

Shaping the Future of Organizational Research in a Rapidly Changing World of Work: Our Visions and Goals for “Research for People in Organizations”

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Research for People in Organizations, 2025, Vol. 1, Article e18551, <https://doi.org/10.5964/rpio.18551>

Published (VoR): 2025-09-29

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The past century has seen a huge amount of progress in the field of scholarship on human work in organizations (see, for example, Kozlowski et al., 2017; Salas et al., 2017; Sott et al., 2020). Yet, many scientific findings remain underused in work design and managerial decisions (Rynes, 2012; Zhou et al., 2024) This scientist–practitioner gap is sustained by several factors, including overly complex theorizing, limited contextual relevance, a disproportionate focus on large enterprises, and recommendations that are difficult for practitioners to implement (Zhou et al., 2024). A particularly tractable barrier is the restricted global access to high-quality research (Maindidze et al., 2024). The high article-processing charges at most commercial publishers do not only limit the possibility for small organizations to access even practitioner-oriented papers, they also slow progress in work and organizational psychology by blocking global collaboration and turning research into a commodity instead of a public good (Boulton, 2021). As a result, research findings often remain confined to privileged academic circles, leaving practitioners without clear, actionable guidance for implementation.

At Research for People in Organizations (RPiO), we work to close these gaps. Our goal is to share the latest high-quality research on a broad range of topics such as organizational behavior, team dynamics, personnel development, human-technology interaction, and employee well-being in ways that are openly available, adhere to open science standards, and are at the same time easy to understand for practitioners. By



making solid evidence clear and usable for everyone, we aim to spark both scientific and practical innovations that improve workplaces worldwide.

This editorial explains RPiO’s main objectives and outlines specific actions we will take to reach them, ensuring that the journal advances free, sustainable, and people-centred research on work and organizations.

No Barriers for Readers and Authors — Full Open Access in Action

We agree with the position paper of the International Science Council (Boulton, 2021) that research in work and organizational psychology should be freely available to scholars, practitioners, and the public worldwide. Especially as most research is funded by taxpayers, the knowledge it generates should serve the public without limitations. Fortunately, our new journal is published through PsychOpen GOLD (<https://psychopen.eu/>), an open-access platform run by the Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID). Fully funded by Germany’s federal and state governments, ZPID strives at providing “a publishing environment free from commercial interests” and charges no fees for publications — neither to readers nor to authors. Every article in RPiO can thus be read, shared, and applied without paywalls, subscriptions, or article-processing charges.

By removing financial barriers for both authors and readers, we promote fair access to scientific knowledge and help ensure that evidence aimed at improving people’s working lives reaches everyone who can benefit from it. A positive side effect for researchers is that publications that are free to read typically receive more and diverse citations compared to those locked behind paywalls (Huang et al., 2024), a metric that still carries weight in academic careers (van Balen et al., 2012). Wider dissemination of research findings can also lead to greater recognition and influence both within the academic community and among practitioners. This is what we are hoping for the authors who publish their articles in RPiO. In addition, open access enables more rapid sharing of findings, which can further accelerate scientific discovery and innovation — an aspect that becomes increasingly important given the fast pace by which the world of work is changing.

Our Commitment to Research That Serves the People in Organizations

At RPiO we place *people* at the centre of organizational science. This stance aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being and Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth (United Nations, 2015). Decades of evidence show that organizations perform better when their employees are

healthy, engaged and treated fairly (Harter et al., 2002; Shi et al., 2024). To keep that human focus front and centre, every RPiO submission must include a translational abstract titled “Contribution for People”. In clear, accessible language (no jargon), authors are requested to explain how their findings improve the well-being, development, or day-to-day experience of individuals, teams, or whole organizations. This requirement ensures that each article offers practical value, not just theoretical insight.

RPiO also encourages research on *sustainable and ethical organizational practices*. Modern organizations face the twin challenges of supporting their workforce and responding to the climate crisis (Renwick et al., 2013). Studies that explore green human resource practices, diversity and inclusion, and socially responsible leadership therefore sit squarely within our scope. To underline this priority, our inaugural special issue will focus on “Green Human Resource Management – HR Strategies for a Sustainable Future”, inviting work that shows how organizations can promote environmentally friendly behavior without placing extra strain on employees. A recent systematic review by Lawter and Garnjost (2025) pinpoints the impact of green HR practices on employee well-being and health as a pressing yet under-studied question, and we urge prospective authors to help close that gap.

Thus, by coupling rigorous research with a clear commitment to people, RPiO aims to inspire research that is not only *about* work and organizations, but truly *for* the people who make them thrive.

Attracting All Disciplines Addressing the “People-Focus” in Organizations

We invite contributions from all disciplines that address the human experience in organizational contexts. This includes, but is not limited to, research from organizational behavior, health and sports sciences, occupational health and safety, human factors and ergonomics, workplace safety, team and group dynamics, leadership and management sciences, information science, public management, production management, work science, organization studies, cultural sciences, cognitive psychology, and the fields of creativity and innovation.

Although the journal was founded by three organizational psychologists, *Research for People in Organizations* is not bound to any one discipline. Our focus lies on research that contributes to understanding and improving the positive and meaningful experience of people in organizations – regardless of the disciplinary lens. We strongly believe that the challenges faced by organizations – both in Europe and globally – can only be addressed through interdisciplinary collaboration. As Shet (2024) emphasizes, the well-being and good life of workers and employees require solutions that draw on insights from multiple fields.

Although psychology plays an important role, it is just one of many valuable contributors to our shared goal of enhancing the well-being of workers, employees and organizations. In this spirit, Dalton et al. (2022) introduce the concept of the *metaproblem*, referring to issues that transcend disciplinary boundaries and demand collaborative, integrative research efforts.

Special Focus on the European Workforce

Because RPiO is funded with European public money, the journal has a particular duty to address issues that matter to Europe’s diverse workforce (Brewster, 1995). The continent’s cultural, social, and economic landscapes vary widely, creating distinctive challenges and opportunities – from “General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)”-driven rules (<https://gdpr.eu/>) to cross-border labor mobility, multilingual teams, and strong worker-representation traditions. Another example for a distinctly European framework with implications for organizations is the EU Artificial Intelligence Act (<https://artificialintelligenceact.eu/>) that governs how artificial-intelligence tools and processes may be used in the workplace. By offering a dedicated outlet for research that considers these developments, we aim to strengthen a clearly European voice within work and organizational psychology while still welcoming findings that resonate globally. We especially invite studies that deliver practical, locally grounded solutions for priorities such as work–life balance, occupational health management, employee welfare, cultural inclusion, and European- or region-specific regulations. In doing so, RPiO seeks to advance research that not only analyzes European work settings but also improves them in concrete, people-centred ways.

Open Science Principles

With this journal, we actively promote the application of *open science principles* within work and organizational psychology. While many journals now mention transparency and reproducibility criteria for submissions on their websites, actual implementation remains limited and inconsistent (Torka et al., 2023). We are committed to closing this gap in academic publishing, as outlined in our adherence to the Transparency and Openness Promotion (TOP) standards (<https://rpio.psychopen.eu/index.php/rpio/open-science>). Although concerns about open science – such as problems with GDPR when publishing data, data misuse, or increased workload – are still common among work and organizational psychologists, recent work shows that many of these fears are less problematic in practice than they appear (Hüffmeier et al., 2022). For this reason, we strongly encourage preregistration, open data, open materials, and transparent reporting in all empirical submissions. In addition, we will only publish classic *quantitative* studies that have been pre-registered and have made this preregistration available to the journal during the peer

review process. We also particularly invite pre-registered reports (Stage 1 manuscripts containing only introduction, methods, and analysis plan). Once a registered report receives in-principle acceptance, we will publish the completed article no matter how the results turn out, thereby rewarding sound design over “positive” findings. By embedding these requirements, we seek to boost the credibility of individual studies and to cultivate a wider culture of scientific integrity and accountability in our field (Keener et al., 2023).

We would like to highlight that adherence to open science principles does not exclude qualitative studies. RPiO warmly welcomes *qualitative* studies, provided they meet clear standards of rigour and transparency. Authors should document their sampling, data-collection, and analytic procedures in enough detail for others to understand – and, where feasible, reuse – their work. We will evaluate qualitative submissions against the 12 transparency criteria proposed by Aguinis and Solarino (2019) to ensure high quality.

Our efforts are complemented by awarding Open Science Badges in RPiO to highlight articles that adhere to Open Access principles, pre-registration, and the sharing of data and materials. By embedding these open science principles, we aim to contribute to the advancement of science, facilitate collaboration, and increase the impact of organizational research for the working people.

Additionally, we registered on the platform as a PCI-friendly journal under “Category 2”. PCI Psychology (<https://psych.peercommunityin.org/>) is a community-organized peer review platform for preprints. The platform organizes a review process where action editors (called “recommenders”) manage the entire workflow, including finding and coordinating reviewers, overseeing the revision process, and so forth. When authors of a preprint receive acceptance, they can forward the accepted article to any PCI-friendly journal. Category 2 means that journals agree to provide the authors of recommended preprints with one of the following three responses, within a specified short turnaround time (e.g., 5 days):

1. Acceptance with minor modifications and with no further peer-review.
2. Need for further peer-review or other checks before decision.
3. Not interested.

New Article Types to Bridge the Science–Practice Gap and Support Early Careers

Finally, RPiO introduces two submission formats that we believe will enrich both scholarship and practice. The first one are case analyses – a format that invites practitioners and scholar-practitioner teams to submit richly documented accounts of real-world interventions, events, or outcomes of HR practices from which organizational literatures can learn (Lowman, 2001). Such timely and relevant cases serve two purposes: First, they test theory against messy reality, showing when and why established models succeed – or

fall short — in specific contexts. Second, they stimulate fresh research questions, pointing academics toward phenomena that matter in practice but remain under-examined in the literature. Each case analysis will also be peer-reviewed for rigor, transparency, and relevance, ensuring that lessons learned are both credible and transferable (Aguinis, 1993). The second format is our so-called “Emerging Scholars’ Showcase”, which welcomes high-quality work from early-career researchers, including bachelor’s and master’s students. Offering a full, blinded peer-review experience at this formative stage not only cultivates sound research habits but also brings fresh data and perspectives into the published record instead of leaving them buried in university repositories. In this way, this initiative supports and nurtures the next generation of scholars, ensuring the continuity of innovative research in applied psychology, which is unique in the journal landscape.

Our Vision for RPiO

Our vision for Research for People in Organizations (RPiO) is to become the go-to source for timely, rigorous, and usable knowledge that benefits researchers, consultants, and managers alike. Furthermore, we will work toward positioning RPiO at the forefront of European debate on all aspects of organizational psychology and human resources. Lastly, our ten-year goals include gaining inclusion in the Social Sciences Citation Index, and earning our first competitive impact factor, both while maintaining diamond open-access policies that eliminate cost barriers for authors and readers. Achieving this vision will require a community effort, and we invite all of you across Europe and beyond to join us in building a journal that advances open, people-centered organizational science.

Funding: The authors have no funding to report.

Acknowledgments: With this editorial, the authors would like to thank Armin Günther, Gerrit Fröhlich, Tina Keil and the PsychOpen GOLD team of the Leibniz-Institute of Psychology for giving us the opportunity to create and develop this journal. Thank you for your support and for helping us to put this journal on a very professional foundation.

Competing Interests: The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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