Workplace Bullying as Mediator of Leadership Styles and Self Concept among Employees

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**Abstract**

This study investigated the mediating effects of workplace bullying on leadership styles and self-concept using the simple random technique. Questionnaires were answered by the respondents. The data was collected from 566 regular employees from five (5) selected government municipal offices in Region IV, Philippines. The findings of this study revealed that the three leadership styles (authoritarian, delegative, and participative) are being practiced by the immediate supervisors as perceived by the employees and that participative leadership style is the most practiced leadership style. Moreover, the respondents never experienced physical, cyber, and sexual bullying and rarely experienced verbal bullying in their workplace. The level of the respondent’s self-concept was found high in terms of social, competence affect, academic, and family and moderate on physical self-concept. In addition, the result also shows that there is a significant relationship between leadership styles, workplace bullying, and self-concept of employees. In addition, there is a significant relationship between authoritarian and participative leadership styles and the respondent’s social self-concept when mediated by verbal bullying experiences. Furthermore, delegative leadership style, participative leadership style, cyber, physical, and sexual bullying significantly predict self-concept of the respondents.

**Keywords:** workplace bullying, leadership styles, self-concept, employees

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Introduction

In our fast-paced, competitive world today, self-concept becomes important for a person because it is related to his/her values and identities. Individuals who have high self-concept can buffer stress and illnesses, but those who have low self-concept forestall their development and enjoyment that can lead to frustration, depression, anxiety and even suicide. The study of the International Sexuality Description Project (ISDP) examined national differences in self-concept across 55 nations that reflected suicide rates. Results indicate that suicide is especially common in nations with relatively low levels of self-concept (Chatart, Selimbegovic, & N’Drikonan, 2010).

In 2012, the University of Nebraska Lincoln conducted a research study focusing on the effects of self-concept on research productivity of librarians in a public university in South-West Nigeria. The result showed that there were relative effects of self-concept ($\beta = 0.253, P < 0.05$) on research productivity of the librarians. The findings established that the effect of self-concept on research productivity was significant and it was concluded that librarians who possess high self-concept would have high research productivity (Okenedo, 2012).

Self-concept issues are also present in the workplace environment. According to studies, people with low self-concept engage in subconscious behaviors that undermine their development and success, making them less likely to ask for or get promotions, raises and even stable jobs (Sinberg, 2010).

Other researches also show that issues of self-concept in the workplace can be manageable with the help of the leaders. Manburg and Lou (2014) stated that leaders in the organizations can profoundly influence employee’s low self-concepts, and further influence their behaviors and other social processes. The study only shows that the immediate supervisors’ way of handling employees can positively or negatively affect the employee’s self-concept.

The Philippines is one of the 55 countries that participated in the International Sexuality Description Project (ISDP) research conducted by the University of Switzerland. The World Health Organization (WHO) found that the Philippines has a suicide rate of 2 out of 10 in general (2.50 for males and 1.70 for females) and 29.98 for the self-concept/self-esteem (Chatard, Selimbegovic, Drikonan, 2010). This implies that the incident of low self-concept is present in the country.

In relation to the aforementioned argument, study shows that here in the Philippines, acts of bullying are not only found in educational institutions, bullying acts also prevail in the company settings. These kinds of acts hamper peace and tranquility in a professional environment and disrupt the delivery of services to the people. Moreover, the study also pointed out that bullying in the workplace is often ignored and overlooked by employers and supervisors, and its ramifications are not limited to the negative effects on victims but also affect an employee’s morale and productivity (Diaz, 2014).

In addition, aside from leadership style, studies have also found out that self-concept can be related to workplace bullying. People who previously had high self-concept to start with could account for the reduce perception of workplace bullying and they can be resilient and bounce back to any negative experiences in the workplace (Bano, 2013). However, not much study has shown self-concept being related in the workplace settings. The perceived gap encouraged the researcher to investigate the mediating effects of workplace bullying to the relationship of leadership styles and self-concept.
The Problem

This study aimed to determine the relationship of leadership styles to self-concept as mediated by workplace bullying on employees from January to May 2016. Specifically, it sought to determine the following: a.) the leadership styles (authoritarian, participative, and delegative) practiced by the immediate supervisor as perceived by the respondents; b.) the extent of workplace bullying experiences of the respondents in terms of verbal bullying, physical bullying, cyber bullying, and sexual bullying; c.) the level of the respondents’ self-concept in terms of social, competence, affect, physical, academic, and family self-concept; d.) the relationship between leadership styles of the respondents’ immediate supervisor, their workplace bullying experiences, and their self-concept; e.) the relationship between the leadership styles of the respondents’ immediate supervisor and the respondents’ self-concept as mediated by their workplace bullying experiences; f.) and the predictors of self-concept.

Methods

The descriptive-correlational research design was used in this study. Descriptive design described and summarized the leadership styles of the immediate supervisors, and the respondents’ self-concept and workplace bullying experiences. The correlational method also determined the relationship of leadership styles of the respondents’ immediate supervisors, their self-concept and workplace bullying experiences as well as the differences in the relationship when the respondents’ demographic profile such as age, gender, civil status and educational attainment were considered. The 566 participants who were randomly selected came from five different municipalities in Region IV of the Philippine islands. Age of the participants ranges from 20 to 51 and above years old. A total of 566 participated in the study. There were 339 (59.89%) female participants and 227 (40.06%) male participants. The questionnaires used in gathering the data was developed from the concepts and ideas taken from the reviewed literatures, research studies and input from panel of experts. The questionnaires underwent reliability and validity. The results of reliability using the Alpha scale for the leadership style of the respondents’ immediate supervisors was coefficient alpha of 0.932, workplace bullying has coefficient alpha of 0.8532, and self-concept has coefficient alpha of 0.7041.

Frequency distribution and percentage were utilized to identify the respondents’ demographic profile as to age, gender, civil status and educational attainment. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of the leadership style of the respondents’ immediate supervisor, their self-concept and workplace bullying experiences. Pearson’s product-moment correlation coefficient to determine the relationship between the leadership styles of the respondents’ immediate supervisor, their self-concept and their workplace bullying experiences. Structure Equation Modelling (SEM) through the use of Analysis of Moment Structure (AMoS) was used to confirm the mediation of the respondents’ workplace bullying experiences between the leadership styles of the respondents’ immediate supervisor and their self-concept. Finally, the researcher used the regression analysis to determine which of the leadership styles of the respondents’ immediate supervisor and the respondents’ workplace bullying experiences significantly predicted the respondent’s self-concept.
Results

Descriptive results of Leadership Styles

Among the four leadership styles, three leadership styles were being practiced by the immediate supervisors as perceived by the respondents and were sometimes observed. Participative style has the highest mean of 3.40 ($SD = 0.50$) followed by delegative leadership style ($M= 3.55; SD = 0.52$) and authoritarian leadership style ($M=2.75; SD =0.71$). The results imply that the three leadership styles were sometimes observed by the respondents as being practiced by their immediate supervisor.

According to Murdock (2014), administrators or leaders often need to change the way they handle problems in the organization based on that specific problem, situation or setting. A good leader will need to use a variety of leadership styles or sometimes combine different leadership styles. Understanding the different types of leadership and how each one works in a company is very useful and helpful for the employees, leaders and company owners. Sometimes leaders may find that they need to evoke more of an authoritarian leadership style in one instance, while participative leadership style would actually move the team forward better in another.

Similarly, Aquino (2015) pointed out that different situation in the organization needs different approaches or leadership styles. Therefore, leaders should implement different types of leadership styles or combination in order to satisfy their employees and attain maximum productivity levels. Thus, ideal leadership style utilizes all leadership styles to the best advantage. This means that the situation probably will determine the style or styles used. In additional Iqbal, Anwar, and Haider (2015) stated that different situations required different leadership styles. When there is little time to coverage on an agreement and quick work is required an authoritarian leadership style maybe the most effective one. However, in a highly motivated and aligned team with a homogenous level of expertise, participative leadership style is found more appropriate. Different leadership style can be used depending on the objective that must be met by the team while balancing the interest of its members.

Extent of Workplace Bullying Experiences of the Respondents

Among the four kinds of workplace bullying, only verbal bullying with a mean of 1.62 ($SD=0.77$) was experienced by the respondents, making it the common type of bullying being experienced in the five government organizations which were used as the population in this study. This implies that workplace bullying in terms of verbal bullying were indeed experienced, yet only rarely in the organization by the respondents.

On the other hand, physical bullying with a mean of 1.42 ($SD = 0.59$), cyber bullying with 1.27 ($SD = 0.51$) and sexual bullying having 1.36 ($SD = 0.55$) were never experienced by the respondents.

Out of 29 research studies about workplace violence, verbal abuse is the most common form of workplace bullying and it often lead to many consequences, particularly at the psychological level of the employees and even in the organizational level (Guay, 2014).

Similarly, Gordon (2013) stated that verbal bullying is the most common form of workplace bullying. Typically, verbal bullying is often very difficult to identify because attacks almost always occur when others aren’t around. As a result, it is often one person’s word against another person’s word which makes it harder to justify. Firm and concrete evidences under this kind of workplace bullying is very limited and hard to provide that’s why most bullies used verbal
bullying in attacking their victims. Verbal bullying is the most common form of workplace bullying that can be experienced by the employees in offices and companies.

**Level of the Respondents’ Self-Concept**

Findings showed that the respondent’s self-concept was high except for physical self-concept which turned out to be moderate (\(M=3.38; SD=0.40\)). This means that the respondents have high self-concept with regards to the following dimensions: social (\(M=3.99; SD=0.66\)), competence (\(M=3.67; SD=0.47\)), affect (\(M=3.57; SD=0.44\)), academic (\(M=3.66; SD=0.68\)), and family (\(M=3.75; SD=0.48\)) self-concept.

These implied that employees who participated in the study generally have high levels of self-concept in almost all the dimensions and can handle pressures and stresses at work. They view themselves highly in terms of their achievements, strength/abilities, relationship in the family and society, and control over their emotions but have moderate view of themselves towards their appearance and physical condition.

In line with these findings, research studies revealed that positive physical self-concept may bring about a greater psycho-emotional balance and stability in an individual which, in turn may affect the response of a person towards depression. Thus, individuals with high physical self-concept live happier lives and are less susceptible to depression if they face obstacles, or encounter problems and failures in life (Boros & Halmy, 2011).

According to Beheshtifar and Rahimi-Nezhad (2012), self-concept in organizations could affect the social work behaviors, organization-based role-set in workplace, career satisfaction, and achievements of the employees. When immediate supervisors have favorable attitudes toward themselves and employees, they are in a much better position to build positive and realistic self-concept for themselves and their subordinates.

Moreover, Bowes (2016) stated that individuals who has high level of self-concept/self-esteem trust their way of thinking and judgment. They make better decisions and create better life for themselves. They established more effective interpersonal work relationships and can effectively contribute to their work environment.

In addition, individuals with high self-concept could account for the reduce perception of workplace bullying. They can manage their negative experiences in the organizations or even at home and can easily bounce back (Bano, 2013). In other words, a good sense of self-concept has an impact on how the employees operate in the workplace, how an individual deal with people and how much they achieved in their career. And individuals, leaders and employees, who has high self-concept can be an asset or help in the organization. These literatures clearly stated that high self-concept is always a desirable trait, because positive self-concept may be attributed to good social adjustment, emotional stability, good health, and resiliency.

**Relationship between the Leadership Styles of the Respondents’ Immediate Supervisors, Workplace Bullying Experiences and Self-concept**

Authoritarian Leadership Style and Workplace Bullying. Table 1 shows the relationship between authoritarian leadership style and workplace bullying. It shows that there is a significant correlation between authoritarian leadership style and each of the indicators of workplace bullying namely: physical (\(r = .341**\), \(p\)-value = .000); verbal (\(r = .276**\), \(p\)-value = .000); sexual (\(r = .229**\), \(p\)-value = .000); and cyber (\(r = .245\), \(p\)-value = .000). These findings imply that authoritarian leadership style is positively correlated to workplace bullying. The more
implementation of authoritarian leadership style in the workplace, the bigger is the chances of having or experiencing workplace bullying in the organization.

Table 1

**Leadership Styles and Workplace Bullying**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Styles</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Sexual</th>
<th>Cyber</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>Pearson r</td>
<td>.341**</td>
<td>.276**</td>
<td>.229**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal Interpretation</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegative</td>
<td>Pearson r</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.780</td>
<td>.772</td>
<td>.460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal Interpretation</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participative</td>
<td>Pearson r</td>
<td>-.178**</td>
<td>-.199**</td>
<td>-.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal Interpretation</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

These findings are in line with the study conducted by Salin and Hoel (2011) that revealed the correlation of authoritarian leadership style and workplace bullying. The study shows that there is a positive relationship between authoritarian leadership style and workplace bullying. According to the findings, an authoritarian leader may create a climate of fear in the workplace where complaining may be considered futile which elevate the chances of having or experiencing workplace bullying in the organization.

**Participative Leadership Style and Workplace Bullying.** As shown in Table 1, the participative leadership style has negative relationship to physical bullying \( r = -.178\**, \( p\)-value = .000) and verbal bullying \( r = -.199\**, \( p\)-value = .000). These findings imply that immediate supervisors who uses or practiced minimal participative leadership style has the tendency to elevate workplace bullying experiences.

According to literatures in an organization run by a participative leader or supervisor, office politics that can threaten the growth and development of a working environment can be reduced. Tensions between the leaders and employees decreased because all the individuals are involved in using their skills together for the completion of a certain task and hence, almost all ideas are taken into consideration and carefully debated which results to a boost confidence of employees. Moreover, this leadership style makes all sorts of issues addressable and it even lowered workplace bullying experiences and turn overs in the organization (“Democratic Leadership Styles,” 2013). This only means that workplace bullying can be avoided with the proper implementation of participative leadership style.

**Delegative Leadership style and Workplace Bullying.** Table 1 shows that Delegative Leadership style and Workplace Bullying has no significant relationship. In line with the
correlation of leadership styles and workplace bullying, some study and researches contradicts the findings above.

In the study of Tsuno and Kawakami (2015), a six months prospective research about multifactor leadership styles and self-concept was conducted. They used a longitudinal study design as well-established measures of leadership styles and workplace bullying and results showed that delegative leadership was the strongest predictor of new exposure to workplace bullying, and a high level of individual consideration in leadership was a preventive factor against new exposure to workplace bullying. This only shows that different leadership styles can be positively or negatively related to workplace bullying.

**Workplace Bullying and Self-concept**

Table 2 shows that workplace bullying has a significant relationship to self-concept of the respondents. Further, it shows the direction and the degree of relationship between workplace bullying (physical bullying, verbal bullying, sexual bullying and cyber bullying) to self-concept such as social self-concept (SSC), competence self-concept (CSC), affect self-concept (ASC), physical self-concept (PSC), academic self-concept (ACSC) and family self-concept (FSC).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workplace Bullying</th>
<th>SSC</th>
<th>CSC</th>
<th>ASC</th>
<th>PSC</th>
<th>ACSC</th>
<th>FSC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Pearson r</td>
<td>-.095*</td>
<td>-.006</td>
<td>-.124**</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>-.087*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>.892</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.484</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>Pearson r</td>
<td>-.123**</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>-.070</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>-.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.727</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>.166</td>
<td>.710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>Pearson r</td>
<td>-.101*</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>-.104*</td>
<td>.102*</td>
<td>-.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.818</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyber</td>
<td>Pearson r</td>
<td>-.131**</td>
<td>-.022</td>
<td>-.091*</td>
<td>.141**</td>
<td>-.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.597</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: 

- **SSC** = social self-concept
- **CSC** = competence self-concept
- **ASC** = affect self-concept
- **PSC** = physical self-concept
- **ACSC** = academic self-concept
- **FSC** = family self-concept

**Physical Bullying and Self-concept.** Physical bullying has a negative correlation with social self-concept ($r = -.095*$, $p$-value =.024), affect self-concept ($r = -.124**$, $p$-value =.003), and academic self-concept ($r =-.087*$, $p$-value =.038). The data infers that individuals who have experienced being kicked, slapped, shoved, and other physical attacks tend to have a lower social, affect and academic self-concept. Thus, the more the respondents experienced physical bullying in the organization, the lower their perception and views they will have for themselves in terms of their social relationship, performance, achievement, and management of emotions and vice versa.

According to the study released by the Crime Survey for England and Wales, there are more than 1.1 million women and 720,000 men who were victims of physical bullying or abuse. In many cases, physical bullying/abuse often leads to depression, anxiety, low self-concept, anger and other challenges such as sexual issues and trouble trusting new people. Seeking professional support is essential for helping victims to overcome the psychological difficulties from their
traumatic experiences (“Physical Bullying,” 2016). This literature only shows that physical bullying has a negative effect on the victim’s self-concept.

**Verbal Bullying and Self-concept.** Table 2 shows the relationship between verbal bullying and social self-concept. Data reveals that in verbal bullying, the only variable which showed a significant relationship was the social self-concept ($r = -.123^{**}, p-value = .003$). These findings imply that the more frequent the incidence of verbal bullying the lower their social self-concept. The data also revealed that there was a negative relationship between these variables. Meaning the more verbal bullying experiences the respondents have, the lower their social self-concept will be.

In the article “What is verbal Bullying” (2014), it is stated that employees who experienced verbal bullying in their organizations has poorer social involvement and difficulty in expressing themselves well in an environment. They usually isolate themselves from other individuals. According to literatures, Verbal bullying can just be as harmful as physical bullying in different ways. It can affect one’s self image and someone in an emotional and psychological way. This type of bullying can lead to low self-concept as well as depression and other problems. It can aggravate problems that a victim may already be experiencing at home or in the office. In some cases, it can reach to a point where victims become so depressed and want to escape so badly, that he or she may turn to substance abuse or in some extreme cases – suicide.

**Sexual Bullying and Self-concept.** Data also presents that sexual bullying has a negative correlation with social self-concept ($r = -.101^{*}, p-value = .016$) and affect self-concept ($r = -.104^{*}, p-value = .013$), but surprisingly it was positively correlated to physical self-concept ($r = .102^{*}, p-value = .015$). The findings imply that individuals who experiences harmful and humiliating actions that target their sexuality like sexual name calling, crude comments, vulgar gestures, uninvited touching, and sexual propositioning has lower level of social self-concept and affect self-concept (see table 2).

Thus, the more the respondents experienced sexual bullying in the organization, the lower they perceived themselves in terms of handling emotions and reactions on situations and relating to other people in their environment and vice versa. Victims of sexual bullying usually lesser their social involvements in their environments and has weaker control over their reactions and emotions.

On the other hand, data infers that sexual bullying is positively correlated with social self-concept. This finding implies that employees who experiences harmful and humiliating actions that target their sexuality like sexual name calling, crude comments, vulgar gestures, uninvited touching, and sexual propositioning developed higher level of social self-concept. Thus, the more the respondents experienced sexual bullying in the organization, the higher they perceived their selves in terms of their looks, health, physical condition, and over all appearances. Individuals that were victims of sexual bullying have high regards over their physical looks and appearances.

In support to these findings, Turner, Finkelhor and Ormrod (2010) found out those individuals who experienced sexual bullying or sexual abuse experienced changes in their self-concept. Results of the study shows that after the sexual bullying incident the self-concept of the victims partially decline and the levels of depression symptoms elevated. This only showed that sexual bullying experiences have negative effects on the individual’s self-concept.
**Cyber Bullying and Self-concept.** Cyber bullying has significant negative correlation to social self-concept \((r = -.131^{**}, p-value = .002)\), affect self-concept \((r = -.091^{**}, p-value = .031)\), and physical self-concept \((r = .141^{**}, p-value = .001)\). This finding implies that the more exposure to cyber bullying, the higher the physical self-concept of the employees, meaning these individuals tend to have better beliefs about themselves in terms of their physical appearance. On the other hand, cyber bullying experiences lower the social and affect self-concept of the individuals, meaning employees who experienced cyber bullying tend to have lesser social interactions in their environment and has difficulty managing their moods and emotions.

In a study conducted by Hinduja and Patchin (2010) about cyber bullying and self-concept, results pointed out that cyber bullying is correlated with lower self-concept. Victims of cyber bullying reported having lower self-concept than individuals who hadn’t experienced cyber bullying.

A study used 2,200 Norwegian employees in seven organizational setting, result of the study shows that victims of workplace bullying were characterized by being low on self-concept, high on social anxiety and low on social competence. It concluded that individuals low in self-concept and social competencies are bullied because they are defenseless and they present a weak image or personality that made them an easy target (Zapf & Einarsen, 2011).

**Leadership Styles and Self-concept**

**Authoritarian leadership style and self-concept.** As shown in Table 3, data yielded that authoritarian leadership style is positively correlated with competence self-concept \((r = .109^{**}, p-value = .009)\) and physical self-concept \((r = .109^{**}, p-value = .009)\). These findings infer that a leader who gives clear instruction for what needs to be done, and make decisions independently with no or little input from the group was positively correlated to employee’s self-concept. Employees that have authoritative supervisor develop positive views about their strength, abilities, looks and over-all appearance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Com</th>
<th>Affect</th>
<th>Phy</th>
<th>Aca</th>
<th>Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>Pearson</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.109**</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.109**</td>
<td>.006**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.664</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.317</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegative</td>
<td>Pearson</td>
<td>.219**</td>
<td>.251**</td>
<td>.181**</td>
<td>.143**</td>
<td>.262**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participative</td>
<td>Pearson</td>
<td>.209**</td>
<td>.139**</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.091*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Authoritarian leadership style is not bad at all and sometimes it is the most effective style to use. In organizations, there are employees that are new, young, and untrained who do not know which tasks to perform or which procedures to follow. An authoritarian supervisor then can be beneficial and helpful for them because they can gain new knowledge and experiences with the strict supervision of the leader. New and younger employees will feel more upgraded and educated in the organization, and their competence and self-concept will elevate. On the other hand, there
are also old employees who do not respond to any other leadership styles. They prefer to wait for instructions and they feel more relax receiving orders from their supervisors. Authoritarian leadership style allows employees to just focus on performing specific tasks given by the supervisor without worrying about making complex decisions and mistakes (Kendra, 2015).

**Delegative Leadership style and Self-concept.** As reflected in Table 3, the delegative leadership style was significantly related to all sub-variables of self-concept namely: social self-concept \((r = .219^{**}, \text{p-value} = .000)\); competence self-concept \((r = 251^{**}, \text{p-value} = .000)\); affect self-concept \((r = 181^{**}, \text{p-value} = .000)\); physical self-concept \((r = 143^{**}, \text{p-value} = .001)\); academic self-concept \((r = 262^{**}, \text{p-value} = .000)\); and family Self-concept \((r = .049^{**}, \text{p-value} = .025)\). These findings imply that individuals under a supervisor that allows employees to make decision for the projects and other company related matters perceived themselves positively and have high beliefs towards themselves in terms of their performance, achievements, strengths and abilities. They are aware of their emotions and these individuals can control their reactions and feelings towards undesirable situations or events. These employees function well within the family unit and even in a wider environment. Lastly, they can relate themselves, ideas, and feelings to other individuals openly and confidently.

Delegative leadership style is effective in some situations and organizations because most employees under this leadership style become highly skilled, experienced and educated by doing their responsibilities and jobs alone. Employees developed pride in finishing their own work successfully without supervision of their leaders and have more desire to do their job again confidently. Employees feel that they are reliable, experienced individuals, and their leaders trust their capabilities (“Study of autocratic leadership style management,” 2015). This only shows that delegative leadership style can positively affect and developed the self-concept of individuals by challenging their strengths and capabilities.

Conducted analysis yielded that physical bullying has a negative correlation with social self-concept \((r = -.095^*, \text{p-value} = .024)\), affect self-concept \((r = -.124^{**}, \text{p-value} = .003)\), and academic self-concept \((r = -.087^*, \text{p-value} = .038)\). The data infers that individuals who have experienced being kicked, slapped, shoved, and other physical attacks tend to have a lower social, affect and academic self-concept. Thus, the more the respondents experienced physical bullying in the organization, the lower their perception and views the employees will have for themselves in terms of their social relationship, performance, achievement and management of emotions and vice versa.

**Participative leadership style and self-concept.** Table 3 shows that participative leadership style is positively correlated to social self-concept \((r = .209^{**}, \text{p-value} = .000)\); competence self-concept \((r = .139^{**}, \text{p-value} = .001)\); academic self-concept \((r = -.091^*, \text{p-value} = .031)\); and family self-concept \((r = -.095^*, \text{p-value} = .024)\). These findings imply that supervisors that share the decision making with the group positively influenced the employee’s beliefs about their strengths, abilities, performance, achievements, and views of themselves in the family unit.

In line with these findings, Murdock (2014) stated that participative leadership style is helpful to employee’s self-concept. Leaders under this style believe that the employees may have skills and ideas that could benefit the decision-making process. The leader involves the entire team closely and they allow the employees to assist in the decision-making process, to give input and to share ideas.

The employees who are being entrusted by the leaders feel empowered, they feel that their skills are being acknowledged and their opinions are being valued. The employees feel that they
add worth to the company whenever the leader asked for their input/suggestions; with this, they positively developed and influenced their self-concept.

**Leadership Styles and Self-concept as Mediated by Workplace Bullying**

Figure 1 shows the direct relationship of leadership styles (authoritarian, delegative, and participative) to self-concept (social, competence, affect, physical, academic, and family) before workplace bullying (physical, verbal, sexual, and cyber) mediate in the independent and dependent variables.

![Mediation Model](image)

*Figure 1. Mediation Model. Leadership Styles (Authoritarian and Participative) in relation to Social Self-concept as mediated by Verbal Bullying.*

As seen in the model diagrammed in Figure 1, participative leadership style has a coefficient of .26 in relation to social self-concept (SCS). This means that an increase of 1 in participative leadership style reflects a .26 increase in social self-concept (SCS). When participative leadership style is related to verbal bullying (VB) there is -.25 coefficients, thus an increase of 1 in participative leadership style reflects -.25 increase in verbal bullying (VB). Moreover, authoritative leadership style has a coefficient of .07 when related to social self-concept (SSC). Meaning, an increase of 1 in authoritative leadership style reflects .07 increase in social self-concept (SSC). On the other hand, authoritative leadership style when related to Verbal Bullying has a coefficient of .28, meaning an increase of 1 in authoritative leadership style reflected .28 increase in Verbal Bullying. Lastly when verbal bullying is related to social self-concept there was a -.09 coefficient, thus an increase of 1 in verbal bullying reflects -.09 increase in social self-concept.
The results shown in Table 4 imply that verbal bullying has a full mediation between the leadership styles of the respondents’ immediate supervisors, specifically, authoritative and participative leadership styles and the social self-concept of the employees. This emphasizes that the leadership styles being used by the immediate supervisors of the respondents had an effect on the employees’ self-concept when mediated by verbal bullying experiences. Data also revealed that authoritarian and participative leadership styles have direct effect to the social self-concept of the respondents; and when mediated by verbal bullying, an indirect effect was also found.

Predictors of the Respondents’ Self-concept

The data shown in Tables 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 revealed that there were five predictors of employee’s self-concept. Under the leadership styles there were two components that predict self-concept of the employees and those two were the delegative leadership style and participative leadership style. On the area of workplace bullying, there were three predictors of employee’s self-concept and those three types were physical, sexual, and cyber Bullying.

Competence Self-concept

Table 5
Predictors of Competence Self-concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>r²</th>
<th>F(1,650)</th>
<th>R² Change</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delegative LS</td>
<td>.251</td>
<td>6.149</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.251</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>37.806</td>
<td>.063</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Constant: 2.921

Physical Self-concept

Table 6
Predictors of Physical Self-concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>r²</th>
<th>F(3,562)</th>
<th>R² Change</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delegative LS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>.147</td>
<td>3.558</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyber Bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>3.947</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>-.107</td>
<td>-2.005</td>
<td>.045</td>
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Constant: 3.011

Affect Self-concept

Table 7
Predictors of Affect Self-concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>( r )</th>
<th>( r^2 )</th>
<th>( F(2,563) )</th>
<th>( R^2 ) Change</th>
<th>( \beta )</th>
<th>( t )</th>
<th>( P )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delegative LS</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td>4.448</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Bullying</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>-.126</td>
<td>-3.063</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.221</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>14.425</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Constant: 3.053

Academic Self-concept

Table 8

Predictors of Academic Self-concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>( r )</th>
<th>( r^2 )</th>
<th>( F(2,563) )</th>
<th>( R^2 ) Change</th>
<th>( \beta )</th>
<th>( t )</th>
<th>( P )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Delegative LS</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.263</td>
<td>6.495</td>
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<td>Physical Bullying</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>-.090</td>
<td>-2.227</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>.277</td>
<td>.077</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Constant: 3.053

Family Self-concept

Table 9

Predictors of Family Self-concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>( r )</th>
<th>( r^2 )</th>
<th>( F(2,563) )</th>
<th>( R^2 ) Change</th>
<th>( \beta )</th>
<th>( t )</th>
<th>( P )</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>.017</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Physical Bullying</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>2.044</td>
<td>.041</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>4.666</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Constant: 3,509

In line with the results seen in table 5-9, delegative leaders had an influence on the employee’s self-concept. In this type of leadership style, supervisors trust their employees fully and employees start to trust themselves too. They feel motivated, and reliable. Thus, their self-concept boost up. They do self-monitoring, problem solving, and produced successful end products (“Authoritarian, Democratic & Lassie-Fair Leadership,” 2013). In addition, delegative leadership style has been found effective in some organizations because employees under this leadership style see the delegation of job as a challenge and they feel reliable, experienced individuals, and trustworthy (“Study of leadership style management,” 2015). Delegative leadership style then can predict the positive development of the employee’s self-concept.

Similarly, Nemaei (2012) found out that participative leadership style can also positively influenced the self-concept of individuals because the leader under this style is sharing the power to the followers. This leadership style can increase the level of trust, motivation, innovation and job satisfaction in the organization and can elevate the self-confidence and self-concept of the employees. Similarly, Kendra (2015) pointed out that participative leaders tend to make employees feel like they are important part of the team, which help employees become more motivated, creative, possess higher self-concept, and foster commitment to the goals of the organization (Kendra, 2015).

Furthermore, Ayoko and Callan (2010) study focuses on the relationship leadership styles and employee’s self-concept. They distributed a questionnaire among 80 managers and 150 regular employees in Iran. The result indicated that there was a positive and strong relationship between leadership styles and self-concept.
They found out that higher levels of inspiration and communication of vision by leaders were directly impacted with lower levels of workplace bullying and has a positive effect on the development of employee’s self-concept. These literatures only showed that leadership styles can affect and predict the self-concept of individuals.

In terms of workplace bullying as predictors of self-concept there are several studies that can support the findings of this study. The crime survey for England and Wales showed that cases of physical bullying/abuse often lead to depression, anxiety and low self-concept (“Physical Bullying,” 2016). This literature only shows that physical bullying experiences can predict a negative effect on the individual’s self-concept. Similarly, Turner, Finkelhor and Ormrod (2010) stated that victims of sexual bullying have lower self-concept and high depression symptoms. This only showed that cyber and sexual bullying experiences can predict negative effects of individual’s self-concept.

**Conclusion**

The leadership styles used by the immediate supervisors relates to the employees’ self-concept. Specifically, when supervisors trust their employees, the employees start to trust themselves too and feel motivated and able to perform their work. More so, if the employees have no or less experience of receiving hurtful and demeaning words from their supervisors. On other hand, negative experiences such as cyber and sexual bullying influences in the negative self-concept of the employees.

**References**


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