



Organizational Neuroscience

An Interest Group of the Academy of Management

Member “NEU”sletter

Welcome from NEU's Incoming Chair

The Organizational Neuroscience Interest Group (NEU) is less than two years old! Yet, we already have 400 members and many of them are doctoral students or are in the early stages of their careers. We are excited but not surprised by the interest of young scholars in our activities. Being part of a field that is largely influenced by the discipline of Psychology (in addition to other disciplines, of course), it is just natural for management scholars to be engaged in research that relies on neuroscience theory and methodology. Such methods are now mainstream among psychologists and their popularity is also growing among our colleagues in marketing, economics, and other areas.

Adopting neuroscience/biological theory and methodologies has significantly advanced adjacent fields, such as social psychology, where scholars have been able to gain important insights about fundamental human phenomena, such as social influence and justice. Research on social prejudice, for example, has been revolutionized by the introduction of neuroscience. Social neuroscientists have demonstrated how discerning ‘us’ from ‘others’ is a central characteristic of the human brain (Amodio, 2014). It takes the brain only a few milliseconds to make such critical judgments which have implications for prejudice, stereotypical behavior, and group conflict, all of which are highly relevant to understanding individuals and organizations.

Overall, our interest group is dedicated to using neuroscience knowledge and approaches at different levels in organizations, as well as promoting linkages to management theory and practice. As our domain statement indicates, we encourage knowledge generation through theoretical propositions and/or empirical evidence pertaining to the neural mechanisms associated with behavior in the workplace. We broadly define organizational neuroscience as brain-related phenomena, including biological/physiological processes that are innervated by the central nervous system (e.g., heart rate). Concurrently, the interest group seeks to understand how the environment, culture, and institutions can affect organizational actors’ behavior through nervous system functioning. By considering neuroscience at different levels of analysis in organizations, we encourage interdisciplinarity and multi-methods research. Moreover, we stress ethical considerations when using neuroscience technology in workplace research. (Continued on next page.)

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Yair Berson
McMaster University
Business School

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Many of us, members of NEU, apply these methods to address classic research questions in our fields, spanning from strategy, entrepreneurship, and organizational behavior. In my own work, I address the effects of leaders on group formation, a process that is often deep-seated and instantaneous, hence making it hard to capture using traditional methods, such as surveys. In several studies, together with my neuroscience colleagues, I have manipulated different leader behaviors to examine their effects on physiological and neurological synchronous reactions of group members. In addition to providing insights into the effects of leaders on individuals and groups, by using neuroscience, we address ongoing criticisms of survey research in management.

I hope that you will join my colleagues and me in this exciting voyage and be one of the pioneers in organizational neuroscience! Please feel free to be in touch!

Yair Berson

Professor of Organizational Behavior, McMaster University, Canada
Incoming Chair, NEU IG.

AoM Mini-conference on Organizational Neuroscience

The NEU interest group was originally approved in the winter of 2020. We all know what happened after that; specifically, the pandemic hit and the world seemed to largely shut down. This was an especially challenging development for our fledgling group, since we were attempting to become known in the AoM and other communities, and to gain members. The best way to do so is by having in-person meetings and conferences. But there were no such meetings/conferences in 2020 and 2021, and to date, we as a group have not yet met face-to-face.

To begin to remedy this problem, we applied to the AoM, and were subsequently granted permission in the fall of 2021, to conduct a mini-conference in June of 2022. The conference was to be held in Rotterdam at Erasmus University, and hosted by the Rotterdam School of Management. A key reason for wanting to hold the conference in Europe was to introduce NEU to the European community. In combination with our meeting in Seattle in August of 2022, the idea was to quickly gain more visibility of NEU in 2022.

However, in the early winter of 2022, it became clear that some factors were prohibiting the successful planning and execution of the conference. They included the continuing uncertainty regarding travel due to the pandemic, and the very short window that we had to plan and make the conference come to fruition in a successful manner.

Accordingly, we received permission to postpone the mini-conference until June 2023. The location and venue have not changed. It will still be in Rotterdam at Erasmus University. But with the longer timeframe, we can engage in more careful and systematic planning. Indeed, we will use the AoM conference in Seattle in August 2022 for advertisement and planning purposes. If you are interested in getting involved, we especially encourage you to attend the NEU business meeting on Saturday August 6 (specific time and location to be announced). You can also contact Sebastiano Massaro, the conference Chair, directly: s.massaro@surrey.ac.uk



Sebastiano Massaro
University of Surrey

Q & A with Richard Boyatzis

Advice for Newcomers

When people think of an organizational neuroscience researcher, your name is at the top of that list. Can you tell us a little bit about what stimulated your interest in both neuroscience and management and how you got your start in organizational neuroscience research?

In the 70s, I was studying the antecedents of what makes men aggressive when drinking alcohol. My studies involved catecholamine assays to determine hormonal effects, which is linked to the sympathetic nervous system. In the 90's, I had been following various colleagues doing neuroimaging studies related to Parasympathetic Nervous System, and effects of meditation. I was asked to be on the faculty of our Department of Cognitive Science because of my writing and met a young assistant professor interested in neural networks affecting interpersonal relationships. That began some serious talks about designing studies which we then did!



Can you share some of your experiences with publishing organizational neuroscience in management journals? What are some typical comments/pushbacks/accolades that you've received from reviewers? How have you navigated them? Any tips for success?

The first major effort showing SNS and PNS effect of leadership and why certain styles of leadership coaching help the leader as much as others. Our attempts to publish this 2003 article in AMR met with a blanket "we don't do physiology." Of course, three years later, then did publish something by Jane Dutton (a frequent AMR publisher). As to the empirical studies, it was far easier to get published in social neuroscience than management. Now, psychology is quite receptive. If it was not for a few bold colleagues (Nick Senior and Bob Lord) doing the LQ special issue, and then later John Antonakis doing a special issue of ORM, none of my neuroscience pieces would be in management journals. [Continued on the next page]



What are some difficulties that you have encountered in organizational neuroscience research? How have you navigated them thus far?

Access to equipment and funding is the largest challenge. It can be handled by partnering with a full-time neuroscientist on campus. Then the issue of funding came along, but that was easier for me to handle. You do need a University that makes cross-school collaboration easier.

There is a lot of buzz around the new organizational neuroscience interest group (NEU). Many members are intrigued about neuroscience and its impact on management and organizational sciences; however, many are also unsure where to start in terms of conducting research in this field. Do you have any suggestions for our readers on how to get involved, especially if they don't have any neuroscience background or training?

Yes, read what has been done. Then talk to colleagues in your Medical School Neuroscience or Psychology Departments, or nearby hospitals. You need specialists, and they need us to discuss translation research or relevance. It takes a few years but once rolling, you can produce insightful and rigorous work in a steady stream. Without doing this, you can easily gravitate toward using EEG, QEEG, or NIRS. They are credible but have limits on what aspects of the brain and network functioning you can study. The other techniques, fMRI, PET, DTI, and MEG, are much more sophisticated and allow better theoretical development of hypotheses.

NTU Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship 2022

NTU Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship 2022 is now OPEN for application. The closing date for submission is 18 April 2022.

If you want to work on Organizational Neuroscience topics please email Assoc. Prof. George Christopoulos (cgeorgios@ntu.edu.sg) and send your CV.

This is a competitive position - please ensure that you satisfy the criteria mentioned below.

ABOUT

The Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship (PPF), launched by NTU President Professor Suresh Subra in 2018, aims to provide the opportunity for outstanding early career researchers from Singapore and around the world, to conduct independent investigations in any discipline at NTU. This Fellowship provides research funding over two years. There is personal development opportunities coupled with mentorship in an established research group. These conditions will empower the Fellows to strive for research excellence and impact and enable them to meet their ambitions as global research leaders.

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NTU Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship 2022 (Continued)

PPF BENEFITS

- The Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship provides:
- A two-year tenure with a salary of SGD 80,000 per year.
- A research grant of up to SGD 100,000 per year.
- A housing grant of SGD 18,000 per year with eligibility for subsidized apartment accommodation (subject to availability)
- Relocation expenses of up to SGD 4,000 (if eligible)
- Mentorship and support in an established research group.
- Opportunity to work with faculty in mentoring graduate students.
- Exposure to the most dynamic and diverse global growth regions.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Within 5 years of obtaining Ph.D. or equivalent degree
- Demonstrable intellectual excellence.
- Maturity and capacity to begin an independent research career.
- Desire and potential to develop as a future academic leader.
- Submit a thoughtful and realistic research proposal
- Be available to take up the position no later than 31 Dec 2022.

HOW TO APPLY

The application is open from 20 January 2022 to 18 April 2022 (Singapore Time, UTC/GMT+8).

Only applications in electronic format are accepted. Please follow the link below to submit the online application.

Checklist

The following supporting documents have to be attached to the online application form:

1. Cover Letter
2. Comprehensive CV (with full publication list)
3. Official transcript or Degree Certificate in English (PhD's degree)
4. Research proposal (in no more than 2 pages, template for download)
5. Contact information of two referees (one must be PhD Supervisor)
6. Top 3 publications (in PDF) and any other supporting documents (scanned copy)

Interested applicants are advised to have them ready before applying on-line. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

For more information on the Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship 2022, please visit <http://www.ntu.edu.sg/tracs/ppf>

General queries about the application can be directed to ntuppf@ntu.edu.sg.