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Authentic Leadership and Conflict Management among Youth in Malaysia: The Mediating Role of Resilience

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Abstract

Youths are the scion of future leadership who should be instilled with leadership style and skills for managing conflicts. Discussions related to leadership show that the leadership qualities found in youths varies from each other where the qualities are influenced by the environment and the ability of the youth. In addition to the challenges present, the exposure of youths to resilience is important for them to adapt to society. Thus, this study aimed to examine the relationship between authentic leadership and conflict management skills among youths in Malaysia with resilience as the mediating variable. This study used a quantitative approach through the distribution of questionnaires involving 439 respondents among youths comprising students of educational programme and novice teachers in the northern zone of Peninsular Malaysia. Authentic Leadership Questionnaire, The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale and Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory (ROCI II) were used in this study. The data was analyzed using SPSS 29 and SmartPLS 4 software. The findings showed that there was a significant relationship between authentic leadership and conflict management while resilience was a significant mediator between authentic leadership and conflict management among youths. Accordingly, individuals with a leadership style are able to manage conflicts due to the resilience skills inherent in them and are able to create positive emotions in the face of adversity.

Keywords: *Authentic Leadership, Conflict Management, Resilience, Youth*

Introduction

Youths are those who are directly involved in the development of a country. The progress and setbacks of a country are measured by the quality of the younger generation of that country (Tan & Abidin, 2016). According to Ibrahim et al. (2018), youths should be given early exposure to life's challenges before they graduate. Early exposure to conflict resolution will produce individuals who have a positive attitude and are able to reduce aggressiveness and violence in them (Shanka & Thuo, 2017). In the process of personality construction, it is important for youths to understand the concept of conflict, the elements of influence of conflict, the impact of conflict and the skills in managing conflicts (Mohamad et al., 2021).

In their daily lives, youths will face many challenges that can affect their personal and academic lives (Longobardi et al., 2016). At the higher education level, one of the factors that can cause youths to

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experience stress is when they are forced to stay away from their families (Feyisa et al., 2022), experiencing learning difficulties (Anasuri & Anthony, 2018) ascertain self-identity, experience financial difficulties and adapt to the new environment and society (Gomez- Molinero et al., 2018). This will put psychological pressure on the youth (Wu et al., 2020) in turn will lead to a situation in which they will begin to lose interest and lack the confidence to graduate (Shankland et al., 2019).

Therefore, conflict management among youths is one of the skills that should be mastered because according to Guerrero (2019), individuals who are unable to manage conflicts will experience difficulties in achieving objectives, in strengthening relationships with people around them, in solving problems and will not feel satisfied in doing things. Although conflict is a natural thing that happens in life (Ghashi, 2020), if not managed properly when it occurs will have an impact on the organization and the individual itself (Rai & Sing, 2021).

In providing exposure to youths to face challenges, youths at the university should also be given exposure related to resilience before completing their studies (Ibrahim et al., 2018). According to Kocaturk dan Cicek (2021), youths with high resilience have the ability to adapt to society and the challenges faced due to the elements of resilience which help to shape their personal and psychological development. While skills and the ability to adapt to society and challenges are important, Kothari et al. (2021) think that environment and also the individuals' internal well-being are additionally essential in shaping resilience. This is because according to Herrero et al, (2019), youths who obtain the quality of satisfaction in life will remain resilient in stressful situations. In other words, the nurturing of resilience among youths should be the main focus as resilience can impact success as well as being able to have good mental well-being and satisfaction in life (Konaszewski et al., 2021).

In Malaysia, through the Ninth Malaysian Plan (RMK-9) the government has stressed the need to develop leadership potential among youths since 2006. The potential for leadership in youth should be maximized as an impetus for youth to remain competitive (Ationg et al., 2021). Nevertheless, according to Uzman and Maya (2019), self-development of university students is often neglected. The university as one of the formal institutions should be able to produce individuals who have a tolerant character, respect for others, acceptance of multiculturalism, able to work as a team and develop leadership potential (Aldaihani & Alkhaldi, 2018). According to Cetinkaya et al. (2021), youths who are able to develop and improve their leadership skills from primary school level to higher education level are able to take responsibility and manage life in the future. Therefore, university students should be trained self-leadership strategies through training programs designed for the environment at the university (Uzman & Maya, 2019).

Looking at these situations, this study aimed to identify the relationship between authentic leadership towards conflict management among youths in higher learning institutions while resilience as the mediator between authentic leadership and conflict management. To understand more about conflict management in youths, the objectives of the study were outlined as follows;

1. To identify the relationship between authentic leadership and conflict management among youths.
2. To identify the influence of resilience as a mediator in the relationship between authentic leadership and conflict management among youths.

Literature Review

Conflict Management

Conflicts can occur in an environment where there is an active relationship between people (Lamm et al., 2020). According to Wilmot and Hocker (2011), conflict is defined as disagreement between individuals due to differences in values, beliefs, goals and relationships. Conflict management is a process to identify and manage conflicts through appropriate and fair methods. According to Huber (2013), conflict can be managed with effective communication skills, problem solving skills and negotiation skills. According to Sabanci (2016), an individual's conflict management style is closely related to the cause of the conflict. In today's social situation, the individual who is able to manage conflicts is a professional individual who has the ability to lead compared to individuals who do not have the skills to manage conflicts (Guerrero, 2019). According to Rahim (2011), there are six factors that can cause conflict to occur, namely, (a) different goals and cooperation between individuals (b) different social inclinations (c) individual needs cannot be met due to limited resources (d) opinions issued are ignored (e) personal interest exists when performing a task (f) too dependent on others. Past studies have shown that an individual's conflict management skills vary according to the role played in life. Studies show the higher the role of an individual, the higher the conflict management skills required (Longitapraja et al., 2019; Pal, 2019). In addition, Hakvoort et al. (2020) and Saiti (2015) are in the opinion that lack of a harmonious environment and healthy relationships can lead to conflict. One of the factors that cause the lack of a harmonious environment and healthy relationships because each individual has a different personality. According to Wolf and Krause (2014), most of the communication problems that occur in organizations are related to personality differences, which can cause conflict. This is because, according to Sabanci et al. (2018), effective communication is the result of understanding between the person who delivers the information and the recipient of the information.

Accordingly, Mungania and Kihoro (2017) stated that in an educational institution conflict is difficult to predict; it requires that individuals who are faced with conflict have the ability to handle the conflict wisely. This is due to the fact that higher learning institutions will experience various levels of conflict and complex phenomena which require various strategies and solutions needed in resolving the conflict (Lukman, 2021). Conflict resolution skills among youths should be given focus as youths will go through a process of self-development where through this process they will form relationships with their parents and peers (Collins & Stenberg, 2006). A study conducted by Akan (2020) demonstrated that basic life skills such as communication, conflict resolution and empathy are basic skills that can help youths to adapt to society and face life's challenges. Therefore, the conflict should not be avoided but the conflict must be managed or resolved in order to prevent worse things from happening. Each individual should at least have the knowledge to manage the conflict even if it is not able to resolve the conflict in order to avoid getting bigger. The ability to think rationally in solve conflicts can help individuals to make good decisions based on the current situation (Hendijani & Ahmadi, 2023). This shows that every individual should have knowledge to manage conflict that occurs events they are unable to resolve the conflict in order to avoid the conflict that occurs becoming worse.

In managing conflict, Rahim (2002) stated that the strategy for managing conflict is based on two dimensions, caring for oneself and caring for others. Rahim (2002) also added, self-care

refers to the concern of individuals to meet their goals in the process of managing conflict. While caring for others refers to the individual's concern for others in the process of managing conflict. Therefore, although the conflict management of each youth is different according to the situation and environment, the skills to solve the conflict should be cultivated from the time in the educational institution. This is because, according to Guncavdi-Alabay (2023), the importance of having knowledge, skills and competence in the process of managing conflicts can avoid from negative.

Authentic Leadership

Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2015). In an organization, the leadership style practiced by a leader can create an environment and improve the quality of the organization (Aboudahr & Mohamad, 2021) and the leader should always be prepared to make any decision without affecting his followers (Junnaid et al., 2020). Nowadays, the need to associate an individual's character with authentic leadership has long been done, studied and even discussed (Avolio et al., 2009; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Authentic leadership is a leadership style capable of influencing changes in organizational culture, behaviour and interactive relationships between individuals (Abdullah & Ismail, 2018; Avolio et al., 2010; Ismail et al., 2019). Authentic leadership is a positive leadership like ethical leadership, and transformation (Alvesson & Einola, 2019) that emphasizes integrity, honesty and high moral values (Avolio et al., 2004; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Walumbwa et al. 2008). According to Saeed and Ali (2019), individuals with authentic leadership personalities are individuals who are able to build a real attitude of themselves where (Mat Zaid et al., 2022) also added that individuals with authentic personalities have self-awareness and are also equipped with high moral standards. It is because, authentic leadership is leadership that is based on values (Gerdener et al., 2011), has high morals (Ribeiro et al., 2020) and is based on positive psychology (Dominguez-Escrig et al., 2023).

In addition, in celebrating the diversity of behavior, studies have shown that individuals who practice an authentic leadership style are seen to be able to accept the diversity that exists and are able to demonstrate the value of strong trust in those around them (Srivastava & Shree, 2019). According to Bandura et al. (2019), individuals who adopt authentic leadership traits such as self-awareness, balance of information processing, appreciation of moral values and sincerity in relationships will directly demonstrate a sacrifice attitude towards those around them. Study conducted by Malloy et al. (2023) in institutions of higher learning showed that individuals who practice an authentic leadership style are able to influence those around them to become more committed due to the existence of a positive environment that is able to benefit them. The positive social environment created by individuals who practice an authentic leadership style in the university is also able to make individuals around them to be more open in giving opinions without fearing the consequences of their open attitude in giving opinions (Soares & Lopes, 2017).

This indirectly proves that through authentic leadership qualities, an individual is also able to attract the trust of the people around them (Ayca, 2019; Bandura et al., 2019; Sadaf et al., 2020) as well as being able to encourage others to voluntarily perform their responsibilities without expecting anything in return (Roncesvalles and Gaerlan, 2021). In addition, through the dimension of self-awareness, authentic leadership is seen as a leadership style that will prioritize the views of others in improving communication with their followers and encourage those around them to give their own views (Saffardin & Maydin, 2019). According to Edelman et al. (2004), leadership among youths is described as the ability of youths to reflect the goals and

changes needed, to be responsible for every action done and to build relationships and communicate well with others. Meanwhile Hoy and Miskel (2008) said that the ability of the individual to influence those around him and the organization through internal and external elements, the selection of goals, organizational activities, individual abilities, sharing of views and power relations is a social process in leadership. With the same stance, Jhonsen (2018) added that the leadership qualities found in youths are different from each other where students who are born talented and have advanced leadership qualities are students who are interested and quick to learn, have a high level of perfection, are socially superior and have more advanced cognitive development than their peers. However, this is refuted by Cetinkaya et al., (2021) and Liu et al, (2020) who said that there are various opportunities to develop leadership potential in individuals and they can highlight the leadership potential when having clear goals that they want to achieve in their lives and thus being able to influence the people around them through the leadership influence they have.

Resilience

Resilience is utilized in describing the positive and negative reactions of individuals when dealing with various disorders from various angles such as ecosystems, organizations, personal issues, security and also local culture (Winn & Dykes, 2019). According to Connor and Davidson (2003), resilience is the quality and ability of an individual to cope with the difficulties experienced. Resilience is an ability that develops in the individual over time where this skill will exist as strength in the individual (Osman et al., 2015). As a result of the stress faced, the resilience present in the individual can be translated through well-being, mental and physical health (Mackay, 2017). This is because according to McFadden et al. (2014), individuals who are resilient in the face of adverse experiences in life can avoid the adverse effects of the experience by converting such bad experiences to something that can benefit their lives. This goes hand in hand with the opinions of Yeager and Dweck (2012) that the behaviour of individuals who are resilient in the face of adversity can be seen through the behaviors and emotions displayed where those with resilience are constantly trying to find new strategies for self-development and do not give up easily on challenges.

In the context of higher education, resilience is defined as the ability of students to recover and rise from life difficulties, conflicts in everyday life and even failures (Fayissa et al., 2022). Past research findings showed that resilience has an impact on students' well-being and success (Beauvais et al., 2014; Souri & Hasanirad, 2011) and able to support academic development and achievement (Martin et al., 2015). University is one of the educational institutions for youths to start their studies at a higher level and at this stage the youths will face difficulties that they have never faced before (de Almeida Santos & Benevides Soares, 2018). The pressure obtained by the youth in higher learning institution is different compared to other youth groups. Previous studies showed that youth in institutions of higher learning experience high pressure that can affect their mental health, especially if there is a delinquent situation (Ibrahim et al., 2013; Shek et al., 2017; Lederer et al., 2021). Therefore, among the constructs that can support the lives of young people in institutions of higher learning is resilience. Resilience becomes a critical concept for university students because life at university is full of stress where most students start a new life by being away from their families and starting new episodes in their lives (Can & Kalkan, 2021). Students who are able to adapt quickly to life at the university are students with high endurance (Haktanir et al., 2018). Regardless of gender, resilience is seen as a factor that is able to adapt to the pressures and challenges that in turn are able to give a boost to the community (Othman & Gazali, 2020). Studies conducted by Masfield

and Beltman (2019) showed that through resilience, individuals will have a positive relationship, achieve satisfaction in doing tasks, easily engage with assigned tasks, be more motivated and have a positive identity. Therefore, resilience is seen among the elements that youths should have in the face of life at the university. This is because resilience is seen as strength that guides individuals to find self-goals, to prioritize others, to be generous, harmonious and to have spiritual strength (Richardson, 2002).

Therefore, in order to develop resilience among youth in institutions of higher learning, the institution's management and educators should play a role in this regard. This is because, psychologically, resilience can be formed through life experience and can be obtained through cognitive and behavioral training (Southwick & Charney, 2018). Study conducted by Price (2023), showed that, in shaping youth resilience in institutions of higher education, management and educators can create additional curricula or programs about the importance of resilience and the need to have resilience. According to Price (2023), it can indirectly able to form resilience among the youth and then is able to maintain the mental well-being of the youth.

Authentic Leadership, Resilience and Conflict Management

In previous study, although there are many studies that examine the influence of authentic leadership, resilience and conflict management, most of these studies are conducted separately with other variables. A study conducted by Wong et al. (2020) showed that a leader who is able to encourage people around him to resolve conflicts together is able to build trust and have a harmonious relationship in achieving success and goals. Conflicts that are managed together are able to convince the surrounding members that they can be trusted with each other and are able to build confidence with the existence of support between them (Brown et al., 2005).

Enrolling in a higher education institution youths will face a different environment and learning compared to during schooling. According to Sapta et al. (2021), the environment plays a role in creating leadership style in individuals. Skills to face challenges possessed by individuals with leadership characteristics are able to influence the environment to be more positive (Sothwick et al., 2017). This is due to the fact that individuals with leadership qualities have unique qualities that distinguish them from others (Lazaridou, 2020). A study by Xion and Huang (2023) found that youths with authentic leadership style are able to influence their innovation behavior in their daily life. According to (Selznick et al., 2022), the innovation behaviour among youths is a new action and solution taken in the face of challenges. In short, individuals with an authentic leadership style are individuals who can influence their conflict management style and those around them (Demirdag & Kalaf, 2016; Hamilton, 2018) and are able to influence others to be more innovative in solving the problems faced (Shang et al., 2019).

Based on the literature review, although there are many studies examining the influence of authentic leadership, resilience and conflict management, most of these studies were conducted separately alongside other variables. A study by Iannucci et al. (2021), showed that resilient individuals are individuals who have less conflict in their lives. In addition, Choo and Prihadi (2019) result finding showed that resilience is the mediator of perfection and academic achievement among graduate students at the university. Besides that a study by Sacdalan and Bozkus (2018) showed that resilience mediated the relationship between self-determination and self-efficacy among youths. Although the relationship between self-determination and self-efficacy was weak, Sacdalan and Bozkus (2018) found that resilience played a role in strengthening the relationship between these two variables.

Further, studies done by Sapmaz (2023); Seo and Yuh (2021) and Yirci et al. (2022) also showed that resilience has an influence and affects between various variables. Therefore, the initial assumption of this study was that the resilience variable was a mediator in the relationship between authentic leadership and conflict management.

Research Methodology

Design of Study

This study was conducted using cross-sectional approach method. According to Creswell (2008), descriptive study that uses a cross-sectional approach to test individual's attitudes, opinions, beliefs and behaviors is a suitable method. Therefore, this cross-sectional study method was suitable as it was comprehensive and data from the respondents could be obtained at once. The process of collecting data was through questionnaires answered by respondents. The use of questionnaires is able to assess the respondents' reactions to the questions and the data can be analyzed accurately through statistical tests carried out (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Population and Research Sample

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the study sample to getting the right respondents is a critical point in the study. In addition, purposive sampling technique (Creswell, 2014) is used for specific population to meet the specified criteria. The targeted population of this study was the youths studying in public universities and Teacher Education Institutions in the Northern part of Malaysia. This study used purposive sampling technique involving 436 respondents.

Research Instrument

The questionnaires in this study were developed in the western country and also in Malaysia to measure study variables. As the instrument in this study was in the English language, a translator was appointed to translate the questionnaire into Bahasa Malaysia. The use of translator in the back translation method was to obtain equivalent questionnaire and avoid cross-culturalism as recommended by Brislin et al. (1973). This study also used the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire from Walumbwa et al. (2008) which contained 16 items to examine authentic leadership style among youths. Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory developed by Rahim (1983) which consisted of 28 items was also used in this study. Meanwhile, the Connor-Davidson resilience scale (Connor & Davidson, 2003), containing 25 question items was used to test resilience among respondents.

Data Analysis

A total of 533 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and a total of 436 questionnaires were reinstated. The data obtained was analyzed using SPSS version 29 for data screening and descriptive analysis while for the verification of the developed model, smart PLS 4 was used. Table 1 shows that out of 436 data obtained, 100 (22.9%) were male respondents while 336 (77.1%) were female respondents.

Table 1: Respondents' Demography.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	100	22.9
Female	336	77.1
Total	436	100

Research Findings

In hypothetical testing, The Structural Equation Model – Part Least Square (SEM-PLS) was used in this study (Ringle et al., 2022). According to Hair et al. (2021) and Hair et al. (2017), through PLS-SEM, measurement and Structural Model analysis can be done despite data distribution abnormalities. To analyze the developed model, researchers used two recommendation methods by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) which was the validity and reliability analyses (Hair et al., 2019), followed by hypothetical testing developed through the evaluation of structural models.

Measurement Model

Measurement Model test must be carried out first to assess the reliability values of each item and the constructs studied in a model. Through Internal Consistency Reliability, the loading value of the indicator was different from each other and produced a composite Reliability (CR). According to Hair et al. (2014), the CR value should be between 0.7 and 0.9, while the value of average variance extracted (AVE) should exceed 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017). In this study, there were several values of indicators that have to be discarded in order to increase the value of AVE. According to Hair et al. (2016), indicators with an outer loading value ranging from 0.4 to 0.7 can be considered to be maintained if the CR value has reached 0.7 and the AVE exceeds 0.5. However, if the indicator value is below 0.4, then the indicator should be discarded. Table 2 shows that the AVE value was above 0.5 and the CR value was above 0.7; and there was some loading value below 0.7 because the CR value has reached the specified value.

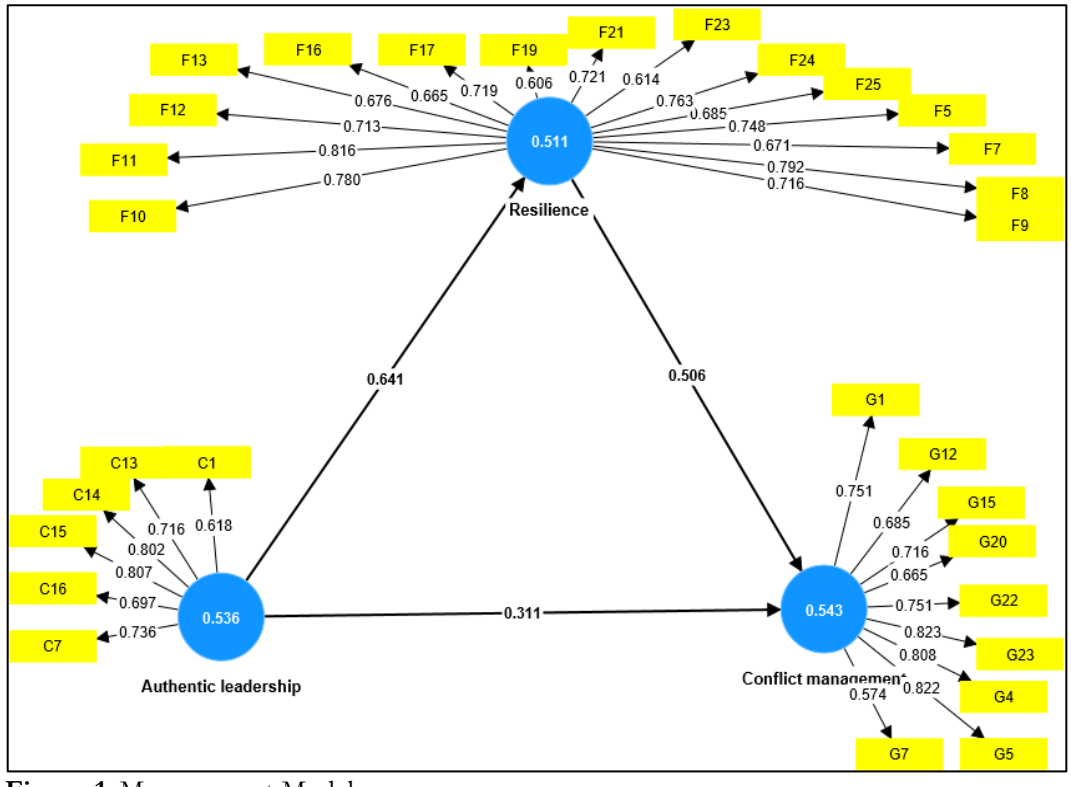


Figure 1: Measurement Model.

Table 2: Measurement Model Result.

Construct	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AV
Authentic Leadership	C1	0.618	0.852	0.835	0.536
	C13	0.716			
	C14	0.802			
	C15	0.807			
	C16	0697			
	C7	0.736			
Resilience	F10	0.780	0.893	0.902	0.511
	F11	0.816			
	F12	0713			
	F13	0.676			
	F16	0.665			
	F17	0.719			
	F19	0.606			
	F21	0.721			
	F23	0.614			
	F24	0.763			
	F25	0.685			
	F5	0.748			
	F7	0.671			
	F8	0.792			
	F9	0.716			
Conflict Management	G1	0.751	0.938	0.940	0.543
	G12	0.685			
	G15	0.716			
	G20	0.665			
	G22	0.751			
	G23	0.823			
	G4	0.808			
	G5	0.822			
	G7	0.574			

Table 3: Construct Validity and Reliability.

Latent Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Authentic Leadership	0.853	0.853	0.536
Resilience	0.893	0.902	0.511
Conflict Management	0.938	0.940	0543

After the Average Variance Extracted analysis was performed, a discriminant valid test was done. Discriminant validity test (Cross Loading, Fornell-Larker and Haterotrait-Monotrait) was done to see how closely the indicator in a construct differs from other constructive indicators evaluated through correlation in a model (Hair et al., 2017; Ramayah et al., 2018) as shown in Table 4, Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 4: Cross-Loading.

Items	Authentic Leadership	Resilience	Conflict Management
C1	0.618	0.389	0.385
C13	0.716	0.453	0.461
C14	0.802	0.522	0.567
C15	0.807	0.516	0.498
C16	0.697	0.407	0.441
C7	0.736	0.487	0.445
F10	0.531	0.624	0.780
F11	0.521	0.594	0.816
F12	0.362	0.467	0.713
F13	0.379	0.435	0.676
F16	0.358	0.379	0.665
F17	0.406	0.456	0.719
F19	0.311	0.349	0.606
F21	0.412	0.484	0.721
F23	0.312	0.325	0.614
F24	0.497	0.504	0.763
F25	0.516	0.534	0.685
F5	0.526	0.575	0.748
F7	0.479	0.468	0.671
F8	0.551	0.605	0.792
F9	0.548	0.587	0.716
G1	0.506	0.751	0.517
G12	0.436	0.685	0.401
G15	0.486	0.716	0.518
G20	0.415	0.665	0.425
G22	0.461	0.751	0.517
G23	0.525	0.823	0.650
G4	0.481	0.808	0.548
G5	0.512	0.822	0.617
G7	0.368	0.574	0.425

Table 5: Fornell-Larker.

Construct	Authentic leadership	Conflict management	Resilience
Authentic leadership	0.732		
Conflict management	0.635	0.737	
Resilience	0.641	0.706	0.715

Table 6: Haterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT).

Construct	Authentic leadership	Conflict management	Resilience
Authentic leadership			
Conflict management	0.737		
Resilience	0.711	0.749	

Structural Model

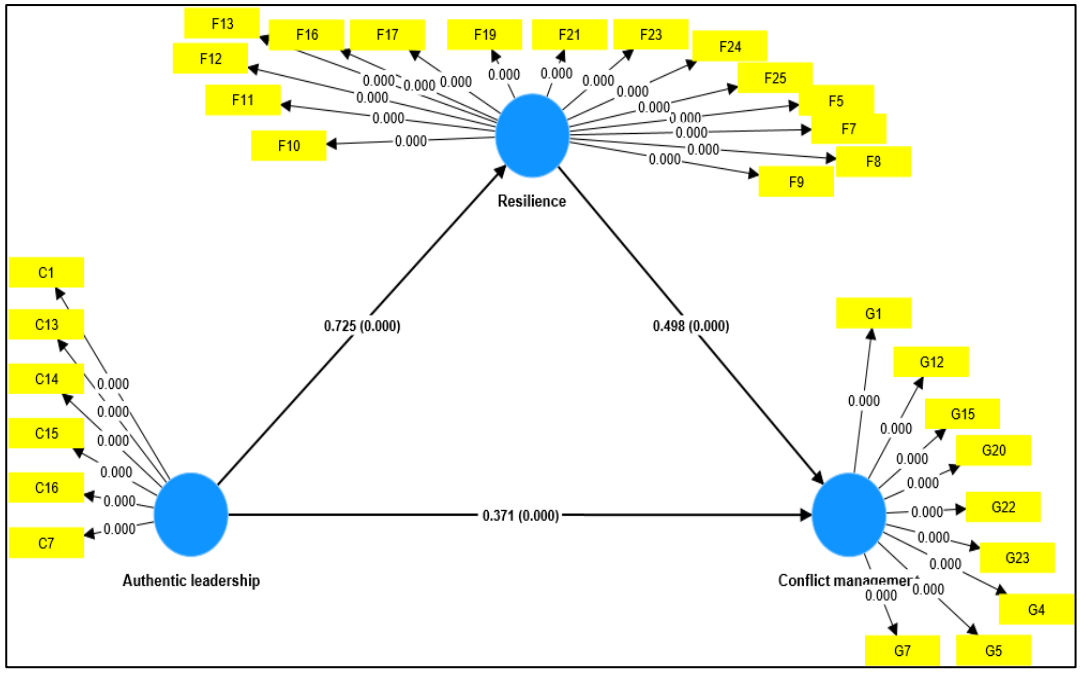


Figure 2: Structural Model.

After performing the measurement model analysis, the next step was a structural analysis of the model. The purpose of structural testing of the model was to make an assessment of the constructs that were connected to each other, thus forming a model.

Table 7: Hypothesis Testing.

Relationship	β	Std Deviation	t-value	p-value	R^2	F^2	Q^2	Confidence Interval (BC)	
								BCI LL	BCI UL
KA->PK	0.371	0.065	5.700	0.00	0.652	0.128	0.295	0.276	0.450
KA->R->PK	0.361	0.044	8.149	0.00				0.273	0.447

Table 7 shows the Direct and Indirect Relationship findings in Structural Model. Through the first hypothesis (H1), the analysis showed that there was a significant relationship between authentic leadership and conflict management among youths (β = 0.371, t = 5.700, p <0.05). The study also conducted an analysis using bootstrapping methods to achieve the objectives of the study as recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2008). According to Preachers and Hayes (2008), if the Confident Interval value does not record a value of 0 then the mediation analysis is significant. Table 7 also shows that resilience has a mediating effect on authentic leadership and conflict management (β = 0.361, t = 8:149, p < 0.000, LL = 0.273, UL= 0.447). In addition, the Q2 analysis was conducted to identify the extent to which the endogenous constructs studied were relevant in forming the model. According to Hair et al. (2014), if the value of Q2 is greater than 0 for an endogenous construct, then the model forecast is relevant. Through the finding of this study, the Q2 value for conflict management was greater than 0 (Q2 = 0.295) so the model predicted in this study was relevant.

Discussion

This study aimed to identify resilience as a mediator between authentic leadership and conflict management. Through empirical findings two initial assumptions have been made where there was a significant relationship between authentic leadership and conflict management while resilience was the mediator of these two variables. The hypothesis model and relationship were tested using structural model. Through the first finding, the analysis showed that there was a significant relationship between authentic leadership and conflict management. This showed that youths who have leadership qualities in themselves are individuals who are able to handle the various situations they face. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of Demirdag and Kalaf (2016); Fotohabadi and Kelly (2018); and Hamilton (2018) that individuals with an authentic leadership style are individuals who are able to influence themselves and those around them to manage conflict effectively. The youth are the future leaders who are also the leaders of their peers in institutions of higher learning. Authentic leadership is seen as a leadership style that is able to provide cognitive support and enhance a trusted environment (Xiao & Huang, 2023). An authentic leader is a leader who is able to understand himself, has strong beliefs and self-esteem, acts based on good moral values and always maintains relationships with people around him where relationships are open, guides towards organizational objectives and always encourages development of his followers (Gardner et al., 2005). This is because, authentic leadership is a leadership style that aims to form the trust of members in the organization (Baron, 2016). The trust that is formed is able to create a positive environment which in turn is able to create positive self-development between the leader and his followers.

In educational institutions, according to Selznick et al. (2020), the youth should strive to be more innovative in solving the problems faced. The challenges and conflicts faced by the youth while at the study centres are different compared to when at school. This is because, the roles and responsibilities faced while at the institute of higher education are increasingly heavy which affects the youth to have the skills to manage their conflicts. According to Pal (2019), the higher the role played by the individual, the higher the level of conflict management required. According to Ilgan (2020), an educational institute is an institution that contains individuals who have differences in values, beliefs and philosophies so that conflict is inevitable. Therefore, individuals who have a leadership style play a role in influencing the conflict management of members in the organization (Akanji et al., 2018; Chandolia & Anastasiou, 2020; & Kiran et al., 2019).

In addition, through the second hypothesis, the findings showed that resilience is a mediator between authentic leadership and conflict management. This means that youths who have leadership qualities in themselves are able to manage the conflicts they face through the resilience inherent in them. This is in line with the findings of the Tosun and Dilmac (2015) study which found that the level of resilience in a person will determine which style of conflict management to choose. The youths who have resilience are youths who are able to overcome the challenges and obstacles faced (MacGilivray & Pidgeon, 2015; Omar & Abdullah, 2020). A study from Amzil (2023) which also goes hand in hand with the findings of this study found that students who are resilient while at university always show seriousness in overcoming negative emotions, while the less resilient people always avoid and stay away from the problems they are facing which affect their self-achievement. Therefore, the youths at the university should be exposed to the resilience skills in order to develop the potential leadership characteristics in themselves and thus be able to manage the conflicts faced wisely.

Summary

Through this study it can be proven that authentic leadership characteristics can help in conflict management with resilience as the mediator among the youths in the university. Each group of youths is different from each other. Youths with leadership characteristics are able to influence their peers to be wise in managing conflicts. This is because the youths are not only the leaders of the current leadership, but they are also leaders among their peers. The role of the youths in the university is not only to gain knowledge but also to prepare for life after graduation. Youths should be able to develop their potential by participating in the programmes organized by the university. Through the participation of programs at the university level, they can indirectly learn the basic skills to adapt to society. Skills to be resilient in the face of challenges can be developed in the youth from time to time. Youths with leadership characteristics are able to create a positive environment and emotions towards their surroundings. The result of positive thoughts and emotions can produce youths who are able to manage conflicts well without avoiding the conflict. Therefore, to produce holistic youths, skills such as leadership, conflict management, resilience, communication, and empathy need to be possessed to adapt to the environment and face challenges.

Limitation and Suggestion for Future Research

This study was a quantitative study. The data found in this study were based on questionnaires that have been formed in western countries. Reliability analysis was carried out by researchers. However, the results of the information and findings of the study were limited as it depended on the honesty and willingness of the respondents to answer the questionnaire. Given the findings obtained using survey tests, researchers suggest that further studies use other methods to determine the influence of resilience on conflict management, such as observation techniques and interviews. This study focused only on youths in higher learning institutions in northern Malaysia. We suggest that future studies use other sampling techniques to diversify the findings of the study.

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