

Leadership styles and bullying – Evidence review

Ashforth (Ashforth, 1994) studied petty tyranny in organisations. Tyrannical behaviours include arbitrariness and self-aggrandisement; belittling others; lack of consideration; a forcing style of conflict resolution; discouraging initiative; and non-contingent punishment. Petty tyranny is the product of interactions between individual predispositions (beliefs about the organisation, subordinates, and self, and preferences for action) and situational factors (institutionalised values and norms, power, and stressors). Tyrannical management causes low self-esteem, performance, work-unit cohesiveness, and leader endorsement, and high frustration, stress, reactance, helplessness, and work alienation among subordinates. This, in turn can create a vicious circle that sustains the tyrannical behaviour.

Marano (Marano, 1995) argued that bosses who are bullies tend to humiliate their employees in front of others in order to demonstrate their power.

Atwater (Atwater, Dionne, Camobreco, Avolio, & Lau, 1998) found that leaders with higher levels of physical fitness and moral reasoning were more likely to use contingent punishment, while those with lower self-esteem were more likely to use non-contingent punishment.

Wager (Wager, Fieldman, & Hussey, 2003) found that an unfavourably-perceived supervisor was a potent workplace stressor which could have a clinically-significant effect on employee's blood pressure.

Skogstad (Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland, & Hetland, 2007) found that laissez-faire leadership was positively correlated with role conflict, role ambiguity and conflicts with co-workers which in turn were linked to bullying at work. "The results support the assumption that laissez-fair leadership behaviour is a destructive leadership behaviour."

Harvey (Harvey et al., 2007) argued that leaders do not necessarily have the best interests of the organization in mind and often treat their own personal goals as more important than the organisation's. He examines the bully as leader, and how the bully creates a dysfunctional environment where the bullied, the observer, and the organisation suffer due to the decisions made by the bully.

Hoel (Hoel, Glasø, Hetland, Cooper, & Einarsen, 2010) found that non-contingent punishment was the strongest predictor of self-perceived exposure to bullying, whilst autocratic leadership was the strongest predictor of observed bullying.

Stouten (Stouten et al., 2010) found that ethical leadership decreased bullying by improving employees' workloads and tackling poor working conditions.

Pelletier (Pelletier, 2010) developed a typology of toxic leader's behaviour and rhetoric.

Roter (Roter, 2011) found that toxic leadership impeded teamwork, affected communication, and was detrimental to the culture of the organisation.

Krasikova (Krasikova, 2011) found that leaders with strong implicit aggression were more likely to perceive their personal goals being misaligned with the goals of the organisation and experience goal blockage by subordinates. Leaders were more likely to pursue destructive goals when their personal goals were misaligned with the organisation's and were more likely to use a destructive leadership style when their goals were thwarted by subordinates. Manipulative

leaders were more likely to pursue destructive goals when their goal achievement was thwarted by subordinates. Followers were more likely to use avoidance, denial and coping than confrontation and advocacy-seeking strategies in response to destructive goals and actions.

Soylu (Soylu, 2011) studied the links between paternalistic leadership and bullying. Soylu found that expecting loyalty in exchange for nurture was positively related to bullying but that behaving like a senior family member at work was negatively related to bullying.

Mathisen (Mathisen, Einarsen, & Mykletun, 2011) found that supervisors who were low on conscientiousness, high on neuroticism and who were stressed had more reports of bullying. Subordinates who perceived their supervisor as being low on agreeableness and high on introversion reported significantly more workplace bullying.

Thoroughgood (Thoroughgood, Hunter, & Sawyer, 2011) found that aversive leaders were perceived more aversively and elicited greater whistle-blowing intentions in financially-unstable organisations possessing climates intolerant of negative leader behaviour. Female aversive leaders were perceived more aversively than their male counterparts under such conditions.

Hauge (Hauge et al., 2011) found that leadership practices and role conflict predicted bullying at the departmental level.

Crawshaw (Crawshaw, 2012) describes coaching abrasive leaders. She argues that they should not be called bullies as they don't actually set out to hurt or injure people.

Caporale (Caporale, Palese, & Bortoluzzi, 2012) studied 175 nurses and found that a non-collaborative leadership style was associated with more "negative actions," that in turn could lead to more bullying.

Sandler (Sandler, 2012) argued that when emotional pressures on leaders become too great a level of anxiety is triggered that tips them into unskilful or dysfunctional behaviour. Sandler developed the [emotional profiles triangle](#) model to help leaders to play to their strengths while managing their anxiety and behaviour more effectively.

Bullying and an oppressive management culture was found at NHS Lothian (Gyford, 2012)

Spence Laschinger (Spence Laschinger, Wong, & Grau, 2012) found that authentic leadership led to a reduction in bullying.

Ayoko (Ayoko & Konrad, 2012) found that diversity increased task conflict which in turn led to worse group performance and morale but that effective leadership reduced these negative effects to zero.

Nielsen (Nielsen, 2013) found that laissez-faire leadership was associated with an increased risk of exposure to bullying behaviour, self-labelled victimization from bullying, and perpetrated bullying. Transformational leadership and authentic leadership were related to decreased risk of bullying with authentic leadership being related to a greater decrease.

Hutchinson (Hutchinson & Hurley, 2013) carried out a narrative review of the literature and concluded that "leadership and emotional-intelligence capabilities offer real potential to mitigate bullying behaviour."

Onorato (Onorato, 2013) found that all industry segments had strong correlations between ethical leadership and bullying (or lack thereof)

Ertureten (Ertureten, Cemalcilar, & Aycan, 2013) found that transformational and transactional leadership decreased the likelihood of bullying whereas authoritarian leadership increased it. Paternalistic leadership was mildly and negatively associated with bullying.

May (May, Wesche, Heinitz, & Kerschreiter, 2014) studied the way followers coped with destructive leadership and how the levels of confrontation of the chosen strategies in turn affected leaders' perceptions and behaviours.

Keller Hansbrough (Keller Hansbrough & Jones, 2014) developed a model which detailed how narcissistic leaders' cognitive processes can promote abuse supervision.

Boddy (Clive R. Boddy, 2014) found that corporate psychopaths had large and significant impacts on conflict and bullying and employee wellbeing. Boddy later argued (Clive Roland Boddy, 2016) that screening for psychopathy should be added into selection procedures. Boddy described a case study of a psychopathic leader of a charity whose reign led to an increase in bullying, staff withdrawal and turnover, a decline in revenue and organisational commitment, creativity and organisational innovativeness.

Bortoluzzi (Bortoluzzi, Caporale, & Palese, 2014) found that a participative leadership style reduced bullying in nursing teams.

Tsuno (Tsuno & Kawakami, 2015) found that people who worked under laissez-faire supervisors were 4.3 times more likely to be bullied than other people. People who worked under supervisors who were highly considerate of the individual had a 70% lower risk of new exposure to bullying. Charisma/inspiration; individual consideration and contingent reward were negatively associated with bullying.

Chua (Chua & Murray, 2015) found that women perceived toxic leaders more negatively than men, while men emphasised positives. Men were more likely to collude with a toxic leader, compared to women. People were also more attuned to negative messages and behaviour from a leader of the same sex.

Trépanier (Trépanier, Fernet, Austin, & Boudrias, 2016) reviewed 12 articles and found that leadership style was one of the four main categories of work-related antecedents of workplace bullying.

Yokoyama (Yokoyama et al., 2016) found that being bullied was associated with low scores for nurse-manager ability; leadership and support of nurses; and staffing-and-resource adequacy.

Jit (Jit, Chandra Shekhar, & Kawatra, 2016) found that servant leaders manifested conflict-management styles which were more persuasive, humane and participative

Kaiser (Kaiser, 2017) studied 237 nurses and found that transformational leadership was linked to a lower incidence of incivility

Han (Han, Harms, & Bai, 2017) found that abusive supervision led to employees suffering from sleep deprivation and emotional exhaustion which, in turn, led to a decline in creativity.

Fink-Samnack (Fink-Samnack, 2017) discusses bullying bosses and leadership and argued that "health-care settings are especially-tense environments, often making it difficult for individuals to distinguish between bullying behaviour and high expectations." She argued that "case

management is poised to promote a safe health care workplace for patients and practitioners alike amid these intricate circumstances.”

Fleming (Fleming, 2018) found that laissez-faire leadership was a significant, positive predictor of work-related, person-related and physical intimidation whilst transformational leadership reduced them.

A 2018 study found that servant leadership significantly reduced workplace bullying (Los Angeles Sanchez Jones, 2018)

Francioli (Francioli et al., 2018) found that social community at work fully mediated the effect of poor-quality leadership on workplace bullying.

Aryati (Aryati, Achmad, Djumilah, & Noermijati, 2018) found that the presence of ethical leadership influenced the formation of ethical climate in an organisation which, in turn, reduced deviant behaviour - including bullying.

Lee (Lee, 2018) found that people working under a passive leadership were more likely to experience sexual harassment.

Porter (Porter, Day, & Meglich, 2018) found that perceived stability in an organisation and higher levels of leader-member exchange were linked to lower levels of workplace bullying. Organisational cultures that emphasised rewards led to higher levels of bullying and newcomers were subject to more bullying than longer-service workers.

Kari Wik (Kari Wik, Einarsen, Hetland, & Skogstad, 2018) found that co-worker conflict increased the risk of subsequently reporting being a victim of workplace bullying and that laissez-fair leadership strengthened this relationship.

Islam (Islam, Ahmed, & Ali, 2019) found that ethical leadership had significantly reduced bullying

Fontes (Fontes, Alarcão, Santana, Pelloso, & de Barros Carvalho, 2019) found that a low relationship-oriented leadership style was 5.8 times more likely to be associated with personal and work-related bullying.

Mills (Mills, Keller, Chilcutt, & Nelson, 2019) found that humour perception affected perceptions of bullying in the workplace and that transformational leadership was associated with 22% of the variance in reports of decreased bullying activity.

Paesen (Paesen, Wouters, & Maesschalck, 2019) found that servant leadership reduced deviant behaviour.

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