

COMMENTARY

## Signaling a new mindset: Let's swap SIOP for SWOP?

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The focal article by Schneider and Pulakos (2022) makes a powerful case for a more organizational mindset in industrial-organizational (I-O) practice and thinking. Their urging can be seen as an inflection point in our field's perspective and self-definition. So, it may be worthwhile for us to mark these changes by also changing our name from the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) to something more appropriate.

Such changes have been made before. We began in 1945 as APA's Division 14, Industrial and Business Psychology and then dropped "Business" in 1962 to become Division 14, Industrial Psychology. In 1973, we changed again, adding "Organizational" to become Division 14, Industrial and Organizational Psychology. (In 1982, we incorporated to the current "Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology.") Today, a half century later, the word "Industrial" in our title seems antiquated. It summons up images of large manufacturing plants. That may have made sense when Viteles came out with his landmark text in 1932, *Industrial Psychology* and again after World War II when he wrote *Motivation and Morale in Industry* (Viteles, 1932, 1953).

But over these same decades, the United States economy has shifted dramatically from a manufacturing to a service economy. Manufacturing's share of employment is now about 8%; the service sector employs 80% of all workers. "Industrial" also implies private for-profit enterprises. In fact, within the service sector, government's share of the labor force is 14.3% and non-profit organizations employ about 10% of all workers. Why should I-O psychology's title imply that it restricts its influence to only the industrial part of the world of work? Why not the whole world of work?

Schneider and Pulakos (2022) offer some reasons for why applying a new mindset may be hard. They note the difficulties of obtaining data from more organizations and using some new methodologies. In addition, there are two other factors, aside from natural inertia, that may work against a new mindset. First, is American culture itself. Geert Hofstede's seminal research (2001) shows that U.S. culture is more individualistic (vs. collectivist) than any other nation in the world. The saying that "fish are the last to notice water" means that most of us take a focus on individuals rather than organizations for granted.

Second, the bread and butter of many I-O psychologists is work in selection and individual assessment, and this does not easily lead to work with a cross-organizational perspective. The long resistance to validity generalization, as against situation-specific differences, is a powerful reminder of such opposition.

On the plus side, many of our clients will welcome the reorientation to an organizational point of view. In my research and consulting experience with many firms, I saw that executives were eager to understand differences between subunits, like branch offices, regional units, and so on. They also understand that systemic differences, rather than individual ones, can make a huge

difference in organizational performance. In recent years, there is also awareness of the rising importance of teams, not just individual efforts, in and across work units.

Some publications in our field may foreshadow a preference for a change in title. For example, the title of a popular I/O text is just *Organizational Psychology* (Jex & Britt, 2014); another I-O text is simply *Psychology Applied to Work* (Muchinsky and Howe, 2018). A recent book on international I-O psychology uses the title, *Internationalizing the Curriculum in Organizational Psychology*. (Griffith et al., 2013). No “industrial” needed, it seems. My own book on surveys (Kraut, 1996) was deliberately titled *Organizational Surveys* rather than a more popular *Employee Surveys* to accentuate that surveys were being used to assess and sometimes change organizations, not individual employees.

Our colleague I-O organizations in Europe (notably from nations more collectivist than the United States), omit the word “industrial” altogether from their titles. So, we see EAWOP (European Association for Work and Organizational Psychology) and IAAP (International Association for Applied Psychology). SIOP also has many professional members from outside of the US, currently 13.5% (J. Tegge, 2022, private communication, from the SIOP Office), who might welcome such a change.

Perhaps it is time we should consider a change in our title of SIOP (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology) to SWOP (Society for Work and Organizational Psychology) or maybe just SOP (Society for Organizational Psychology). That would signal a timely and useful change in our perspective and a stronger interest in organizational performance. Let’s start discussing this and see what title might best describe our field’s scope and capabilities.

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