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Cronin, M.A.; Homan, A.C.

DOI

[10.1177/2041386620908954](https://doi.org/10.1177/2041386620908954)

Publication date

2020

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

Organizational Psychology Review

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[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Cronin, M. A., & Homan, A. C. (2020). From the (new) editors. *Organizational Psychology Review*, 10(1), 3-5. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2041386620908954>

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From the (new) editors

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Organizational Psychology Review
2020, Vol. 10(1) 3–5
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DOI: 10.1177/2041386620908954
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We are honored to assume the helm at *Organizational Psychology Review (OPR)*. Of course we want to thank our Associate Editor (AE) team: Claudia Buengeler, Karen Niven, Jennifer Overbeck, Jana Raver, Marissa Shuffler, Chester Spell, Maria Tims, and Mary Waller, all of whom we are delighted to have, and who were enthusiastic about joining our adventure. On our inaugural issue, we wanted to provide a sneak peek at our vision for the journal.

A focus on knowledge synthesis: Taking a bird's-eye view

OPR publishes theory and meta-analyses. On the surface, these may seem like opposites, but in fact both are knowledge synthesis vehicles. Both collect published findings and attempt to distill integrative, valid, and reliable knowledge. Thus while the means and even the character of the ends may seem different, when thinking about science more broadly both theory and meta-analyses should structure rather than splinter our knowledge, should pinpoint

gaps rather than filling them, and should inspire new and exciting research (questions) rather than be the endpoint.

In thinking about knowledge synthesis, we intend to broaden the scope of what gets synthesized. Typically, theory and meta-analyses synthesize topical knowledge. For instance, a forthcoming theory on the leadership of team diversity integrates knowledge coming from empirical work on team diversity and team leadership (Homan et al., in press). Yet substantive topics are not the only bases for synthesizing knowledge. Theory is “a statement of relations among concepts within a set of boundary assumptions and constraints” (Bacharach, 1989, p. 496; see also Sutton & Staw, 1995). Such concepts, assumptions, and boundaries can relate to the functions and processes of research itself.

Thus we will encourage attempts to generate theory on the research processes itself by developing the logic and justification for new methods. For example, the last issue of *OPR* included a special section intended to provide teams researchers with new ways to study

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teams (Shuffler & Cronin, 2019). In this section, Klonek et al. (2019) provided guidance on high-resolution sampling methods—those that gather team data at the timescale of minutes, seconds, or even continuously. While this may seem more of a methodological than theoretical topic, why such an approach is credible and the boundary conditions on its use are theoretical. Such guidance must use existing concepts and their relationships to substantiate and bound the argument (Bacharach, 1989; Whetten, 1989). And, of course, understanding what high-resolution sampling can tell researchers about teams should inspire new kinds of research.

A different way to use theory to advance management research is to bound them to contexts (cf. Johns, 2006) rather than phenomena. Most organizational theory focuses on some specific phenomenon (e.g., the evolution of conflict into counterproductive work behavior, see Raver, 2013) and generalizes it across contexts. Yet a different approach would be to use theory to synthesize the variety of phenomena that simultaneously operate to produce counterproductive work behavior within a specific context (e.g., start-up teams, see Knight et al., 2020). To understand counterproductive work behavior in this context, one would need to synthesize many different categories of forces (social, political, economic, even structural in terms of the built environment) that are normally studied separately. Synthesis of such a variety of phenomena also invites a more interdisciplinary approach. More explicit theory on how distinct phenomena co-occur in a context is what makes theory practical to managers. More explicit theory on how to generate evidence helps build better and more interdisciplinary research (as people can start to build bridges between the concepts and relationships used across disciplines).

Meta-analyses have a role here too in terms of advancing what we know about method and about context. Meta-analyses that take into account methodological choices do exist. For

example, De Wit et al. (2012) found that the scale and performance measurement used to study the effect of task conflict influenced the findings. We will encourage submissions of meta-analyses that incorporate systematic tests of how the method used in research on a topic might have influenced the conclusions drawn about that topic. We also think that perhaps the meta-analysis approach could also help distill the factors that matter most within a context. Figuring out how to compare clusters of effects in order to see which ones dominate in a context might require some disciplined imagination (i.e., theorizing, see Weick, 1995). But a way to limit what really matters in a context would help make a more parsimonious science.

At the 30,000 foot view, we want *OPR* to push the envelope on what theory and meta-analyses can do for organizational science as a field, not just for the topics we study.

A focus on learning: Working with diamonds in the rough

Our vision of *OPR* as a vehicle to promote knowledge synthesis is a work in progress. But from that work, we will learn, and we hope to share that learning with the field. That learning starts with manuscript development.

New ideas are often high risk because of the review process. We believe there is a way to improve that process and the AE is key. We believe that a good AE is like a music producer—they help the band write the song they are hoping to write but could not get to themselves. It is a careful balance between maintaining the author's vision while ensuring that vision can be refined by the collective wisdom of the reviewers. It is also a balance between encouraging boldness while limiting overclaiming. The reason we picked the AEs we did was that they all support and understand that approach; they all have the imagination to see potential, and the experience to temper that potential.

We also think that the way knowledge synthesis happens in our field is not well understood, at least not as well understood as methodological issues. Consider, for example, how many papers exist on writing theory versus how many exist about mediated moderation. Now consider which of these functions, theory or mediated moderation, has more variety and nuance in form and function. Our field needs more intelligence about knowledge synthesis than it has (Colquitt & Zapata-Phelan, 2007; Sutton & Staw, 1995). As such, we intend to have editorials devoted to guiding knowledge synthesis through theory and through meta-analyses. While many of these will be traditional “from the editor” commentaries, we will welcome anyone to submit an exposition on knowledge synthesis. We think that *OPR* should be a tool for educating future researchers and that many of our colleagues, not just the editorial team, could contribute to this.

This brings us to our last addition. We will be starting a section called Knowledge Synthesis Insights where we interview field leaders to get their opinions on how aspects of our knowledge creation practice could be improved. We think we could stimulate greater reflection on how we, as a field, execute our craft. These essays can not only be used to orient our newer members to the field, they can also serve to provoke critical analysis and debate, from which the field can improve how it operates.

Conclusion

OPR is awesome so submit your work.

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