

Women, minorities more prone to filing grievances

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Many employees often do not file grievances even when presented with the opportunity to do so. A new study in *Industrial Relations* sought to assess the degree to which certain minority groups may be more or less prone to file grievances as a way to remedy particular types of workplace issues or problems.

Self-report data were collected from a sample of 866 blue-collar workers drawn from four unions in the northeastern United States. The study assessed employee grievance filing in relationship to demographic variables, including gender and race. The sample consisted of men, women, whites, African Americans, and Hispanics.

The overall rate of actual grievance filing by women and ethnic minorities was not significantly different from that of their male or white counterparts.

However, employee demographic characteristics do serve as a significant moderator of the link between the severity of potentially injurious workplace conditions and the rate of employee grievance filing. Specifically, the grievance filing of women and minorities was more sensitive to the severity of particular workplace conditions than was the grievance filing of their majority peers.

In contrast, the grievance-filing behavior of men and whites tended to remain fairly constant regardless of their perceived level of workplace injustice or injury. It is reasonable to expect then that grievance filing

for women and minorities will be utilized only when the severity of the condition is such that the failure to file is perceived as entailing even greater risks than those entailed in filing.

“Our findings suggest that for those individuals who, because of their gender or minority status, are disadvantaged in the labor market and are thus perhaps most in need of an effective mechanism by which to voice concerns regarding the workplace, the grievance system may not necessarily always provide an adequate answer,” the authors note.

Source: Wiley

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