

## EDITORIAL

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# **The ENOP Reference Model as a landmark for the future teaching of WOP in Romania**

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### **Introduction**

This Editorial discusses the ENOP Reference Model and its possible implications for the teaching of work and organizational psychology in Romania. The ENOP model has a history of well over 20 years and is the dominant model for the development and assessment of professional competencies in work and organizational psychology in Europe. It has been adopted by the European Association for Work and Organizational Psychology, is one of the fundamentals of EuroPsy (which is promoted by the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations), and provides the underlying framework for most of the established European programmes in WOP, like for example the Erasmus Mundus European Master on Work, Organizational and Personnel Psychology (University of Valencia, Spain). However, in Romania this framework is virtually unknown and, sadly, the undergraduate and graduate training of psychologists does not follow its recommendations, thus potentially developing professionals who may be underprepared, when compared with their European colleagues. We hope to raise awareness of professors, academic managers, professional associations and professionals in Romania for the ENOP Reference Model and to the benefits of adopting such an explicit model of quality.

The European Network of Organisational and Work Psychologists (ENOP) is a small network of professors in Work and

Organizational Psychology (WOP) from several European countries. The ENOP has currently (2016) 27 members from 22 countries. It is constituted officially as an organization, and is supported and hosted by the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, in Paris, France. The ENOP has apparently (EAWOP, 2016) first appeared as an organization in 1980 in an informal meeting in Windsor Park (United Kingdom), and it was based at least in part on another informal group of colleagues from European universities, supported by the Dutch Foundation for the Study of Developments in European Industrial Psychology. The current President of ENOP is Professor José María Peiró (University of Valencia, Spain). The ENOP members meet once a year in Paris. The ENOP publishes a Newsletter for the benefits of its members, and, being a small organization, does not organize a conference. The ENOP functions as a think-tank: it is not prescriptive, and does not impose its reasoning on others, but rather targets the development of meaningful scholarship. Such scholarship is by its very nature influential, and the ENOP has been highly influential for European WOP.

The best known "product" of ENOP is the ENOP Reference Model, or, as it now called, the "ENOP-EAWOP European Curriculum Reference Model with Minimum Standards for W&O Psychology: Basic and Advanced" (<http://www.enop.ee/enop/index.php/curriculum>). The ENOP Reference Model was developed over a period of several years,

starting with the early 1990s: it was first semi-publicly discussed in 1993 and disseminated later after public consultation and revision in 1994 (Roe, Coetsier, Léboyer, Peiró, & Wilpert, 1994).

The ENOP Model became especially influential as part of the larger movement towards common curricula in European universities, spearheaded by the Bologna Declaration, and the important work regarding the education of psychologists in general, done by Lunt and colleagues (e.g., Lunt et al., 2001). This latter work resulted in the common framework for the training of psychologists in Europe, and after its adoption by EFPA (2001), was the groundwork for the development of the European Diploma of Psychology (EuroPsy). As part of its work on the specialist certificate in WOP associated with the EuroPsy, the EAWOP-ENOP Task Force turned to the ENOP reference model, which is thus heavily reflected in the EuroPsy.

The Reference Model has a bearing on the training of WO psychologists in the various European countries and aims to facilitate the comparison of curricula and, of course, to offer guidance for the harmonization of these curricula. It is considered today the benchmark for the training of WO psychologists in Europe. Its impact is arguably less important now in the Western European countries, which already have well-established teaching and practice approaches, but should be considerably more impactful on the short term in Eastern European countries, such as Romania. Here, a comparison of the ENOP Model to national practices in teaching, legal regulations, and to professional practice shows that national practices are woefully inadequate.

We will offer a very short walkthrough of the ENOP Model, with the intention to make it known to university professors, university administrators, practice regulators, and professionals in Romania. Specifically, we will focus on the four major distinctions the ENOP model makes, which will explain how the model is structured.

The ENOP model operates a number of distinctions, in areas such as educational objectives (what level of depth should teaching have and what should we aim to develop in future specialists), fields of study

(are there more fields of study in WOP and what are they), type of science (are there different requirements for explanatory and intervening science), depth-of-specialization (should we distinguish between several levels of professional competence and what are those).

**(1) Educational objectives.** The topic of educational objectives in the ENOP model discusses what level of depth should teaching have and what educators should aim to develop in students. The model differentiates between four levels, which are progressively more difficult to develop, and are based on each other: (a) the acquisition of knowledge, (b) the acquisition of skills, (c) the acquisition of competences for professional activity (i.e., for intervention and development), and (d) the acquisition of competences for scientific research.

**(2) Fields of study.** The Model emphasizes the fact that WOP covers three connected areas of study: work psychology, personnel psychology and organizational psychology. We will offer short descriptions of the contents of these three areas, extracted from the ENOP Reference Model (p. 7).

**Work psychology** concerns people's work activity, i.e. the way in which people deal with their tasks in given contexts. Persons are seen as workers who (individually and collectively) perform tasks that are derived from the work processes taking place in the organization. Important subjects are tasks, work environment, time arrangements, performance, error, effort, load, fatigue, well-being, task and job design, tool design, technology, ergonomics, etc.

**Personnel psychology** concerns the relationship between persons and the organization, in particular, the establishment of the relationship, its development, and termination. Persons are perceived as individuals who at a certain stage of their career become 'employees' of an organization. Important subjects are choice processes of individuals and organizations, abilities and capabilities, skills and competencies, needs and need fulfillment, commitment, methods of selection, career development, appraisal, rewarding, training and competence development, etc.

**Organizational psychology** concerns the (collective) behavior of people about the shaping and functioning of socio-technical arrangements designated as organizations. People are involved in this arrangement as 'members'. Important subjects are communication, decision making, power, leadership, participation, cooperation, conflict, organizational culture, organizational structure, technology, organizational change and development, intra- and inter-organizational relations, etc.

To sum it up: work psychology is concerned with how people work (how they deal with their tasks), personnel psychology is concerned with the relationship of people as employees of the organization, and organizational psychology is concerned with how people interact and collectively shape the social and technological structure of the organization. All these three areas are equally important and the ENOP model stresses that a professional will need a basic understanding of all three to be effective in any field of WOP.

**(3) Type of science.** The topic of the type of science in the ENOP model discusses the difference between explanatory and intervening (so-called “technological”) science. Explanatory science aims at

understanding reality and is characterized by products and services which are descriptive and diagnostic (e.g., assessment, organizational surveys, diagnosis, etc.). Intervening science, or technology, aims at modifying reality and is characterized by products which require action and change (e.g. interventions, performance optimization, individual and group development, etc.).

**(4) Depth-of-specialization.** The topic of depth-of-specialization in the ENOP model posits three levels of professional competence in WO psychologists. (a) A first (basic) level requires systematic coverage of one subject area and is mainly concerned with knowledge. (b) A second level regards a systematic study of the problems and methods typical for one subject area. (c) A third level regards an in-depth, detailed study of a particular issue. Different programs have a different thrust and a different area of specialization, and this will reflect on the level (c), and possibly, in part, on the level (b). The Model considers, however, that level (a) should be ensured by all WOP programs equally.

Table 1 below summarizes the first three distinctions, in what is the recommended structure of a graduate program in WOP.

Table 1. The structure of a graduate program in WOP (ENOP, 1994)

WORK	PERSONNEL	ORGANIZATION	Objective/type of science
General course (G)			Orientation
W1	P1	O1	Knowledge of theories (explanatory)
W2	P2	O2	Knowledge of theories (technological)
W3	P3	O3	Diagnostic skills (explanatory)
W4	P4	O4	Intervention and design skills (technological)
Professional training (e.g., stage, ethics course)			Professional competences
Research training (e.g., research project, advanced method courses)			Research competences

These recommendations also come with a minimum number of credits (300 ECT) attached, which are clearly distributed among the cells of Table 1. A large number of other

specifications are made by the model, with the intention to guide educators in implementing the Model. For our discussion, however, this short presentation should be sufficient.

Based on the points outlined above, it is possible for professors and educational administrators in Romania to assess in what way their courses and educational programs fit this structure. Moreover, it should be possible for Romanian professionals in WOP to evaluate in what measure their professional expertise is aligned with these requirements on which, sooner or later, they will also be assessed and compared with.

## Discussion

We believe that this model will help university professors, university administrators, practice regulators, and professionals in Romania to shape the teaching and practice of WOP in the short and medium future. The Romanian Association for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (APIO) has adopted some years ago (APIO, 2011) a project regarding the competencies of WO psychologists, which is heavily based on the ENOP-EAWOP model. Therefore, some of the Romanian professionals in WO psychology are in part familiar with its tenets. A larger awareness and a stronger reliance on the ENOP model should benefit all these stakeholder groups in many ways.

University professors could gear their teaching towards this model, in order to cover as many as possible of the three large domains (work, personnel and organizational) and with as much as possible of the expected content, in order to ensure that students taking their WO courses live up to the expectations of this model and can be viable as professionals not only in Romania, but in Europe.

University administrators could try to reshape their educational programs to fit the requirements of this model. While some undergraduate-level courses in WOP and some WOP Master's programs in Romanian universities are competitive and comparable to other similar courses and programs in Europe, they rarely target the domains and skills of the ENOP model specifically and explicitly. Rethinking programs (especially, for example, when multiple Master-level programs in WOP exist in the same university) to fit this model explicitly will certainly make them more competitive and comparable with other European approaches, as well as more easily

to differentiate between each other. Some may want to focus explicitly on one component or another of the model (e.g., personnel rather than work psychology), or may want rather to emphasize depth in one educational objective or another (e.g. competencies for professional activity rather than competencies for scientific research). No matter what the option of university administrators will be, the ENOP Model will help them make explicit decisions and communicate them convincingly to other stakeholders.

Practice regulators (e.g., the Romanian Board of Psychology, COPSI), and professional associations (e.g., the Romanian Association for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, APIO) should consider the ENOP model with the utmost attention. First, their mission to inform the public and the profession should motivate them to communicate this model to a large audience. Second, the quality of professional WOP practice in Romania is often at a dismal level. The historical synopses that Romanian psychology, in general, has had during the Communist regime, certainly explain this situation. However, that often-invoked historical motivation should not absolve us of seeing that some domains of practice in which Romanian WO psychologists are active nowadays are non-defendable from a scientific point of view, and are sub-standard from a level-of-service point of view. These domains of practice should not be encouraged, and the developmental effort of psychologists, as well as the regulatory effort of institutions should rather be targeted towards bringing Romanian WO practice towards contemporary European practice, and not towards keeping it in the dark ages. Third, it is only a matter of time until the EuroPsy will also be adopted in Romania, even if for the time being COPSI is opposed to this certification. Already Romanian psychologists are interested in the EuroPsy certification and have to register with national bodies in other countries. When the EuroPsy will also be available in Romania, it may become clear how sub-standard many of the Romanian professionals in WOP have been trained and have practiced until now. It is a matter of responsibility towards their members to try to prepare the adoption of such quality systems promptly, by beginning as fast

as possible with information and with professional development towards the targets described by the ENOP model.

Finally, professionals should consider their competencies, their skills, knowledge, interests and professional experience, and compare themselves with the requirements of the ENOP model. After all, professional standards, in a country where professional standards are laughably minimal, cannot come from institutions. One's own professional standard comes from within: a regulatory institution will never set maximal standards but, by definition, standards of minimum acceptability (standards defining the "good enough" level to enter the profession). But minimal standards are not those a professional should be interested in (who want to only be "good enough"?!) — the mark of a true professional are the standards of excellence he/she sets for him/herself. The ENOP model can help psychologists and other specialists to self-assess their professional competence in WOP and to set for themselves a high and

aspirational standard of professional excellence.

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