A Human Rights Travesty? Māori Workers Experiences of Workplace Violence in the New Zealand Workplace

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Abstract:
Māori, the Indigenous people of New Zealand, have a weaker workplace position in New Zealand and this study explores experiences around workplace violence: (a) physical, (b) verbal, and (c) workplace bullying. Study 1 compares Māori (n=163) and white New Zealand workers (n=909) experiences of violence and finds Māori report higher physical (45% v. 32%, p=.035), verbal (71% versus 57%, p=.043), and workplace bullying (M=1.97 v. M=1.77, p=.003). This highlights consistent human rights violations suffered by Indigenous people in the New Zealand workplace. Study 2 focuses on aronga takirua, which refers to a cultural double shift, whereby Māori workers can carry an additional burden doing cultural roles in addition to their work roles. This is likely to reflect a power imbalance in Māori workers, potentially influencing their experiences around violence. Grit (tendency to pursue long-term challenging goals with perseverance and passion) is included as a moderator, testing if it buffers the detrimental relationship. Overall, aronga takirua is positively related to all violence dimensions while grit is negative. Grit buffers effects towards physical violence only, leading to lower levels as grit increases. The findings highlight the not only differences amongst Māori workers but the role that cultural load can play.