



EFFECT OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN THE INSURANCE SECTOR: EVIDENCE FROM LEADWAY ASSURANCE, NIGERIA

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Accepted: August 8, 2022

ABSTRACT

The study investigated conflict management and employees' engagement in the insurance sector in Nigeria. The objective was to establish effect conflict management style (avoidance, accommodating, and competing management styles) on employees' engagement (emotional, cognitive, and physical employees' engagement) in insurance company in Lagos State using a survey research design. Leadway Insurance Company was surveyed random sampling technique. A total population of 310 regular employees were investigated with a sample size of 228. The validity of the instrument was determined using content and construct validity while Cronbach Alpha was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. Bivariate linear regression Analysis was used to analyse the hypothesis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (V26.0). The study found that avoidance conflict management had significant effect on emotional employee engagement in Leadway Assurance, Lagos state, Nigeria ($\beta = 0.351$, $t = 4.594$, $p < 0.05$). Findings further revealed that accommodating conflict management influenced cognitive employee engagement in Leadway Assurance, Lagos state, Nigeria ($\beta = 0.284$, $t = 3.973$, $p < 0.05$). Moreover, there was a significant effect competing conflict management on physical employee engagement in Leadway Assurance, Lagos state, Nigeria ($\beta = 0.527$, $t = 7.670$, $p < 0.05$). It concluded that conflict management promotes employees' engagement in the insurance sector in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study recommended amongst others that insurance companies should sensitize and train their employees about the conflict management and what it is all about.

Keywords: Insurance companies, Conflict management, Employee engagement, Nigeria

CITATION Odunayo, H. A. (2022). Effect of conflict management on employee engagement in the insurance sector: Evidence from Leadway Assurance, Nigeria. *The Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management*, 9 (3), 274 -287.

INTRODUCTION

A highly engaged workforce is being viewed as a means of achieving a long-term competitive advantage in today's fast-paced business world. Organizations globally strive to improve individual and organizational performance through high levels of employee engagement and this has led to engagement becoming one of the most important concepts in the field of management. Every organization is aware of the importance of keeping employees engaged and involved. Employee engagement surrounds concepts of human resources such as job satisfaction, employee commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour. However, it is more comprehensive than these concepts despite the fact that it is related to them, employee engagement displays a two-way relationship between employer and employee, engaged employees are emotionally attached to their organizations and are deeply involved in their work, with a strong desire to see their employer succeed, going above and beyond the terms of their employment contract.

Globally, organisations executives are becoming more interested in employee engagement as there are appealing relationships between staff engagement levels and customer loyalty, profitability, productivity, turnover, safety accidents, absenteeism, shrinkage, patient safety incidents, and product defects. Moreover, in India employee engagement procedures have been assessed to be acceptable (Segalla & DeNisi, 2019). In furtherance, studies in Jordan have stated that employee engagement is a means HR uses learn more about what practices and policies in their company are most beneficial in terms of employee motivation, attendance, retention, and productivity. Without an atmosphere that encourages employee engagement, turnover will rise and efficiency will fall, resulting in low customer loyalty and stakeholder value (Bhatla, 2011). Additionally, (Rurkkhum & Bartlett, 2012) argued that in Thailand there is an active role human resource development takes in strengthening employee engagement in

order to obtain outcomes related to the performance of in-role and extra-role behaviours, it was further suggested that human resource development can implement interventions related to job design, assignment of challenging tasks, supportive management practices and policies as well as the provision of Human resource development opportunities to positively influence employee engagement. Employee engagement should help organizations discover that their employees are the most powerful contribution to their competitive position, therefore employee engagement should be seen as a continuous process of learning, improvement and action (Bhatla, 2011).

In Africa, an engaged employee is aware of the business context in which he or she works and collaborates with coworkers to enhance job performance for the benefit of the company (Ologbo & Sofian, 2013). Employee engagement is outlined by energy, absorption, participation, efficacy, vigour, devotion, excitement, and a positive state, all of which are identified as accelerators for employee performance (Men, 2015). This is consistent with (Gichohi, 2014), who stated that there is a favorable association between employee engagement and performance due to enhanced dedication. Employee engagement, according to (Otieno, Wangithi, & Njeru, 2015), can be a predictor of employee success since it leads to good behaviors such as personal initiative, organizational citizenship behavior, and employee effectiveness.

Low employee engagement is costly to an organization's performance, so, top management must develop positive, successful people managers, as well as workplace policies and practices that prioritize employee well-being, health, and work/life balance (Ram & Prabhakar, 2011). According to (Ohiorenoya & Eguavoen, 2019) adopting techniques that can boost employee engagement and so affect its workforce for productivity and performance is a prevalent concern in each organization. Thus, it is critical to analyze the elements that may impact employee

engagement. However, most firms in Nigeria do not emphasize justice in dealing with personnel, spite of the fact that they are the most critical asset in the business, with their actions and inactions impacting the overall performance of the company. This has given the illusion that Nigerian employees are unsatisfied with their jobs, but some scholars perceive that inequality in the workplace can cause workers to be dissatisfied, resulting in a lack of work engagement. The dearth of studies as regards Conflict Management and employee engagement calls for a thorough study to determine what conflict management strategies are effective in increasing employee engagement. Therefore, it is against this background that this study aimed to examine the effect of conflict management styles on employee engagement in Insurance firms in Lagos State, Nigeria.

In line with the research objectives, the following hypotheses were tested:

- **H₀₁:** Avoidance conflict management has no effect on emotional employee engagement in Leadway Assurance, Lagos state, Nigeria.
- **H₀₂:** Accommodating conflict management does not influence cognitive employee engagement in Leadway Assurance, Lagos state, Nigeria.
- **H₀₃:** There is no significant effect of competing conflict management on physical employee engagement in Leadway Assurance, Lagos state, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

This section focused on the review of conflict management and employee engagement. It reviewed related literature on the opinion of scholars relating to the study variables. The section also discusses the theoretical and empirical findings from the previous studies.

Conflict Management

Conflict, work, and organizations are so inextricably linked that some have argued that organizations do

not exist in the absence of conflict, and that conflict cannot exist in the absence of individuals being interdependent for task accomplishment. Conflict is defined as a process that occurs when one person or group perceives differences and resistance between itself and another person or group about interests and resources, opinions, values, or practices that are important to them.(Gelfand, 2007). Conflict management is described as a continuing process that may never have a resolution (Shanka & Thuo, 2017; Iyiola & Rjoub, 2020).

Additionally, (Shanka & Thuo, 2017) also noted that constrictive disputes can result in stronger relationships between individuals and groups, as well as new and improved knowledge of organizational challenges. In contrast, damaging conflict can lead to divergence of opinion and a loss in effective collaboration among organization members. However, how the opposing parties react to certain disputes may also have an impact on the situation's conclusion. Unmanaged disputes can lead to ineffective outcomes. Successful conflict management necessitates listening to and offering chances to meet the needs of all parties, as well as effectively addressing their interests in order to achieve a win-win conclusion for all parties involved. According to(Sally Erin Howell, 2014) Conflict management is critical for the proper operation of organizations as well as for the psychological, cultural, and social growth of individuals.

The method in which the disagreement is managed, rather than the conflict itself, might produce greater stress in the situation. Previously(Tabassi, Abdullah, & Bryde, 2018)stated that effective styles make a contribution to conflict management, increased work stability, increased sense of self-efficacy among team members, and reduced the chance of bad confrontations in the future, and long-term financial prosperity for a firm. Several theories and models to resolving interpersonal conflict have been developed (Kleinman, 2003; Rahim & Magner, 1995; Rubin., 1994). These

theories expand on (Blake and Mouton's 1964) ground-breaking work, which classified mediation techniques and strategies into five categories: forcing, withdrawing, smoothing, compromise, and confronting. The authors further classified these five techniques into two broad categories that are linked to team leader behaviour: care for people, and concern for task. Thomas (1976) quoted in Rahim & Magner, 1995) evaluated and updated Blake and Mouton's approaches for addressing disputes in team contexts in 1976. Thomas (1976) also divided conflict resolution techniques into five types and found two key dimensions: ability to work together and assertiveness when self-concerns are more significant. In addition to these two dimensions, five conflict resolution styles were proposed, based on how cooperative or aggressive an individual is: cooperative, competitive, accommodating, avoiding, and compromise (Tabassi, Abdullah, & Bryde, 2018). This study however concentrated on three out of the five highlighted conflict resolution styles (avoidance, accommodating, and competing conflict management).

Avoidance Conflict Management

Avoidance conflict management is frequently defined as a lose-lose approach to dealing with interpersonal conflict that does not fulfil either party's concerns. An avoidant individual does not satisfy their own or others' concerns, it is characterised by low concern for self and others and has been associated with withdrawal, buck-passing, or sidestepping situations.(Rahim & Katz, 2019). It puts the parties in a lose-lose situation where they choose not to address one another's feelings, opinions, or aspirations.

Accommodating Conflict Management

Accommodating conflict management refers to a person's lack of interest in himself/herself compared to their tremendous interest in others. This method is also known as the harmony, non-confrontation, submission style, since it emphasizes similarities to minimize the importance of differences and serve the interests of the opposing

party.(Tuncay, Yaşar, & Sevimligül, 2018).An accommodating style (low care for self, great concern for others) is defined by a flawed appraisal of alternative possibilities and one-sided functions of giving in to others, which frequently leads to poor decision-making. An accommodating person puts her own needs aside to care for the needs of others.

Competing Conflict Management

The competitive style involves one dominant person attempting to achieve their objectives at the expense of the others. In a power-driven mode, the competing individual asserts his or her point of view, usually making a quick decision with little to no discussion. Although the feelings and opinions of others are rarely considered, and there is no willingness to interact, this approach can be swift and effective (Fiori, 2021). A competitive style is one in which the opposition's concerns and position are entirely disregarded.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement refers to employees' dedication to their positions within an organization, has become a valuable asset for small and medium-sized businesses looking to adapt to a changing environment(Rasool, Wang, Tang, Saeed, & Iqbal, 2020). Employee engagement is also defined as the degree to which a member of staff is emotionally invested in the organization's success. Christian, Garza, & Slaughter (2011) further defined work engagement as a relatively lasting state of mind characterized by simultaneous commitment of emotional and intellectual energies into the performance or experience of work. Additionally, Ganji, Rahimnia, Ahanchian, and Syed (2021) stated that employee engagement is defined as an organization's capacity to captivate its employees' collective consciousness, emotions, and energies in order to generate desire and enthusiasm for high-quality work. Employee engagement is a pleasant emotion that leads to brilliant, emotive, and social contributions to a company. Employees engagement results from the reciprocal exchange

between employees and companies (Wan, Zhang, & Chun, 2021).

Employee engagement requires strategic capabilities that are relevant to the company's business. Capabilities and talents need to be prepared through training and capacity building programs tailored to the size of the company's business (Bhatt & Sharma, 2019). This condition indicates a high level of work commitment and enhances the ability of employees to work. Employee engagement is the basis of a physical and emotional connection between employees and their employers. As a result, organizational behaviour theorists are paying more attention to the human and environmental elements that drive employee engagement.

Organizations need to create a prioritization scale to meet their commitment to all employees. This is because employee involvement is proportional to what employees receive to carry out work processes. Employee development impacts the company's strategic performance through employee engagement about the talent created through the empowerment of human resources (Wahyuni, 2019).

Employees' engagement is a multi-dimensional concept which comprises emotional engagement, cognitive engagement, and physical engagement. Emotional engagement is a term that describes a person's sense of self or values. Employees use their critical thinking skills to accomplish job duties, according to Kahn's (1990) concept of emotional engagement. While (Yoo 2016) defined emotional engagement as an employee's knowledge and emotional responsibility to the company, (Kassa and Raju 2015) argued that emotional engagement also has to do with how well people react depending on their personal attitudes and sentiments. Employees that are emotionally linked to their jobs feel pride, a sense of purpose, and a sense of self-importance (Chughtai, Byrne, & Flood, 2015; Khan & Lakshmi, 2018). Employees that have a strong emotional attachment to their jobs are more engaged.

The psychological and physical benefits of an employee being cognitively present while working were highlighted in Kahn's (1990) research. Employees become cognitively engaged when they become aware of their job from a mental standpoint. Employees that are intellectually engaged are mentally stimulated, concentrated, and engrossed in their professional duties. Employees with high levels of cognitive engagement are aware of their responsibilities and can identify with the organization's goal (Lam, Loi, Chan, & Liu, 2016). Being cognitively engaged also implies that the job employees do is meaningful and that they have access to the necessary resources (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015) there is a link between cognitive engagement and highly engaged people who thrive when given the right tools.

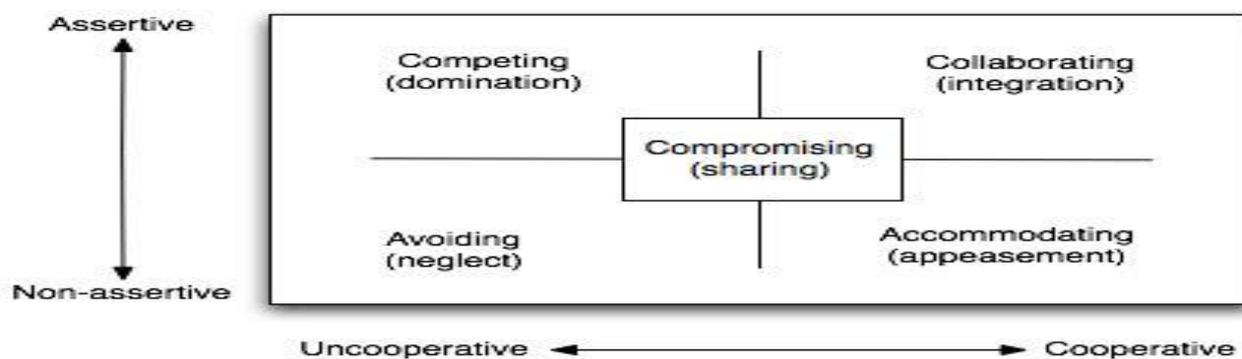
Physical engagement refers to the force or efforts that a person uses to complete a task. Individuals must be emotionally and cognitively invested in their professional duties in order to be physically engaged. Individuals' propensity to immerse themselves cognitively and emotionally in the task they do is known as physical engagement (Fletcher, 2017). The use of drive and determination in one's job function is known as physical engagement. Furthermore, Kahn (1990) discovered that when people face personal obstacles in their physical surroundings (such as a loss of attention due to poor working circumstances, system inefficiencies, or inadequate communication), it becomes difficult for them to focus thus becomes impossible for the individuals to physically do their job (Fletcher, 2017; Maynard, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

The theory explains the the effect of conflict management on employee engagement in Insurance firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. This study is anchored on Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Resolution Model. Thomas and Kilmann in 1976 postulated the conflict mode instrument and were designed to understand the various behaviours of particular individuals in a conflict scenario. The model views mainly two particular perspectives that is

assertiveness which is satisfying individual needs and cooperativeness which involves cooperating with others and when combined, form a conflict management style (Tjosvold et al., 2014). The model looks at the five basic styles of conflict

management; integrating, dominating, accommodating, compromising and avoiding and how the two perspectives are involved as shown in the figure below 1.



Source: Thomas Kilmann (1974)

Figure 1: Thomas Kilmann conflict management styles

The figure shows the five styles of CM and how assertiveness and cooperativeness are involved when managing conflicts in the organisation. For instance; dominating style is assertive and uncooperative, accommodating style is unassertive and cooperative, avoiding style is uncooperative and unassertive, compromising style is partially assertive and partially cooperative while the integrating style is assertive and cooperative according to Thomas and Kilmann (1976). Therefore, the model depicts personal behaviour in a conflict scenario basing on how assertive and cooperative they are when using the various styles (Kaimenyi, 2014). The Thomas Kilmann conflict mode instrument was relevant to this study in that for conflicts to be solved, the managers should know the conflict management styles they use (Corn, 2013) and with this, they are then able to establish which style suits the organisation depending on the parties' behaviours of being assertive and cooperative of which in the end yield results. The managers can also select from a number of conflict management styles depending on which style suits the organisation and how it was to have an impact on the employees' performance. The management should also be able to recognise the conflicts and establish how employees deal with

them (Graham, Mentor, & Hughes, 2009) and educate them on the various styles on how to mitigate the conflicts. According to Iravo (2011), a work environment based on trust, respect and free from conflicts leads to employee commitment and motivation with a result of high performance.

Empirical Review

Avoidance Conflict Management and Emotional Employee Engagement

Emotional engagement is a term that describes a person's sense of self or values. Employees use their critical thinking skills to accomplish job duties, according to Kahn's (1990) concept of emotional engagement. While (Yoo2016) defined emotional engagement as an employee's knowledge and emotional responsibility to the company, (Kassa and Raju 2015) argued that emotional engagement also has to do with how well people react depending on their personal attitudes and sentiments. Employees that are emotionally linked to their jobs feel pride, a sense of purpose, and a sense of self-importance (Chughtai, Byrne, & Flood, 2015; Khan & Lakshmi, 2018). Ma (2007) explored the impact conflict management styles as indicators of behavioural pattern in business within two countries. The conflict management styles were measured using

the Thomas-Kilmann model i.e., competing or dominating, collaborating or integrating, compromising, accommodating or obliging, and avoiding. Questionnaires were administered in English in Canada and in Mandarin in China to 226 MBA students from one major Canadian university in East Canada and 200 senior undergraduate students from one leading business school in Beijing, China. Moreover, it was found that Canadians use more compromising and collaborating styles and show higher level of distributiveness than the Chinese whereas the Chinese use more avoiding and competing tactics and show lower level of distributiveness than Canadians. The results also support different styles lead to different behaviours outcomes, where competing is the single most important factor that predicts engagement outcomes in both Canada and China, and avoiding is the most influential factor in Canada that affects the emotional engagement.

Li (2017) examined leaders avoidance of conflict in china and how it affected team conflicts, behaviour and engagement. Data was collected from 245 subordinates in three large companies in the People's Republic of China through an online survey. We sent surveys through the companies' human resources departments, and the final sample included 245 subordinates. The main purpose of the research is to examine the effects of leaders' conflict avoidance on followers' attitudes and followers' emotional well-being in Chinese organizations. The findings in this paper are intriguing, in that they suggest there are positive relationships between leaders' avoidance and followers' attitudes and emotional well-being, which are different from the conventional negative view about leadership avoidance in a Western context. The findings suggested that, in China, a team leader's avoidance or lack of intervention in a conflict situation can be effective in achieving positive attitudes and emotions among subordinates.

Posthuma (2012) summarized studies on emotional engagement and conflict management and

highlighted how conflict management research can help managers, employees, and organizations more effectively manage the emotional engagement and aspects of conflict. Five studies were selected and combined study so that the researchers could have an integrative review of recent research on emotional engagement in the workplace. The studies were chosen to highlight the relationships between emotional engagement and key conflict variables, such as task, relationship, and process conflict; trust; venting; and forgiveness. The studies represented a broad range of samples, including participants from more than 14 countries and cultures. That a broad range of positive and negative emotions, such as anger, enthusiasm, excitement, guilt, and remorse, are significantly related in complex and varied ways to various aspects of conflict management. The studies highlighted not only the importance of understanding engagement in conflict situations, but also the need to understand how and when the regulation of emotions can facilitate effective conflict management.

Accommodating Conflict Management and Cognitive Employee Engagement

Employees become cognitively engaged when they become aware of their job from a mental standpoint. Employees that are intellectually engaged are mentally stimulated, concentrated, and engrossed in their professional duties. Employees with high levels of cognitive engagement are aware of their responsibilities and can identify with the organization's goal (Lam, Loi, Chan, & Liu, 2016). Being cognitively engaged also implies that the job employees do is meaningful and that they have access to the necessary resources (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). Kaya and Skarlicki (2020) studied what organizations could do to cultivate a more conflict-positive workplace? And if a promising line of enquiry could be found in cognitive engagement the first study involved an online survey delivered to 1,007 working adults on Amazon Mechanical Turk, while the second study involved 600 employees at a large healthcare

organization The first was an exploratory study to examine the relationship between the variables in the model at the dispositional level, and to test the soundness of the underlying theory as a precursor to an experimental field study. The second study entailed a randomized controlled trial with one month of online training at a healthcare organization, with active and passive control conditions and three waves of data collection. Results revealed that cognitive engagement facilitates constructive conflict management by increasing integration/ accommodating and reducing avoidance, showing that the advantages of cognitive engagement in conflict management stem from more than its benefits for affect.

(Rahim & Katz, 2019) The authors proposed that conflict-management strategies commonly employed in the workplace are impacted by worker gender as predicted by face negotiation theory and vary over time based on the engagement of the worker. A field study was conducted to assess main and interactive effects of gender and generation on the five strategies for conflict management: Integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising. Questionnaire data were collected over four decades (1980s-2010s) from employed students a population of 6,613 was used. Data analysis was performed using a multivariate analysis of covariance. The results suggested that female employees who were cognitively engaged consistently use more noncompeting strategies (accommodating, obliging, avoiding and compromising) than male employees and male employees consistently use more competing strategy (dominating) than female employees.

Competing Conflict Management and Physical Employee Engagement

Physical engagement refers to the force or efforts that a person uses to complete a task. Individuals must be emotionally and cognitively invested in their professional duties in order to be physically engaged. Individuals' propensity to immerse themselves cognitively and emotionally in the task they do is known as physical engagement (Fletcher,

2017). The use of drive and determination in one's job function is known as physical engagement. Physical involvement refers to not just a person's job position, but also the amount of effort they put in to complete the activity (Kuok & Taormina, 2017). Mishraa and Kodwani (2018) hypothesizes that the conflict results in the presence of perception of organization politics POP only for those employees who are relatively less engaged with the organization. Data was collected at two different points of time from the employees of two public sector undertakings. With a sample size of 126, only 115 were usable, resulting in a 55.83 percent response rate. SEM was employed to test the hypotheses with the help of Smart PLS 3.0. A two-step process was followed to test the hypothesized model. The results of the study highlighted a positive association between competing conflict management and physical engagement. A moderating effect of employee engagement on relationship conflict and perceived organizational politics (POP) was observed. Further, POP was found to have a positive relationship with the intention to leave and a negative relationship with openness to diversity and perception of justice was observed. POP mediated the relationship between relationship conflict with the intention to leave and the perception of justice.

Niekerk, Klerk, and Pires-Putter (2017) assessed the relationship between conflict management styles and physical engagement employees in a higher education institution in South Africa. Participants were academic personnel with a population of 180 and support staff with a population of 201, of which 59.9% were females and 29.9% were black African participants of a large South African university. Using completed self-report measures of conflict management and physical engagement. The data was analysed to predict work-related well-being from conflict management styles and to determine the differences between support staff and academic personnel regarding conflict management styles and work-related well-being. The findings indicated the conflict management style of compromise to

predict lower levels of engagement and higher levels of disengagement. While Support staff who were physically engaged reported to utilise the compromising and dominating style more than did academic personnel.

Adim, Odili and Aigboje (2020) examined conflict management and performance of health care professionals in teaching hospitals in Rivers State. The study used a cross sectional research design involving medical doctors, nurses, medical laboratory scientists and pharmacists in University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital and Rivers State University Teaching Hospital. A Multi-stage sampling was employed to select 165 healthcare professionals from both hospitals. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. Results from analysis of data revealed that conflict management significantly predict performance of health care professionals in Teaching Hospitals in Rivers State. The study recommends that health care professionals' collaboration should be adopted in Teaching Hospitals. This includes sharing of patient information, joint participation in the care and in the decision-making process, and degree of cooperation, must be carefully scrutinized and implemented with the added input of nurses, physicians and other paramedics.

METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was adopted for this study. This is to aid the collection of data on the subject matter. The population of the study comprises all employees of the selected insurance company in Lagos State, Nigeria. The population are the 310 employees in the selected insurance company which is Leadway Assurance Plc. A sample size of two hundred and twenty-eight (228) respondents was randomly selected from the

selected insurance company. This was obtained from the selected insurance company by the use of simple random sampling technique. Simple random sampling technique was employed in order to ensure that everyone in the population has an equal chance of being chosen when the questionnaires are administered. The researcher made use of a well-structured questionnaire which is the main instrument administered for the primary data collection and it is designed to cover the variables. Validity of the instrument was determined using content and construct validity while the Cronbach alpha was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument which yielded coefficient alpha of 0.726, 0.770, 0.759, 0.780, 0.791, and 0.788 for avoidance conflict management, accommodating conflict management, competing conflict management, emotional employee engagement, cognitive employee engagement, and physical employee engagement respectively. Bivariate regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses formulated with the support of SPSS version 26 for windows.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study collected data on employees from Leadway Assurance Plc. The researchers distributed a total of 228 copies of questionnaire to the respondents, out of which 224 copies were rightly filled and returned to the researcher. The response rate of the participants to the questionnaire administered is 98.2%). The analysis was conducted by using the inferential statistics and the results of the analysis are presented in Tables. The hypotheses test was conducted with a 95 percent confidence interval, assuming a significance level of 0.05. The decision rule is placed at a crucial area of $p > 0.05$ for null hypothesis acceptance and $p < 0.05$ for null hypothesis rejection.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1

H₀1: Avoidance conflict management has no effect on emotional employee engagement in Leadway Assurance, Lagos state, Nigeria.

Table 1: Summary of Regression of the Effect of Avoidance Conflict Management on Emotional Employee Engagement in Leadway Assurance, Lagos state, Nigeria

Variables	B	T	Sig	R	R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
(Constant)	16.572	9.419	.000	.297 ^a	.088	4.610
Avoidance Conflict Management (ACM)	0.351	4.594	.000			
a. Dependent Variable: Emotional Employee Engagement (EEE)			F (1,218) = 21.100			

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The result on Table 1 revealed that, avoidance conflict management significantly affects emotional employee engagement with a coefficient and probability value of $\beta_1 = 0.351$, and $p < 0.05$ respectively. This indicated that, an increase in avoidance conflict management will enhance emotional employee engagement of the selected insurance company. The coefficients of determination (R^2) of 0.088 indicated that, only about 8.8% of variation or change in employees 'emotional employee engagement in the selected insurance company is attributable to avoidance conflict management and the remaining 91.2% is due to other factors not captured in the model. The coefficient value showed that, a unit change in avoidance conflict management will lead to 0.351 change in emotional employee engagement. The *F*-

statistics of *F*-stat = 21.100, $p < 0.05$ revealed that, the variable specified fit the model well and it is suitable for policy making. Based on these results, the null hypothesis one (H₀1) which states that avoidance conflict management has no effect on emotional employee engagement in Leadway Assurance, Lagos state, Nigeria was rejected.

Thus, the model is as follows:

$$EEE = \alpha + \beta_1 ACM$$

$$EEE = 16.572 + 0.351 ACM$$

Hypothesis 2

H₀2: Accommodating conflict management does not influence cognitive employee engagement in Leadway Assurance, Lagos state, Nigeria.

Table 2: Summary of Regression of the Effect of accommodating conflict management on cognitive employee engagement in Leadway Assurance, Lagos state, Nigeria

Variables	B	T	Sig	R	R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
(Constant)	17.598	10.537	.000	.263 ^a	.065	3.786
Accommodating Conflict Management (ACM)	0.284	3.973	.000			
a. Dependent Variable: Cognitive Employee Engagement (CEE)			F (1, 213) = 15.783			

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The result on Table 2 revealed that, accommodating conflict management significantly affects cognitive employee engagement with a coefficient and probability value of $\beta_1 = 0.284$, and $p < 0.05$ respectively. This indicated that, an increase in accommodating conflict management will enhance

cognitive employee engagement of the selected insurance company. The coefficients of determination (R^2) of 0.065 indicated that, only about 6.5% of variation or change in cognitive employee engagement in the selected insurance company is attributable to avoidance conflict

management and the remaining 93.5% is due to other factors not captured in the model. The coefficient value showed that, a unit change in accommodating conflict management will lead to 0.284 change in cognitive employee engagement. The *F*-statistics of *F*-stat = 15.783, *p* < 0.05 revealed that, the variable specified fit the model well and it is suitable for policy making. Based on these results, the null hypothesis two (*H*₀₂) which states that accommodating conflict management has no effect on cognitive employee engagement in Leadway Assurance, Lagos state, Nigeria was rejected.

Thus, the model is as follows:

$$CEE = \alpha + \beta_1 ACM$$

$$CEE = 17.598 + 0.284 ACM$$

Hypothesis 3

*H*₀₃: There is no significant effect competing conflict management has on physical employee engagement in Leadway Assurance, Lagos state, Nigeria.

Table 3: Summary of Regression of the Effect of competing conflict management on physical employee engagement in Leadway Assurance, Lagos state, Nigeria

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Sig</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
(Constant)	11.221	6.558	.000	.459 ^a	.210	3.563
Completing Conflict Management (CCM)	0.527	7.670	.000			
a. Dependent Variable: Physical Employee Engagement (PEE)			<i>F</i> (1,221) = 58.826			

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The result on Table 3 revealed that, completing conflict management significantly affects physical employee engagement with a coefficient and probability value of $\beta_1 = 0.527$, and *p* < 0.05 respectively. This indicated that, an increase in completing conflict management will enhance physical employee engagement of the selected insurance company. The coefficients of determination (*R*²) of 0.210 indicated that, about 21% of variation or change in physical employee engagement in the selected insurance company is attributable to completing conflict management and the remaining 79% is due to other factors not captured in the model. The coefficient value showed that, a unit change in completing conflict management will lead to 0.527 change in physical employee engagement. The *F*-statistics of *F*-stat = 58.826, *p* < 0.05 revealed that, the variable specified fit the model well and it is suitable for policy making. Based on these results, the null hypothesis three (*H*₀₃) which states that there is no significant effect competing conflict

management has on physical employee engagement in Leadway Assurance, Lagos state, Nigeria was rejected.

Thus, the model is as follows:

$$PEE = \alpha + \beta_1 CCM$$

$$CEE = 11.221 + 0.527 CCM$$

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The objective of this study was to examine the effect of conflict management on employee engagement in Insurance firms. Using regression technique, it is evident that avoidance conflict management, accommodating conflict management, and competing conflict management have positive individual significant effect on emotional employee engagement, cognitive employee engagement, and physical employee engagement in Leadway Assurance, Lagos state, Nigeria respectively. These conform with the studies of Ma (2007) as well as Li (2017) that Canadians use more compromising and

collaborating styles and show higher level of distributiveness than the Chinese whereas the Chinese use more avoiding and competing tactics and show lower level of distributiveness than Canadians. The findings in this paper are intriguing, in that they suggest there are positive relationships between leaders' avoidance and followers' attitudes and emotional well-being, which are different from the conventional negative view about leadership avoidance in a Western context. The findings suggested that, in China, a team leader's avoidance or lack of intervention in a conflict situation can be effective in achieving positive attitudes and emotions among subordinates. This is also consistent with the study by Kaya and Skarlickib (2020) who found that cognitive engagement facilitates constructive conflict management by increasing integration/accommodating and reducing avoidance, showing that the advantages of cognitive engagement in conflict management stem from more than its benefits for affect. Mishraa and Kodwani (2018) equally found a positive association between competing conflict management and physical engagement. Niekerk, Klerk, and Pires-Putter (2017) found that conflict management style of compromise to predict lower levels of engagement and higher levels of disengagement. While Support staff who were physically engaged reported to utilise the compromising and dominating style more than did academic personnel. Echaabari, Ihunda and Adim (2018) examined collaboration conflict strategy and employee performance in oil producing companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria and found that there is a positive significant relationship between collaboration and employee performance in oil producing companies in Port Harcourt. Therefore, it was concluded that since acrimony, disagreement and grievance is inevitable, management should adopt proven techniques of resolving them so that the corporate goal will be actualized by the collective contribution of every member of the organization.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings revealed that, an improvement in accommodating conflict management, avoidance conflict management, and competing conflict management tends to enhance emotional employee engagement, cognitive employee engagement, and physical employee engagement of selected insurance company. The accommodating conflict management style involves giving up on ones needs to satisfy the needs of others which encourage conflicts to come up again with time. The styles provide minimal information and parts of the individual needs are left unsolved thus conflicts arising in the long run. The avoiding style is preferred because it involves withdrawing from the conflict at hand whereas the dominating style is preferred because the style is used in case of an emergency and involves speedy decision making. With all this in place, conflicts are managed which leads to temporal and fair solutions which satisfy all the parties. Therefore, the styles when used leads to increase in employee performance in the work place. The competing style encourages participation of all the parties, the style is partially assertive and cooperative and the style leads to temporal solutions when being used. It can therefore be concluded that conflict management is important determinant of employee engagement of insurance companies. As a result, it is recommended that management of the Leadway Assurance should be able to sensitize and train the employees about the conflict management and what it is all about. This will create awareness about the management process among the employees and know how to go about the conflicts that may arise in the long run. The training should be able to entail the different types of conflicts faced, methods or styles used for solving conflicts and the procedure followed before a final decision are made in the work place regarding the conflict.

Suggestions for Further Research

The research was on conflict management and employee engagement in Leadway Insurance Plc in Lagos State, Nigeria and came up with suggestions

for further research were suggested which should be on the inclusion of other conflict management styles since this study investigated three styles as well as investigating conflict management style and employee performance in banks or telecommunication companies in Nigeria.

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