

INTRODUCTION

From the Editor

This journal provides a forum for the exchange of perspectives. Each issue contains two focal articles that take a position on a topic of importance to the field of industrial–organizational (I–O) psychology. These focal articles are first posted on SIOP’s Web site, and readers are invited to submit commentaries in response. A set of commentaries—some of which support and extend the focal article and others that challenge or add new perspectives to the focal article—are selected to be published with the article, along with an integrative response from the authors of the original article.

The first focal article in this issue poses a question, “What If Industrial–Organizational Psychology Decided to Take Workplace Decisions Seriously?” The team of authors—Reeshad Dalal, Silvia Bonaccio, Scott Highhouse, Daniel Ilgen, Susan Mohammed, and Jerel Slaughter—advocate for more cross-fertilization between the judgment and decision-making (JDM) field and I–O psychology. The article grew out of a panel discussion at the 2009 SIOP conference, which highlighted the philosophical and methodological differences between the two fields but also illustrated how the two approaches could enrich each other. The article generated a large number of commentaries, 13 of which were chosen for publication. In their response, the authors clarify their perspective, build on the commentaries, and remain enthusiastic about the possibilities of combining the strengths of both fields.

The second focal article, “75 Years After Likert: Thurstone Was Right!” was authored by Fritz Drasgow, Oleksandr Chernyshenko, and Stephen Stark. This article was also sparked by a 2009 SIOP conference session—this time Fritz’s

Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award presentation. The authors raise questions about one of our most taken-for-granted tools—the Likert rating scale—and make a case for Thurstone scaling and the ideal point models underlying this approach. The article is followed by another set of lively and wide-ranging commentaries. In their response, the authors clarify that they aren’t saying that Likert scaling doesn’t work as “a rough and ready measurement method.” Rather, it is in some of our field’s more complex applications of measurement that ideal-point models outperform.

I suspect that these two sets of focal articles and their commentaries will be somewhat more difficult for a number of readers to make their way through. If you haven’t been exposed to the JDM field, there are new concepts and language to get familiar with. If you don’t regularly think about psychometric issues, your first impulse might be to shy away from an article on measurement models and analytic methods with which you are unfamiliar. But I urge you to dig in. If you are like me, you may not completely grasp all the details, but you’ll have a better understanding of some of the assumptions we typically make in the field about the best approaches to research and measurement—and perhaps you’ll find yourself holding those assumptions a bit more lightly!

Deserving special thanks for their contributions to the success of this issue are the people who reviewed focal articles and commentary submissions: Winfred Arthur, Talya Bauer, Paul Hanges, John Hollenbeck, Adam Meade, Kevin Murphy, Deniz Ones, and Eduardo Salas.

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