

## INTRODUCTION

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# From the Editor

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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 the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology'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, by Ann Marie Ryan and J. Kevin Ford, is entitled, "Organizational Psychology and the Tipping Point of Professional Identity." In it, the authors argue that organizational psychology has an "identity problem" and is at a critical juncture in terms of maintaining its distinctiveness as a field. An important feature of this article is its use of research on identity formation and change to help readers better understand what may be happening within our profession. Ryan and Ford lay out four alternative future scenarios to stimulate reflection and dialog on crafting the profession's collective future. The article is followed by 10 wide-ranging commentaries. I was pleased that the article sparked commentaries from I-O psychologists working in a wide variety of settings: psychology departments, human resource functions in organizations, business schools, interdisciplinary programs, and HR products and services firms. In their response, the authors note themes across these commentaries and

share how they intend to contribute to maintaining the core distinctive attributes of I-O psychology through their approach to graduate training. I join the authors in hoping that this series stimulates further dialogues about the evolution of our collective identity as well as more intentional action to manage that identity.

The second focal article, "Validation Is Like Motor Oil: Synthetic Is Better," was produced by a cross-organizational team of authors (Jeff Johnson, Piers Steels, Charles Scherbaum, Calvin Hoffman, Richard Jeanerret, and Jeff Foster) and grew out of a 2009 SIOP symposium in New Orleans. These authors argue that synthetic validity isn't just an interesting idea raised half a century ago but a practical methodology that has great potential to advance the science and practice of I-O psychology. The article both educates about synthetic validity techniques and presents the case for this approach being the best in many situations. The authors also urge the I-O community to join in advancing the science and practice of selection through the development of a large, public, synthetic database. The focal article is followed by nine commentaries that provide what the authors aptly describe as "a fair amount of suggestions for improvements, conditional or tempered praise, and explicitly critical comments." The authors are thorough in responding to the various reactions to their original article and return to their advocacy for a synthetic validity database with refined ideas and new developments in potential government funding.

One thing the two focal articles have in common is an advocacy for action from

the I-O community (which is different from the more typical advocacy for improved practice in the field). This journal aspires to advance the science and practice of I-O psychology by raising issues, highlighting differences in perspectives, and seeking integration and common ground. Perhaps we should add “stimulating collective action” to the list.

Deserving special thanks for their contribution to the success of this issue are the people who reviewed focal articles and commentary submissions: Michael Burke, Theodore Hayes, Jerry Kehoe, Allen Kraut, Ronald Landis, Jeff McHenry, Kenneth Pearlman, Hannah Rothstein, and Frank Schmidt.

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