

The price of power at work?

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Individuals with a more senior level of job authority have higher levels of interpersonal conflict according to new research out of the University of Toronto.

The study conducted by Scott Schieman, a professor of sociology at the University of Toronto and Sarah Reid, a PhD candidate, involved data from a 2005 sample of 1,785 working adults in the United States. This is the first study of a nationally representative sample that documents the link between power and conflict in the workplace across a broad cross-section of jobs and sectors.

"We show that a highly desired attribute of the job—authority—comes with some interpersonal costs, but those costs aren't distributed equally across key social groups," said Schieman.

The study found that:

- Workers with higher levels of job authority report significantly higher levels of exposure to interpersonal conflict from all sources at work;
- Men with authority report more conflict than similarly-positioned women;
- Younger workers with power report the highest level of conflict with others in the workplace.

The study findings are published in the August edition of the journal

Work and Occupations.

Source: University of Toronto

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