and satisfaction (Friesenhahn, 2019).

The findings suggests that, since the correlation between the dimensions of AL and the Integrating/Accommodating style, were the highest, the conclusion could be drawn that the sampled Nigerian supervisors use this style the most to settle conflict in the workplace and the frequently used conflict management style is the compromising style.

H2: **Authentic leadership competencies have a negative relationship with avoiding and competing styles of managing conflict.**

The results from the study showed that AL competencies had a negative relationship with the competing and avoiding style and follows the line of previous research that identified that AL competencies are negatively correlated to these styles. Rodgers (2012) highlights that cooperation, not competition is an essential element of conflict management for positive team results. This point would explain the negative significance of AL on the dominating/competing and avoiding styles. Authentic Leadership is incompatible with the competing/dominating mode of conflict management as it does not lead to high-performing teams and organisations focused on a higher purpose (Jehn and Manniz, 2001). The result indicates that leaders would avoid using the dominating and avoiding style as it negatively correlates with team effectiveness (Rodgers 2012). Tjosvold (2008) highlights that competitive relationships and orientations when handling conflict can lead to either escalation or avoidance which in the end can break relational bonds within organisations. This would explain the negative relationship between the AL competencies and these styles as they do not lead to effectiveness within the organisation.

It is therefore not a surprise to see the results reflect this. Authentic leaders are rooted in openness and sharing of information which would indicate that in situations of conflict, they also expect that

followers would be open and share their opinions and values- which they (authentic leaders) would respect and try to think of ways to collaborate with all opinions shared. It therefore does not go in line with the dominating CMS where we see situations of imposing one's position on others or the case of the avoiding where leaders ignore the conflict or avoid confrontations to reach a solution.

5.1 Implication for Organisations

Another point to note in this study is the offshoot that constructive conflict leads to innovation and change within organisations. Fotohabadi & Kelly highlight that authentic leaders with self-awareness and a focus on constructive resolution can initiate positive innovation from disputes. Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, has often been known to use collaborative approaches to finding solutions. Organisations therefore need to focus on enabling managers to develop these competencies as this study has proven the effect of good leadership and more so, that of authentic leadership. With the world developing and becoming more globalised and digitalised, organisation need leaders able to inspire employees to achieve innovative results. Authentic leaders can contribute to this by rallying individuals to focus on a shared vision. The focus of organisations creating trainings that develop these AL capabilities in managers/supervisors' stems from the fact that it equips them to identify the right ways to handle conflict and how to use conflict to initiate positive change within the organisation. Rahim (2010) identifies that conflict can sometimes give rise to healthy competition, which can lead to performance improvement. However, the tipping point is how it is handled- hence the need for organisation to train leaders to develop these AL competencies. Organisations can use the findings from this study in their hiring processes by also focusing more on conflict resolution, leadership skills, transparency, self-awareness, and emotional regulation. Thereby hiring individuals that have these capabilities and can influence change as well as employee satisfaction and commitment.

5.2 Limitations and recommendations for future research

This study explored the relationship between authentic leadership and conflict management styles. However, during this study, certain limitations were encountered. The sample data size could not be more than the amount gotten since recent events of the world do not allow for easy movement for gathering of information. It is recommended that for future studies bigger sample size be considered. Another limitation is that since this study is relatively new, little research has been done on this, there is little research available to build the research on.

Another limitation is survey information was gathered at a single point in time thereby not allowing to establish causal effect. Future studies should do a longitudinal study that allows for monitoring over a period to establish causal effect. Another recommendation would be for future studies to introduce moderator variables such as job satisfaction, innovative performance etc, to determine the relationship. Finally, this study focused on sectors such as banking and finance, health, construction, and energy. Future studies should focus on more sectors that rely on teamwork such as the technology and security sectors.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study validates that authentic leaders, just like transformational leaders, frequently use the most constructive styles (collaborating, compromising, and accommodating) to manage organisational conflict. They can foster self-development and growth by adopting these styles of conflict management that focus on the shared vision, efficiency, development and cooperativeness of employees and the organisation. Findings from this study indicate the necessity for organisations to focus on leaders that have developed AL capabilities who understand the need to have constructive environments that encourage employees to reach their full potential (Walumbwa et al., 2010) as well as productive ways to handle conflict that increase team performance as well as employee job satisfaction.

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Lühikokkuvõte

See uurimistöö uurib seoseid autentse juhtimiskompetentsi (AL) ning järelevaataja konfliktilahendusstiilide (CMS) vahel. Uurimistöö üritab tõestada autentse juhtimisviisi ning konfliktilahendusstiilide vahelise suhte olemasolu. Juhtimine on organisatsioonilise kasvu ning efektiivsuse jaoks elulise tähtsusega. Arvestades, et konflikt on ühiskonnas ja töökohal alati kohal, siis on oluline, et firmajuhid lahendaksit konflite konstruktiivselt, et efektiivsus ja produktiivsus ei kannataks. Mitmed uurimused on vaadelnud seoseid teiste juhtimisstiilide vahel nagu transformatsiooniline ning tehingulise juhtimise ja konfliktilahenduse vahel, kuid vähesed on uurinud seoseid AL ja CMS-I vahel, sest AL on arenev kotseptsioon ning selle korrelatsiooni mõistmiseks on vähe tehtud.

Uurimused on ning näidanud, et transformatsioonilisel ning autentsel juhtimisviisil on mõned sarnased jooned (Brown ja Trevino, 2006) ning vähesed uurimused on näidanud AL ja CMS-I vahelisi seoseid. Uurimus põhineb mõnedel uurimustel, mis on uurinud tranformatsioonilise ning CMS vahelisi suhteid, et luua aluspinda mõistmaks, kas AL võib samal viisil CMS-i mõjutada.

Sarnasuste tõttu transformatsioonilise ja autentse juhtimisviisi vahel väidab see uurimus, et autentsed juhid kasutavad sarnaseid konflikti lahendusviise nagu transformatsioonilised juhid. Seega oleks autentsel juhtimisviisil CMS-ile sarnased mõjud nagu ja transformatsioonilisel juhtimisviisil.

Seega, lähtudes ülaltoodud leidudest pakkus autor välja positiivse seose autentse juhtimisviisi kompetentside ning konstruktiivsete konfliktihaldamisviiside vormide vahel – koostöine, vastutulelik ja kompromissistiil ning negatiivne seos võistlusliku ning vältiva konfliktihaldusviisiga. Uurimus juhindus kahest alltoodud hüpoteesist.

H1: Autentse juhtimisviisi komptentsidel on positiivne seos vastutuleliku, koostöise ning kompromisse tegevate konfliktihaldusstiilidega.

H2: Autentse juhtimisiivi kompetentsidel on negatiivne seos vältiva ning võistlusliku konfliktihaldussüsteemiga.

Kasutati kvantitatiivset uurimust ning ristuuringuid. Uuringurakenduse kaudu küsitleti mugavalt 189 töötajat NIgeeria pangandus- ja finants, tervise- ning ehitussektorist, kus vastajad täitsid

küsimustiku oma järelevaataja eelistatava konfliktilahendusstiili tuvastamiseks ning nende juhtimisstiili kindlaks määramiseks. Autentse juhtimisviisi kompetentside ning järelevaatja konfliktilahendusstiili muutujate uurimiseks kasutati Pearsoni korrelatsiooni.

Analüüsi tulemused näitavad, et autentse juhtimisviisi kompetentsid on eneseregulatsioon (SR), eneseteadlikkus (SA), sisemine moraalne perspektiiv (IMP), tasakaalustatud töötlus (BP). Suhete läbipaistvusel (RT) oli positiivne ja märkimisväärne mõju integreerivatele/koostöisetele, kompromisse tegevatele ning vastutulelikele CMS stiilidele, mis toetavad eelmise uurimuse seisukohta, et organisatsioonilised juhid kasutavad integreerivat tüüpi sagedamini kui kompromisse tegevat stiili (Fotohabadi & Kelly 2018) samas kui autentsed liidrid otsivad lahendusi, mis oleksid austaks nende arvamust ning teiste arvamust ning oleks kõigi osapoolte suhtes aus.

Vastukaaluks, autentse juhtimisviisi kompetentsidel oli negatiivne mõju CMS-I domineerivale ja vältivale stiilile, samas rõhutab Rodgers (2012), et mitte võistluslikus vaid koostöö on konfliktilahendusoskuse oluline osa, mis toob kaasa positiivseid tiimitulemusi ning autentsed liidrid näevad seeläbi, et kui nad on osa organisatsioonide kasvust, siis väldivad and domineerimist ja konfliktide teket.

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