Journal for Ethics in Social Studies
ISSN: 2559 - 7612
Covered in: CrossRef; RePEc; CEEOL; KVK; WorldCat; Google Scholar

2017, Volume 1, Issue 1, pages: 15-26 | doi: https://doi.org/10.18662/jess/03

Aggression in Ethics of the Economic Act

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Abstract: "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way" (Frankl, 2006, p. 77). Aggression has become today a fundamental social problem of man and humanity, because the whole world is threatened by aggression. If before there was talked about aggression of human beings or aggression in the world, today more often talks about a world of aggression. One can say that we are in a war of all against all, where the economic violence takes symbolic forms of stigmatization. In the space of manifestation of the market economy, where the rules are not fully crystallized, the absence of prohibitions promotes violence and unpredictability through physical violence and through its presence in the competitive practices.

Keywords: aggression; aggressor; ethics; damage; behaviour.

How to cite: Avram, L.G. (2017). Aggression in Ethics of the Economic Act. *Journal for Ethics in Social Studies, 1*(1), 15-26.
https://doi.org/10.18662/jess/03

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1. Introduction

The Chapter of Introduction should refer to the context of the research.

Aggression is considered a feature of those types of behaviour that are geared towards destruction and causing material, moral and psychological damage. Therefore, the aggressive behaviour can target both objects and human beings.

Viewed from the perspective of the objective pursued, some aggressive behaviour is geared towards producing *„a bad"* to another person, while others are geared towards demonstrating the *„aggressor power"* (Boulding, 1989) or masculinity (Segall, 1988). Other authors do not consider necessary this differentiation because *„these various purposes are not mutually exclusive and many other acts of aggression can be oriented to achieve some or all of these goals"* (Mitrofan, 2003, p. 162).

Some authors raise the question if in the definition of aggression should focus more on aggressive act or intention. From this perspective of intention, there is the purpose to do *„a bad"* to another one, or to demonstrate the *„power"* of the aggressor.

Aggression should not be confused with the antisocial behaviour or delinquency, or with the deviance and the criminal activities.

In conclusion, the aggression is a form of behaviour that is intentionally directed towards the objects, people or to himself, to produce harm, injuries, destruction and damage.

2. Different ways to explain the aggression

It is raised the question if the aggression is related to heredity, environment or education.

Sigmund Freud and Konrad Lorenz argue that the aggression is innate. Freud considers aggression as predominantly destructive while Konrad Lorenz considers the aggression to have an adaptive value and it is even essentially for survival that is the visible difference between how the two approach the topic.

If the human aggression was only instinctually, it would be expected to find many *similarities between people* on how to adopt the aggressive behaviour. However, the reality permanent proves that there are great differences both at the individual and at *the community* level. There are *individuals*, *groups* and even nations that manifests extremely aggressive, while *others are very peaceful*.

Quasi-generalized rejection of the instinctual nature of aggression does not mean, however, and ignoring the biological influences on them, such as:

• neuronal influences - there are certain areas of the cortex, after the electrical stimulation that facilitates adoption of the aggressive behaviour by the individual;

• hormonal influences - males are more aggressive than females because of the hormonal differences (theory which is valid both for animals and for people);

• Biochemical influences - increasing the alcohol in the blood, lowering the blood sugar may increase the aggression.

Specialists of the University Yaledin USA claim that aggression is a response to frustration. They explain that at the time when achieving a goal is blocked may arise frustration, which then becomes a source of manifestation of aggression. For example, a person cannot sanction his chief instead he can argue with his spouse at home; a child cannot punish the father but instead hits another child.

It is considered that aggression is a learned social behaviour. So, this was the origin of the aggressiveness social learning theory which argues that the aggressive behaviour is learned through several ways:

• directly; through direct learning, by rewarding or punishing of certain behaviours;

• By observing and imitating the patterns of behaviour of others, especially of the adults.

Aggressive behaviour patterns are found most often in:

• family – the violent children come from families in which the two parents also were grown with physical punishment;

• social environment - in those communities where aggressive behaviour patterns are accepted, even admired, the aggression is easily spread to the next generation;

• mass media - especially the television which offers daily the patterns of aggressive behaviour, physical or verbal;

We can often mention, among the causes of impulsive-aggressive behaviours, the existence of the temperamental traits, an individual belonging to one of the types of temperaments. Certain temperaments - choleric, nervous - constitute the basis for aggressive behaviour that is adopted immediately. *„Temperament is a dimension of the energy of the personality which is the most strongly expressed in the behaviour".*

Therefore, knowing the temperament can be a starting point to ways we can manage the impulses and the aggressive behaviour.

Many researchers have established an obvious link between the level of the self-esteem and aggressive tendencies in the sense that the lower self-esteem, self-confidence and their capabilities are, the more prominent the aggressive component is.

The concept of self-esteem is correlated with feelings of competence and awareness of their own values. Individuals, with low self-esteem usually focus to impress others, have a low confidence in themselves, have their doubts about the value and their social acceptance, do not taking risks and trying to avoid failure. They are seeking confirmation of their values and decisions to others and are easily influenced.

The aggressive manifestations, criminality are undoubtedly the less human evolved, less flattering to our species, know the psychic characteristics of the delinquents, the deviant personality and the involved psychosocial factors contributing to a better understanding of the causes of the antisocial aggressive behaviour. The endless „transition period" faced by some countries, with all the negative consequences seems to be a favourable environment for manifestation of aggression, that is understood most often erroneously, as „spirit of competition" (Annual Review- Series Humanistica, 2006 http://www.humanistica.ro/anulare/2006/ANUAR_2006_humanistica/art05Florea.pdf

3. Classification forms of aggression

Different criteria by which we can classify the aggression:

Depending on the aggressor (who adopts the aggressive behaviour):

- young aggression and adult aggression;
- male aggression and female aggression;
- individual aggression and collective aggression;
- Spontaneous aggression and premeditated aggression.

Depending on the means used to finalize the aggressive act:

- physical aggression and verbal aggression;
- direct aggression having direct effects on the victim;
- indirect aggression when there are intermediaries between perpetrator and victim

Depending on the objectives pursued by *„practicing aggression":*

- aggression aimed at obtaining the benefits (psychological or material);
- Aggression aimed predominantly injury and/or destruction of the victim.

Depending on the manifestation of aggression:

• violent aggression and nonviolent aggression;
• Latent aggression and manifested aggression.

Some authors say that aggression is manifested at the interpersonal level and it is a psychosocial phenomenon and as such, it raises the problem of *„co-participation"* of two members of the conflict relationship *„aggressor – aggressed"*. The reality shows that in many cases the blame is shared between the two. This has led to the emergence of the groups of victims:

• The provocative victims who, prior to their victimization, have committed something, consciously or unconsciously, towards the offender. Such cases may occur when a person, the next victim behaves arrogantly towards the next offender or if he does not keep a promise solemnly, or if he falls in love with the offender's girlfriend etc.;

• Victims that triggering the evildoers actions. Such as people who, by their behaviour, influence evildoers in committing the crimes, although between them there never was any connection.

4. Aggression in the Economic Field

In the evolution of contemporary societies it is highlighted that although intensified measures and interventions of the specialized institutions of social control against the delinquency acts and criminality in many countries is found a resurgence and a multiplication of the number of committed crimes with violence and aggression as well as those in the economic and banking field, fraud, extortion, bribery and corruption.

The aggression represents a social problem whose way of manifestation and resolution interested both the social control factors such as the police, judiciary, administration and the public opinion. Such the offenses and crimes committed through aggression and corruption tend to become very intense and dangerous for the stability and the security of institutions, groups and individuals. It is often associated with organized crime, terrorism and institutionalized violence, specific of the *„subcultures"* violence and organized crime.

Although the causes of resurgent violence and organized crime are difficult to identify and explain the existence of sensitive difference in terms of ampleness and intensity from a country to another; most experts and researchers consider that the sources of these phenomena lies in the perpetuation of the political structures, economic and defective normative, in maintenance and accentuation the social and economic disparities

between individuals, groups and communities, intensifying the conflict and the social and ethnic tensions.

Aggression in the economic field is not a new phenomenon, the emergence and its evolution is closely related to the individuals' developments, groups, organizations and human societies. Specialists believe that represents an ongoing evolving human. Paradoxically more organizations adopt ethical behaviour, which depends on human nature and functioning of the society (Ferreol & Neculau, 2003).

The most common form of the economic aggression is represented by advertising which through the persistence and measure of violence establishes new rules in order to destroy previously existent elements.

5. Verbal abuse within the organizations

In the organizational environment, the violence often finds its outlet in the form of verbal aggression that can harm companies and employees.

The verbal aggression in the workplace is not represented by any form of communication that might seem offensive. Often superiors, work colleagues, subordinates and customers have not only rights but also the obligation to strike home in different ways of information about the positives and negatives parts of the professional performance. Although these things do not make us happy to hear, they are not verbal abuse.

We cannot generalize that any acid or nervous addressing can be defined as the verbal abuse. Using at the workplace the expressions such as *„hell", „idiot, imbecile"* etc. they may not like of many, and in the extreme cases it creates a hostile working environment, which makes someone to feel threatened. For the people with fundamentalist religious beliefs, using of such language may be offensive by religious or moral reasons. However, the injurious words do not constitute a verbal attack. A chief who says during a presentation that *„the meek of inspectors from Washington do not understand that we were trying to do business here"* does not assault verbal anyone in the audience and no court would accept a claim based on such speech (Bell, 2007, pp. 23-65). The tone of the chief or colleagues can be tough, sarcastic, annoying or derogatory compared to the usual one that is used when it is talked to *„you"* or others.

Content – the frequent affirmations that some superiors adopt with the employees may include sexual references, comments on alcohol or drugs or comments about personal hygiene or clothing.

Language - used in the verbal abuse may be significantly different, especially in case of mischievous expressions, compared to the words use for an ordinary communication to the office.

Nonverbal signals - are represented by the facial expression of the speaker's posture, gestures of hands, body movements that send messages and in the case of the verbal abuse, express nonverbal meanings that differ radically from those submitted in the ordinary conversations.

Audience - sometimes the abuser narrow the target audience by the verbal abuse from one person.

Volume - involving verbal aggression, a tone higher than normal (Bell, 2007).

5.1. Verbal aggression and gender

Over the time, there were many complaints in different economic sectors regarding the verbal aggression faced often by the women, being verbally attacked more often than men.

Many experts explain the gender issues. They consider that in an organization the women appreciate more the human relationships than accumulating the power. They deviate from their path to feed the good feelings and to make, so that, every woman in the group to feel appreciated (this is not a generalized description for all jobs). For example, if a chief female gives a task to a subordinate, it is possible to ask her how she thinks it should be carried out as well. The expectations are negotiated, so that, no one employee does not feel outnumbered.

The emphatic language occurring in such a work atmosphere is perceived by people females (Figure no. 1) as aggressive, because they violate the fabric of relations that they are trying to create and maintain.

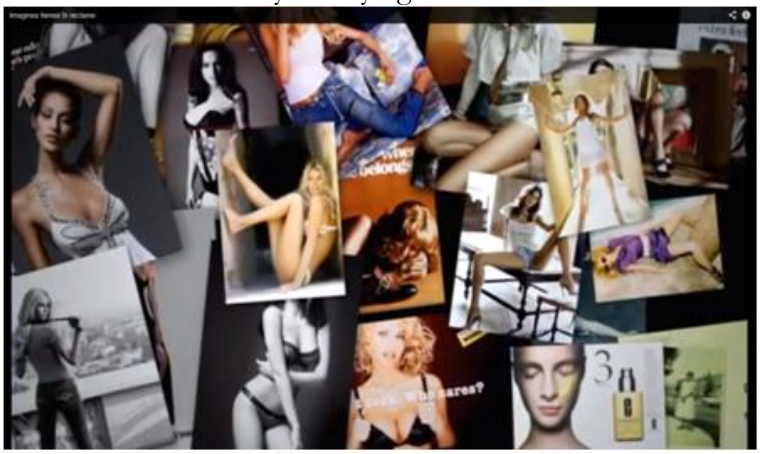


Figure no. 1 "The image of women in advertising"

Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_k9j8ZxEj4 "The image of women in advertising"

Aggressive language transmits inevitable that one or more people in the group are underappreciated.

The management mode and expression at the time of attacks are different between men and women.

Most often, in case of a verbal aggression, the women express their reaction by introverted formulations, such as: *„Let me tell you how I felt when you said that"*. In such a situation, the emphasis is on feelings of the women abused and not on the aggressor actions. Unlike men, in a similar situation, they express reaction in an extroverted, focusing on the aggressor actions and not on the victim's feelings.

Often, the women who are dealing with men at work can expect them to be more difficult to do and to say things that strengthen relationships. Generally, the men are inclined to give orders and not be interested in any thoughts or feelings.

Starting from the premise that advertisements reflect and build the cultural values of the dominant groups tending to reflect and capitalize on stereotypes in general and on the gender stereotypes, in particular http://www.anasaf.ro/ro/docs/Introducere.pdf).



Figure no. 2. "They fired me because I am too fat and that anyway no longer fit in their clothes."

Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_k9j8ZxEj4 ,"The image of women in advertising"

Most advertisements are promoting the women as a sexual object that satisfies desires, not necessarily in a directly-explicit way (Figure no. 2),

as beings weak defenceless and without right answer, being cultivated to bend down the view, to be silent and not to think (http://nupublicitatiiofensatoare.blogspot.ro/).

While in the past these things can assign to the women, now we can say that things are not so and the woman increasingly their power every day, but, paradoxically, the thinking of the most men about the women remains unchanged.

5.2. Verbal aggression and men

As it is well known, the most businesses companies are dominated by men, especially at the senior level such as: executive chiefs, vice presidents, general managers, and members of management boards. Beyond the visibility of the quite exceptional women who holding offices as executives in the large corporations, women represent less than 1% of the executives chief of the top 500 companies listed by Forbes, even though the women represent nearly half of the world's workforce.



Figure no. 3 "And that, of course, it happens again and again"

Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_k9j8ZxEj4,"The image of women in advertising"

In this male environment, the verbal patterns that appear between men tend to become, too often, the communications pattern of the companies. Typically, in a relationship, men often struggle involuntarily to dominate or to assert its status. In the conversation between men, they try to overcome each other through calls to aggressive actions by expressing strong emotions of *„macho"* or the application the degrading labels to others.

The men in the business world have adopted, so much, the *„tough language*" as a mode of communication; still they use it even when the people express their affection with the family members (Bell, 2007).

6. Aggression in the workplace

Aggression in the workplace is attributed to the competitive pressure, stress or intolerance. Whatever the explanation, the aggression and the physical and verbal abuse are phenomena increasingly frequent in the organizations. According to the International Labour Organisation, they are major problems signalled in the workplace in the last years.

There are known many cases where employees are made guilty for not fulfilling certain tasks or different cases in which intentionally are given to employees tasks that cannot fulfil, aren't received the necessary resources, are taken the important tasks or are given for achievement the humiliating labour that often are not the subject to their activity. Such behaviours are abuses of power.

Language or behaviour aggression may be due to intolerance; the abused persons are not allowed in the community, not agreed by the chief or colleagues because of small handicaps for example, or simply because they are not approved because of the invented reasons. These reasons can be ignored, but equally it may be happened to be the target of the malicious comment, of some bad taste farces, and even of some discriminate when it comes to recruiting a position or to obtain of some rewards.

Most often the people who have aggressive behaviour are usually insecure and they are not very sociable, without the special empathic capacity. They externalize this insecurity, finding satisfaction in attack and minimize the capable people around them. They subdue the target individuals to the unjustified criticisms, make them culpa for any error, humiliate those people in front of others, ignore or supervise them closely, isolate or exclude them complete from the community.

At the workplace, the people with aggressive behaviour are considered to *„poisoning"* the atmosphere through the proliferation of uncivilized behaviour by inducing feelings of fear, anger or depression.

The price for such behaviour is paid by the organizations where these people perform their activities. These people are usually characterized by a lower efficiency, absenteeism, lack of motivation, employee turnover and even the court cases.

Studies made in this report demonstrates that the persons subdue to some aggressive behaviours and/or abusive spend up to half of their work time defending, trying to seek support, analyzing the situation, trying to face

the stress and lack of motivation. In borderline cases they will require the sick leave because of stress. Families and their close persons will be affected, because the aggressed people tend to manifest the deformation of behaviour due to the anxiety and frustration.

The proliferation of such events is usually possible when organizational behaviour is left to the individuals or groups of individuals, when likes and dislikes are allowed to form and evolve by itself. In such cases, there isn't an *„acceptable behaviour"*, a code of behaviour to regulate the social relations within the organizations.

This phenomenon is expanded when the managers are those that provide the evidence of the aggressive behaviour. Because they represent a model for the employees willing to occupy a leading position, their behaviours tend to be imitated. In this way, the employees feel they will get a privileged status.

Of the level of each organization, it is important to be aware for negative implications which aggressive behaviour can have on the organizational efficiency and climate. It is therefore recommended that in the Internal Procedure Rules to be stated expressly that is not supported aggressive or abusive behaviour. Also there should be clear procedures for investigating, recording and resolving the conflicts of this type (http://www.bbexpert.ro/info_util/agresivitatea)

6. Conclusions

Aggression can take different forms at the workplace, the most important being:

- organizational abuse appears when the company can be wrong by attempting to interests of the staff and by assigning unsuitable tasks;
- the abuse by ignoring appears when the company promotes employees less valuable and leaving the rest to waste without equal access to training courses, projects with visibility or social events of the company;
- societal abuses are well known for a long time: in all groups appear *„churches"* and there are selected the favourite ones;
- mental and emotional abuse - these forms of abuse destroy a person's personality and individuality. The personal anxieties are awakened by hostile threats about the job loss or transfer; being intensified to an embarrassing level by nagging, stinging, harsh words or humiliating treatment;
- physical abuse - even if it is more than a century when mistakes were punished at the workplace, by beating, whipping or jail, certain types of

physical abuse are still tolerated or even encouraged in some organizations. A good example in this case is represented: the resident doctors who are assigned to guard every 24 or 30 hours, the physical fatigue accumulated is so acute that in some states are investigating whether these people can drive their cars to the house;

• verbal abuse - this form of aggression is called „*verbal whipping*". In terms of the verbal aggressor, the purpose of its action is to cause pain, not to bring a constructive change or to improve the work relationship. Typical for the verbal abuse is criticizing of someone activity by offending the person, the victim feels personal attacked rather than professionally evaluated.

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