



Organizational Neuroscience

An Interest Group of the Academy of Management

Member “NEU”sletter

Welcome from NEU’s Chair

Greetings fellow neuro-enthusiasts! It is hard to believe that we are already six months into NEU’s inaugural year. Despite what continues to be one of the strangest years ever, NEU continues to grow and we are currently over 300 members. This despite having a virtual conference our first year and the sad news that next year’s conference will also be held online. Nonetheless, your executive team is working hard to establish NEU’s presence in the Academy and provide value to every member through a number of upcoming initiatives that the committee chairs outline below. Our goal is to create a family of scholars where members of all experience levels and interests can seek and find feedback, advice, and education for research, practice, and teaching, in addition to a network of collaborators and supporters. NEU is truly an interdisciplinary interest group and as such its success depends on the engagement and involvement of the widest possible membership. In these challenging times, more than ever, we need each of you to help spread the word and invite others to join NEU.

The last 10 years have seen a rapid increase in articles that draw on neuroscience methods and findings. I firmly believe that this trend will continue and accelerate in the near term. As David and Pierre’s book [Organizational Neuroscience](#) so meticulously laid out, the application of neuroscience in organizational research is in its infancy. Nonetheless, it will not be long before neuroscience will challenge and redefine almost every organizational theory at all levels of the organization. I am gratified and humbled to be part of our pioneering group of early adopters and look forward to the future. In the words of Shakespeare: From this day to the ending of the world, But we in it shall be remembered—We few, we happy few, we band of brothers & sisters.

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Bill Becker
Virginia Tech

We are social! Follow [NEU on Facebook](#) for regular updates



The NEU Interest Group in Perspective:

A Stroll Down Memory Lane and a Look toward the Future

By: David Waldman, *Arizona State*

My interest in neuroscience applications to organizational issues started about 15 years. A close colleague, Pierre Balthazard, told me about a serendipitous encounter that he had in an airport with a neuroscientist practitioner. One thing led to another, and together, we started to collect electroencephalogram data on individuals in leadership positions. Like any new and different endeavor, there were naysayers who were skeptical of whether my work in this emerging area would be worth my while. One even cautioned me to “not quit my day job”, insinuating that research with a neuroscience emphasis would never get published in our mainstream management or applied psychology journals. Nevertheless, my colleagues and I plodded on with a vision of how neuroscience theory and methods could help to broaden our understanding of organizational phenomena and outcomes.



Time moves on, and within several years, I noticed that a significant number of others in the AOM and elsewhere (e.g., SIOP) were getting interested in neuroscience applications to organizations. For example, I saw papers presented, and PDWs delivered, at the AOM with a neuroscience theme. At the AOM meeting in 2018, Sebastiano Massaro and I bantered around the idea of forming an organizational neuroscience interest group. In the spring and summer of 2019, we actually got the process started, which is certainly not an easy thing to accomplish. Perhaps this is why no new interest group had been formed in the AOM since 2015. The most challenging aspect of the process was obtaining at least 500 signatures of support through a petition. But in January of this year, NEU was approved by the Board of Governors, and within several months, we had Bylaws and an Executive Committee.

Some might ask, “why exactly is there a need for a distinct interest group in the AOM?” Indeed, as I’ve already noted, activities involving a neuroscience theme had already ensued for years under the auspices of other interest groups and divisions. In our minds, the answer was simple – the need for identity. That is, with the advent of an interest group, there could be more psychological and professional identity. As an example, doctoral students and junior faculty members in the AOM who are interested in neuroscience could have an actual entity with which to identify. And to the best of our knowledge, no such entity, other than NEU, currently exists. Beyond identity, NEU provides opportunities for networking and continuing education. Regarding the latter, as a topic that is not typical in management doctoral education, it is important that NEU provide continuing informational/educational development through PDWs, online videos, and so forth.

Moving Forward into the Future

Now that NEU is established, I will highlight four areas that I envision for future work. First, I think that we need more research on understanding the neuroscience of interactions within dyads and groups in organizations. The basic question is: how do people affect each other at a neurological level? For example, existing areas that could benefit from such work include emotional contagion and the development of shared mental models. [Continues on next page.]



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Second, I think that we need to see more emphasis on understanding the interplay of neurological processes, cognition/behavior, and environmental contexts. While it may be tempting to simply reduce all cognition and behavior to neurological variables, it's also not realistic. Environmental and occupational contexts come into play, and may even shape the neurological structures or processes of individuals. Third, we need to realize that management is an application-oriented area, and thus, we need to see more efforts to use neuroscience-based knowledge for application purposes. One such example is neurofeedback.

For years, me and others have touted neurofeedback as a potential breakthrough in leadership development possibilities. We now need to see actual tests of its viability in this arena. Can neurofeedback really help organizational members with regard to issues like stress, engagement, and leadership behavior?



Finally, we need to have continuing scrutiny regarding methods, applications, and ethical issues. Moreover, while we need to listen to and learn from naysayers, there needs to be a sense of responsibility and balance on the part of those naysayers. I personally give more credence to skeptics of our field who have actually gotten their hands dirty with neuroscience theory and methods. I see such individuals as having a more informed perspective, as opposed to those who lack personal experience and simply want to poke holes in emerging organizational neuroscience efforts. Just some food for thought.

JOB CORNER

Research Fellow (Post-Doctoral) position at Nanyang Technological University (Singapore) in collaboration with the University of Cambridge

This is an exciting opportunity to join a multidisciplinary group from both Universities examining the effect of cognitive flexibility on students and working adults. The overall aim is to harness advancements in neuroscience to develop **cognitive training programmes** for the improvement of **lifelong flexible learning**. This is a strategic global initiative for the Universities of Cambridge and NTU that brings together multidisciplinary expertise from over 30 investigators in the areas of Neuroscience, Psychology, Linguistics and Education across the two universities.

Please apply directly to <https://ntu.wd3.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/Careers/job/NTU-Main-Campus-Singapore/Research-Fellow--Social-Cognitive-Factors-in-Working-Adults-R00004160-1>

A Doctorate (PhD) is an essential requirement, along with experience / knowledge of statistical packages - especially R, Matlab and SPSS.

Q & A with Sebastiano Massaro

Research, Publishing, & Advice for Success

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?

Thanks for the flattering words. To be honest, I see myself as a boundary spanner scholar. I began my research career as a bench neuroscientist, working in research settings that focused on basic and clinical applications. There, I became interested in imaging and computational methods, and only then did I join the business school world. The timing of this path was ideal, in a way, because I obtained my Ph.D. in management science just a few years after David, Bill, and Russell published the first works in organizational neuroscience. Although quite a few senior scholars advised me against venturing into this new field as a junior scholar, I was determined to follow my passion and therefore decided to root my scholarly identity in organizational neuroscience.



Most of all, this research domain was a perfect fit for my background and ongoing research interests in that it incorporates both research methods and the broader mechanisms of interplay between emotions and cognition in decision-making. Neuroscience theory and practice offer the opportunity both to map these constructs and processes and to understand the mechanisms behind them. All in all, looking back on my post-graduation trajectory, I am rather pleased that I followed my instinct. It led me to create one of the first (if not *the* first) [laboratory in organizational neuroscience](#), as well as to contribute to the institutionalization of the field at the AOM.



It is often difficult to engage in interdisciplinary research. What are some difficulties that you have encountered in organizational neuroscience research? How have you navigated them thus far?

I believe that in 2020, scientific research should be interdisciplinary by default. Clearly, a central challenge in organizational neuroscience is the merging of the social, formal, and natural sciences—three worlds that are empirically and epistemologically distinct. Hence, it is critical to be able to speak and understand the languages of these worlds. As such, organizational neuroscience is both a challenge and an opportunity for authors, reviewers, and editors as a whole. In my experience, the biggest challenge has been to publish in management journals in the early days of the field. After a couple of unsuccessful attempts to submit empirical papers, I realized that the time simply wasn't right for my empirical pipeline. I switched to writing theoretical and methodological articles while continuing to collect neuroscience data on the side. Only recently have I started to engage again with submissions and R&Rs of empirical papers, and I am finding a much more accessible audience—more prepared reviewers and editors who are more receptive to hearing about neuroscience. I believe the NEU community now has a valuable opportunity to grow rapidly and “attack” those top journals that so far have seen just a handful of empirical neuroscience research articles. I believe that management authors who approach neuroscience for the first time will definitely find a more sympathetic pathway than what the community faced just a few years ago. [Continued on the next page]



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?

NEU has grown very popular. It is remarkable that in just a few months, we have acquired 300 members despite the challenges imposed by the global pandemic, such as the reduced networking opportunities at virtual conferences. This suggests that NEU has robust momentum; however, I do appreciate that many still might feel unsure about joining NEU, perhaps feeling uncertain about how to start working in the area. In this case, I think it's important to offer reassurance—neuroscience is such a broad field that it is impossible for any one person to grasp all the knowledge it encompasses. Rather, this field calls for teamwork. Because neuroscience can be approached from so many angles, it is important to assemble the right team from the earliest stage of research. For instance, I prefer to work with fMRI and heart rate variability (HRV), while others within NEU prefer qEEG or skin conductance. Thus, the take-home message is that organizational neuroscience is best done as a cooperative effort and with an open mindset. NEU is about to release some video tutorials on common methods, and I think this will be a great starting point for newcomers who wish to understand the network of expertise.

As researchers, we want to showcase our research in journals. 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?

My attempts to publish organizational neuroscience papers have ended in polarized experiences—either straight acceptances or years and years of R&Rs. In general, the sentiment is that neuroscience is cool and needed, but also, management journals do not yet have a fully established scholarly base of reviewers with enough expertise to engage critically with neuroscience material. The key issue for me has been to convince management reviewers that there is a clear link between particular aspects of neuroscience and specific gaps in the management literature. I play offense with this argument because I usually encounter at least one reviewer (the infamous reviewer 2) who is generally skeptical of neuroscience, so the R&R process quickly turns into a mission to educate that reviewer about the ABCs of neuroscience. No wonder it can take years! Jokes aside, I anticipate that many scholars may struggle to decide how much methodological detail to include in a paper. I generally engage in very complex computations and try to be as complete as possible. However, these details may sidetrack the narrative of a paper. The solution? Supplemental Materials are becoming my best friend. In this way, lay readers do not feel overwhelmed, and more technical readers can fulfill their expectations.

NEU Committee Updates

Education and Professional Development Committee:

This committee includes George Christopoulos (Nanyang Business School) and Jemima Frimpong (NYU, Abu Dhabi). The role of the Education and Professional Development Committee is to provide ongoing education and development of NEU members, and the AOM community more broadly. A key charge of the committee is to introduce neuroscience and neuroscience methods to management scholars. To that end, we first plan to understand management scholars' level of interest in organizational neuroscience, and their need for resources that will facilitate their engagement with neuroscience methods and technologies. We will then develop programs that appropriately explain neuroscience, its relevance to studying organizations, and neuroscience methods. We will produce content on theory, methods, and technologies pertaining to organizational neuroscience, once we have garnered sufficient interest. We plan to adopt various approaches, including seminars, webinars, hands-on workshops, short videos, and e-learning. These efforts will be complemented by PDWs for AOM meetings, and e-communities to support students and scholars.

Public Relations and Communications Committee:

This committee has three members, including Susan Zhu (University of Kentucky), Daan Stam (Erasmus University), and David Waldman (Arizona State University). The purpose and goal of our committee are to manage NEU's communication networks and produce newsletters to disseminate information and updates on the NEU Interest Group. We aim to keep our NEU members and AOM members in the loop on all things Organizational Neuroscience such as...

- Notable Organizational Neuroscience research and articles.
- Special Issue Journal calls; helpful webinars, workshops; awards or grant applications; calls for research projects; conference submissions, etc.
- Networking opportunities, job announcements, place to showcase research interests, exposure for any NEU job market candidates, and more.

Our committee hopes to 1) connect new researchers who are new to org neuro research with more experienced researchers; 2) provide information and resources for research, teaching, and mentorship; 3) establish contact with popular press and industry partners

JOB CORNER

Apply for a Ph.D. using Neuroscience Approaches at NBS, NTU, Singapore

Are you Interested to be one of the pioneers to combine Neuroscience methods and techniques with Management?

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore is consistently ranked as one of the top 50 Universities in the world. The current President, Prof. Subra Suresh, was the Director of the US National Science Foundation NSF. NBS is one of the most established and comprehensive providers of business and management education in the Asia-Pacific. It is accredited by both the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) and Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

Equipment and technology available: Candidates for PhD in business will benefit from state-of-the-art equipment on bio-psychological, neuroscience and experimental research. Our facilities include multiple experimental cubicles, group testing rooms, psychophysiology, EEG, eye-tracking, virtual reality, wearables, and access to functional MRI. A virtual tour can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=7v8AU4PibEY&feature=youtu.be>

Generous financial support is available.

Our faculty holds expertise in managerial cognition, human resources, culture, decision making.

To Apply:

Please check you satisfy the minimum requirements (honours Distinction or equivalent; English language requirements, if relevant). Note that despite there are no formal GRE./GMAT cut-offs, NBS Admissions are competitive and you should assume cut-off criteria similar to other top-50 Universities.

<https://nbs.ntu.edu.sg/Programmes/PhD/Admissions/Pages/default.aspx>

Direct inquiries: for admission enquiries: NBS_PhD_Admission@ntu.edu.sg; for academic matters: cgeorgios@ntu.edu.sg; akyyu@ntu.edu.sg;

NEU Committee Updates

Membership Committee:

The membership committee has four members, including Richard Boyatzis (Case Western Reserve University), Weiwen Li (Sun Yat-Sen University), James Nathaniel Montgomery (Troy University), and Danni Wang (Rutgers University). The purpose and goal of our committee are to attract new members, retain existing members, encourage diversity in NEU, and raise awareness about the importance of organizational neuroscience research in the management area. We are now in the process of recruiting new members and expanding our NEU group.

We have done the following steps and will ask all members of the Executive Committee to do these three actions. At some point, we will ask all current members of NEU to do these three actions:

- 1) Approach all of our PhD students and faculty to join NEU, whether they are AOM members or not (so it might net new members to AOM).
- 2) Mention in lectures, webinars and podcasts the relevance of NEU and encourage people to join.
- 3) Approach colleagues (co-researchers, authors, etc.) in other countries, other Universities, and consultancies of those interested in neuroscience to consider joining AOM and NEU.

Our committee has also planned a few targeted groups for new members and is currently making plans and taking more actions to increase the awareness of our NEU to the larger community, including other AOM divisions and interest groups, management scholars, and PhDs students, as well as psychology researchers. We aim to double or triple our current member size before next year's AOM and make our NEU group a well-known community for people who are interested in knowing about neuroscience, learning, and doing organizational neuroscience research. Moreover, we want to make our NEU a diverse and interdisciplinary group by having people with different research backgrounds across the world to get connected.

Website and Archives Committee:

This committee has two members, including Sebastiano Massaro (University of Surrey) and Rachel E. Sturm (Wright State University). The purpose and goal of our committee are to maintain and update the NEU website, assist the other committees in disseminating knowledge on NEU initiatives and communications, and help raise the profile of NEU within the AOM.

Our committee aims to assist NEU by:

- 1) updating AOM Connect on a regular basis;
- 2) offering a platform to access information and resources for research, teaching, and mentorship in organizational neuroscience;
- 3) maintaining a database of NEU historical archives;
- 4) setting up the online electoral platform for members to vote for NEU's executive committees.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE "NEU"SLETTER!



Let us know if you have announcements to share or want to contribute articles! It is a great way to showcase your research or teaching.

EDITORS

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