

# Special Issue on Ethics of Psychological Assessment in Organizations

## Editorial

Diana Rus & Roman Soucek

Dilemmas surrounding ethics in Work and Organizational Psychology (WOP) research and practice are quite common. Indeed, ample research has been published on the topic and ethical codes of conduct for WOP have been developed at regional and national levels. In this Special Issue, we are delighted to feature a collection of articles centred around the ethics of psychological assessment in organizations that have sprung forth from an EAWOP Small Group Meeting (SGM) held in Warsaw, Poland, September 11–13, 2019.

The SGM was organised by a group of Polish researchers and practitioners, namely, Joanna Czarnota-Bojarska (Faculty of Psychology, University of Warsaw), Urszula Brzezińska (Psychological Test Laboratory of Polish Psychological Association) and Grzegorz Rajca (Polish Psychological Association). The aim of the meeting was to discuss various ethical issues pertaining to the research and practice of psychological assessment in organizations, and fifteen practitioners and researchers spent two fruitful days sharing their insights. Four main ethical challenges related to psychological assessments in organizations emerged during the meeting which are also reflected in the articles published in this Special Issue. These four challenges focus on: a) an apparent goal misalignment between business and science; b) difficulties surrounding the practical application of research findings in specific contexts; c) the employment of research methods that require significant effort from participants; and d) WOP compliance with legal requirements and ethical standards.

We open by presenting an interview that the first author held with one of the organisers of the SGM, *Urszula Brzezińska*, an experienced WOP researcher and practitioner in the field of psychological assessment. Urszula outlines the psychological assessment landscape in Poland and offers the readers some interesting insights on the ethical challenges faced by WOP practitioners resulting from the changes in the workplace due to COVID-19.

Next, we continue with a fascinating essay by *Grzegorz Rajca*, a seasoned WOP practitioner working as a consultant. Grzegorz tries to understand why certain

psychological assessment tools that lack any solid evidence-base are prevalent and popular in organizations, whereas evidence-based tools lag behind in popularity and use. He highlights several reasons for why these tools may be dominating the assessment market and provides a number of possible solutions to the problem.

Following, we have an interesting case study from Poland depicting the ethical challenge of hidden employee appraisal during competence training. The authors, *Sylwiusz Retowski* and *Magdalena Trzepiota*, vividly describe a case from their practice highlighting the ethical standards that could have been infringed upon and present the courses of action they took to handle the situation. This case is a good example of ethical challenges that WOP practitioners might be faced with and highlights the need to raise awareness among WOP practitioners and Human Resources (HR) professionals of professional ethical standards.

We continue with an analysis by *Katarzyna Durniat* of the theoretical, methodological, legal, and ethical issues related to diagnosing and counteracting workplace mobbing. *Katarzyna* highlights the state of the art in mobbing research and engages in a discussion of the strengths and limitations of prevalent research methods in the field. She also elaborately points to the legal, ethical, and practical issues encountered in preventing and counteracting workplace mobbing in the Polish context.

Our next article, authored by *Joanna Czarnota-Bojarska*, focuses on some of the major ethical and methodological dilemmas faced by researchers conducting organizational research. *Joanna* focuses specifically on issues related to ensuring respondents' anonymity and the confidentiality of their data. Based on two specific examples of organizational research, she highlights problems that might arise when respondents feel that the anonymity and confidentiality of their data is threatened. She concludes by proposing specific actions that organizational researchers can take to counteract these issues.

Last but not least, *Katarzyna Wojtowska* and *Joanna Czarnota-Bojarska*, discuss the ethical dilemmas faced by organizational researchers employing the experience sampling method in diary studies. They present the results of a workshop conducted among researchers participating in the EAWOP SGM held in Warsaw, Poland, September 11–13, 2019. Workshop participants who engaged in creating a new tool for diary research identified several ethical issues and jointly developed some preliminary solutions for addressing these issues.

We hope you will enjoy this Special Issue that highlights so many salient points about our work. For the rest of the year, we have further papers in preparation, including a fascinating case study on family businesses. We also hope to bring you a Special Edition of papers on “*Young people and careers*” from a SGM held in Glasgow in June 2020.

We would also like to announce some exciting news and developments. First, we are happy to announce that we have been growing and are now regularly publishing more than one issue per year. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our authors, the editorial team and our production designer who have made this possible! Therefore, we will change our issue-based system of publication to an annual volume based system. In other words, the journal will publish annual volumes that may contain several issues. You can find more information about this change here as well as on the journal homepage.

Second, we are looking forward to your contributions and are planning to introduce a new paper format designed to further our current understanding of the application of WOP. In this respect, we will especially welcome contributions that present practice-oriented tools used in WOP. These could include the presentation of new tools used in WOP practice as well as material that shows how certain tools have been used in WOP interventions. Please contact us ([InPractice@eawop.org](mailto:InPractice@eawop.org)) with your ideas and a short plan of the paper and we will be delighted to work with you to bring this material into publication.

Best wishes for 2021!



**DR. DIANA RUS, SPECIAL ISSUE EDITOR**  
[d.rus@creative-peas.com](mailto:d.rus@creative-peas.com)



**PD DR. ROMAN SOUCEK, SPECIAL ISSUE EDITOR**  
[roman.soucek@fau.de](mailto:roman.soucek@fau.de)



**DR. ANGELA CARTER, EDITOR**  
[angela\\_carter@justdevelopment.co.uk](mailto:angela_carter@justdevelopment.co.uk)



**DR. COLIN ROTH, EDITOR**  
[colin.roth@blackboxopen.com](mailto:colin.roth@blackboxopen.com)