

# A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON WORKPLACE AGGRESSION: WAGES AND JOB CLASS

*Samantha S Ortiz, College of Psychology, California State University, Dominguez Hills, 1000 E Victoria St, Carson, CA, [sortiz85@toromail.csudh.edu](mailto:sortiz85@toromail.csudh.edu)*

*Thomas J Norman, PhD, College of Business Administration, California State University, Dominguez Hills, 1000 E Victoria St, Carson, CA, [tnorman@csudh.edu](mailto:tnorman@csudh.edu)*

## ABSTRACT

Much of what is known about workplace aggression is research that is focused on observations from the private sector (Frederickson & McCorkle, 2013). According to Schat, Frone, and Kelloway (2006) approximately 47 million employees working in the United States experience psychological aggression in the workplace each year. Therefore, in order to further assess and council cases of workplace aggression, I would like to further the depth of knowledge on the topic amongst classes of work based on wages and categories (i.e. blue collar, white collar, etc.) and compare the results to identify specific characteristics of aggression based on socioeconomic status.

Keywords: aggression, management, hostility

## Introduction

In the existing knowledge published on workplace aggression, little has been observed on the level of workplace aggression in specific classes of work. A study conducted by Schat, Frone, & Kelloway (2006) found through a national survey of Workplace Health and Safety under a National Institute of Health grant that 41.4% of workers across 15 occupational categories including public, private and nonprofit sectors experienced psychological workplace aggression.

However, there is one issue in the existing literature on workplace aggression that I would like to address—the variance of definitions that are currently in use. For example, some authors describe workplace aggression as a scheme in which an employee tries to physically harm their coworker (O'Leary-Kelly et al. 1996). Baron and Neuman (1998) define it as any display of behavior directed by one or more people to harm others in that workplace in ways that would prevent them from further interaction. Rospenda and Richman (2004) define it as 'any negative workplace interpersonal interaction that affects the terms, conditions, or employment decisions related to an individual's job, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment, but is *not* based on any legally protected characteristic' (pp. 221-222). Because of such varying definitions it is hard to pinpoint the exact motivation of the aggression. So, in order to further advance the knowledge on workplace aggression's many forms, I would like to assess this research to discover how workplace aggression is defined based on job class and wages. With this knowledge, further research can propose new approaches to counseling for those who experience workplace aggression as well as management for each level of aggression of its job class.

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