20 Years of rPOT and the Role of Scientific Journals in the COVID-19 Pandemic

20 Anos da rPOT e o Papel dos Periódicos Científicos na Pandemia da COVID-19

20 Años de rPOT y el Papel de las Revistas Científicas en la Pandemia COVID-19

rPOT (Psychology Journal of Organizations and Work / Revista Psicología: Organizaciones y Trabajo) celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2021. In rPOT’s June 2001 Editorial, the first editor of rPOT celebrated the moment of joy when Brazil finally had a scientific journal specialized in Work and Organizational Psychology (WOP) that could serve researchers, teachers, students, and other professionals interested in this field (Zanelli, 2001). Since then, rPOT has become an important source of access to specialized, free, and qualified knowledge, playing a fundamental role in the dissemination of information in the area of Organizations and Work, in Portuguese.

During this period, 60 issues and 551 articles were published, including this issue, reflecting a trajectory of dissemination of scientific knowledge in different domains of WOP (POT) and its related areas. A quick analysis of the scientific production published by rPOT during this period, based on a resource of textual data analysis, provided by the IRAMUTEQ software (Interface de R pour les Analyses Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires / R Interface for Multidimensional Analysis of Texts and Questionnaires), allows us to highlight some relevant aspects.

A graphic representation of grouped words (word cloud), according to their frequency, considering all the abstracts of articles published by rPOT (2001-2021), shows the terms work (trabalho) and organizational (organizacional) highlighted (Fig. 1). WOP (POT) researchers are experts in understanding work and organizational processes, at various levels, as well as their interactions with other psychological and social phenomena, in different contexts. Therefore, this emphasis would be expected, as well as the other terms conveyed more frequently in the abstracts of the articles: organizations (organizações), study (estudo), health (saúde), scale (escala), psychology (psicologia), management (gestão), workers (trabalhadores), and context (contexto), among the main ones.

The presence of the expression pandemic (pandemia), in this textual analysis, is probably an outcome of publications carried out in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic between 2020 and 2021. Indeed, rPOT, in its editorials throughout this period, sought to mobilize researchers and professionals from WOP (POT) and related areas to promote and publish scientific productions related to the pandemic and its impacts on workers’ health and on the management of work and organizational processes (Cruz et al., 2020, Cruz et al., 2021a; Cruz et al., 2021b; Cruz et al., 2021c).

The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic showed that one of the great governance challenges, in public and private sectors, was to understand the dynamics between global and local crises (Howard-Grenville, 2020). Another challenge was to understand the reach and extent of its effects on the community, in different domains - in the preservation of life and well-being of families, in the maintenance of supply chains and sources of income, and in promoting educational processes and socialization. In a way, organizations and people were individually tested in their capacity for improvisation, resilience, and adaptation to the new situation, the so-called new normal (Hodder, 2020; Lloyd-Smith, 2020).

COVID-19 has also posed important challenges for the scientific community. The relentless search to produce valid and useful knowledge and technologies for decision-making, portrayed in the dissemination of scientific research results, broadly and in record time, were outstanding characteristics of the last two years. The extension of the health crisis and its painful impacts on people’s lives caused a significant mobilization of scientists, research institutions, and specialized health agencies, developing processes and products towards the best and most effective solutions in the short term and medium term, at least (Cruz et al., 2021c). The period of the pandemic proved to be a laboratory for intense discussion about the role of scientific research and its capacity to seek immediate solutions, as well as its operational limits, ethical conduct, and the conflicts of interest associated with it.

In this scenario, scientific journals, primary vehicles for the dissemination of scientific information, in general and within their specialized areas, have dedicated themselves to encouraging and disseminating research focused on the COVID-19 pandemic. Preprints (prior publications) of articles were made available for

Figure 1. Word cloud of textual analysis of abstracts of rPOT articles (2001-2021)
free by international journals in an attempt to quickly share the results of new research, many of them assuming the principles of open science - data sharing (Adams & Theis, 2020). In addition, there was a noticeable increase in the volume of scientific articles signed by dozens of researchers, reflecting interdisciplinary and transnational collaborative efforts.

rPOT, in this context, aligned itself with a significant movement of national and international scientific journals, helping to understand the problems faced as a result of the pandemic and, especially, in the technical-scientific guidance of strategies related to health policies and actions. It was recognized that the pandemic triggered severe changes in production and organizational activities, affecting mental health and the dynamics of work processes (Cruz et al., 2021a). These aspects were intensely portrayed in the articles published in rPOT, in 2020 and 2021. They became an important source of information for academics, leaders, organizational psychologists, human resources managers, and workers in general.

One of the main challenges faced in this period by scientific journals, including rPOT, was to speed up the peer review system and the process of editing and publishing articles, in their definitive form. These efforts and the mobilization of reviewers and editors were aligned with the purpose of quickly disseminating the produced knowledge and ensuring the quality of the scientific production available. However, it has not been an easy process, given the significant volume of new materials submitted to rPOT, as well as to other scientific journals, and the difficulty in quickly placing approved articles on the PEPSIC (Periódicos Eletrônicos em Psicologia / Electronic Journals of Psychology) platform.

Data on research publications on COVID-19, over the years 2020 and 2021, indicate an exponential growth of them, in a clear indication of the mobilization of the scientific community to validate relevant information and expand the reach of research findings (Adams & Theis, 2020; Lee & Haupt, 2021). In health journals, this process was more accentuated, especially due to the need to provide relevant and updated information to support policies in this field. The dissemination of good quality technical and scientific information is a permanent need, accentuated in periods of crisis (Silva et al., 2021).

Part of the COVID-19 pandemic's legacy is a significant set of studies and reflections on the quality of scientific research and its technical, ethical and social challenges in the face of health crises and emergencies (Cruz et al., 2021b). The notion that research and its respective forms of dissemination rarely reach a wide audience or lack social impact has been put to the test (Hodder, 2020).

Throughout this process, it was necessary to recognize that scientific production and dissemination cannot continue with the great challenges that society is going through and the challenges that will still occur post-COVID-19. In other words, it is necessary to maintain focus on the debate of perspectives and arguments, among researchers, opinion makers and science disseminators, in an attempt to reduce the distance between academic production and society. This process certainly helps to strengthen good practices for validating and disseminating useful information, and for leaving a certain “comfort zone” of the scientific community, seeking to innovate in the strategies of production and dissemination of knowledge and scientific products.

For researchers, professors, and other WOP (POT) professionals, it implies building bridges between the needs of people who live in the world of work and organizations and scientific, technical, and technological development. Specifically, to use all the technical-scientific expertise in identifying, mapping, evaluating, debating, understanding, and explaining aspects of behavior in the world of work and organizations. This would promote or improve relevant changes in people's lives, favoring a greater approximation between science and practical life.

References


Roberto Moraes Cruz
Editor-in-Chief
Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), Brazil

Jairo Eduardo Borges-Andrade
Senior Editor
University of Brasília (UnB), Brazil

Alexsandro Luiz De Andrade
Associate Editor
Federal University of Espirito Santo (UFES), Brazil

Daniela Campos Bahia Moscon
Associate Editor
Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), Brazil

João Viseu
Associate Editor
University of Algarve (UAlg), Portugal
Marcos Ricardo Datti Micheletto  
Associate Editor  
São Paulo State University (UNESP), Brazil

María Elisa Ansoleaga Moreno  
Associate Editor  
Diego Portales University (UDP), Chile

Mª Inmaculada López Núñez  
Associate Editor  
Complutense University of Madrid (UCM), Spain

Mussa Abacar  
Associate Editor  
Rovuma University (UniRovuma), Mozambique

Nádia Kienen  
Associate Editor  
State University of Londrina (UEL), Brazil

Janete Knapik  
Junior Editor  
Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), Brazil

Simone Cassiano  
Junior Editor  
University of Brasília (UnB), Brazil

Maria Nivalda de Carvalho-Freitas  
President  
Brazilian Association of Organizational and Work Psychology (SBPOT), Brazil