
L'eccellenza come esempio di brillante carriera in Psicologia del Lavoro e delle Organizzazioni: Laudatio in onore di José María Peiró

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Sommario

José María Peiró è un talento eccezionale nella Psicologia Applicata a livello globale e uno degli psicologi del Lavoro e delle Organizzazioni più famosi e conosciuti al mondo, a livello internazionale, per la sua visione anticipatrice nella ricerca, per le sue raffinate competenze metodologiche e per le sue avanzate competenze nel trasferimento tecnologico e negli interventi *evidence-based* nei contesti. Questo contributo riguarda la Laudatio in onore di José María Peiró durante la cerimonia di premiazione della laurea magistrale honoris causa conferitagli il 5 novembre 2024 presso l'Università di Firenze (Italia). Il contributo offre un commento alla figura di José María Peiró, delineando la prima parte della sua carriera e il suo fiorire, presentando un focus sulla sua collaborazione con l'Università di Firenze (Italia) e offrendo una panoramica in breve del suo lavoro e delle sue attività più rilevanti. La speranza è che condividere una carriera di eccellenza come questa di José María Peiró rafforzi la motivazione e il significato in tutti i lettori, alimentando in tutti la ricerca di un mix di passione e dedizione, che modelli di ruolo come lui ispirano e testimoniano.

Parole chiave

Talento eccezionale, Psicologia Applicata, Psicologia del Lavoro e delle Organizzazioni, José María Peiró, Laudatio, Laurea magistrale honoris causa, Università di Firenze.

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Excellence as an Example of a Brilliant Career in Work and Organizational Psychology: Laudatio in Honour of José María Peiró

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Abstract

José María Peiró is an exceptional talent in applied psychology at a global level, and one of the most famous and well-known work and organizational psychologists in the world, at an international level, for his anticipatory vision in research, his refined methodological skills and his advanced competences in technology transfer and in evidence-based interventions in contexts. This contribution is about the Laudatio in honour of José María Peiró during the Award Ceremony of the Honorary Master's Degree awarded to him on November 5th, 2024 at the University of Florence (Italy). The contribution offers a comment on the figure of José María Peiró, delineating the first part of his career and his flourishing, presenting a focus on his collaboration with the University of Florence (Italy), and offering a brief overview of his most relevant work and activities. The hope is that sharing a career of excellence like the one of José María Peiró will reinforce the motivation and meaning in all readers, fuelling in everyone the search for a combination of passion and dedication, which role models like him inspire and testify to.

Keywords

Exceptional talent, Applied psychology, Work and organizational psychology, José María Peiró, Laudatio, Honorary Master's Degree, University of Florence.

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Introduction

José María Peiró represents one of the greatest points of reference at an international level for work and organizational psychology, and applied psychology in the world. This contribution was conceived out of a request from distinguished colleagues, who suggested its usefulness for the purpose of inspiring excellence, and supporting the aspiration to excellence and the flourishing of talents, in the young as well as in every reader who can share the steps of the construction of the excellence of a «magister». It drew inspiration from the Laudatio in honour of José María Peiró during the Award Ceremony of the Honorary Master's Degree awarded to him on November 5th, 2024 at the University of Florence (Italy) by its Magnificent Rector Alessandra Petrucci.

Comment on the figure of José María Peiró

José María Peiró is an exceptional talent in applied psychology at a global level, and one of the most famous and well-known work and organizational psychologists in the world, at an international level, for his anticipatory vision in research, his refined methodological skills and his advanced competences in technology transfer and evidence-based interventions in contexts.

The Laudatio offered by Annamaria Di Fabio during the ceremony, gave voice to all the colleagues, and in particular the colleagues of the FORLILPSI Department (Director Vanna Boffo), and of the School of Psychology (Dean Caterina Primi) with its Master's Degree «Psychology of the Life Cycle and Contexts» (Responsible Annalaura Nocentini), at the University of Florence (Italy), who, with a unanimous decision expressed their support from the beginning in favour of the awarding of this Honoris Causa Degree to José María Peiró.

José María Peiró is a magister in the most faithful significance of the term. He is a role model for all those who have known him or seen him in action, a living example of excellent intelligence, excellent competence, and rigour in method. He has shown continuous and tireless engagement and commitment in research and intervention in full light of conscientiousness, and far from the corrosive darkness of perfectionism. He has paid constant attention to workgroups, managing others and processes, and is strongly aware of the great value of leading by example, for the growth of the young, and of the discipline of work and organizational psychology, in order to strengthen it, make it grow, and continue to enhance it around the world.

For those who have had the fortune of working with him, or watching him at work, it is extremely easy to understand José María Peiró's purpose, not so much expressed in words, but in action. Being at the service of others, of people

and environments in real contexts, and in particular of the young, with great generativity, has characterized, and continues to characterize his path, which is something that we can recognize and deeply admire.

Everything that José María Peiró has built or «touched» has grown, expanded and generated solid constructions, in which the direction was always the pathway of constructing not only hedonic but also, and especially, eudaimonic well-being for environments and people (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Indeed, José María Peiró is the most eudaimonic congruent scholar in work and life, putting his extraordinary competences at the service of others, with amazing circular processes of flourishing from theory to practice.

In relation to work aspects, he has made contributions from local to regional levels, from the national level of his country to a European level, and from a European level to a global level. In personal life, he has jointly succeeded as a pillar with another strong pillar: his wife. In both these domains, there is the affection and admiration of so many colleagues and friends from local to global levels, oxygenating processes for the flourishing of this marvellous family.

From the first phase of his career... and his flourishing

At the beginning, José María Peiró worked in local psychological services in the Valencia region, and we can recognize that he never abandoned his interest in applied psychology at the service of humanity. One of his first achievements is the two volumes of *Psicología de las Organizaciones* (1983-1984), one of the best handbooks in the field. Another important contribution of José María Peiró to the field of work and organizational psychology in the first part of his career was the «AMIGO Model» (Peiró, 2000; Peiró & Martínez-Tur, 2008), the foundation of which is the concept of mission, which is central to any organization and gives meaning to its existence. He also paid attention to the multilevel analysis of stress appraisal, emotions, coping and strain, well-being and mental issues at work.

The focus was on the collective analysis of these phenomena, considering shared views of stress, emotional climate, and collective coping and well-being as well as the cross-level relations between these constructs (Peiró, 2008; Peiró & Rodríguez, 2008; Peiró & González-Romá, 2013; González-Romá & Peiró, 2014; Rodríguez et al., 2019). Following this line of research, special attention was paid by Prof. Peiró and his team to the relationship between well-being and productivity, focusing especially on performance indicators. In this context, he studied the perspective of the «Happy-Productive Worker» (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001; Peiró et al., 2019, 2021), examining the fundamental serious issues of work as a contributing factor to personal development and the transformation of the social world. The awareness that many people's lives and futures are greatly influenced

by their social standing as well as their dedication to their jobs and careers was underlined (Peiró, 2017).

In this framework, it is easy to comprehend why he has recently focused on topics like the digitization of work and digitalized competences (Peiró & Martínez-Tur, 2022; Peiró & Serrano, 2024; Peiró, 2024), which have been accelerated by the recent pandemic, in various organizational areas, combining productive actions with prevention. Furthermore, another of his important achievements was the design and coordination of an Erasmus Mundus Master's programme with international collaboration and European funding. Many students from all over the world have held important positions in international companies (Martínez-Tur et al., 2014; Moliner et al., 2021).

José María Peiró is a magister in work and organizational psychology, as well as in applied psychology. His expertise stems from key areas: his intellectual perspective, his rigour and both advanced research and technology transfer, his approach to teaching generatively, his ability to put ideas into practice and his capacity to build teams and networks for research and applying psychology.

In relation to his collaboration with the University of Florence (Italy)...

José María Peiró is a treasured mentor in work and organizational psychology in general, and for all those who have had the opportunity to learn at his school and have him as a role model. In relation to the University of Florence, he guided and enriched all the processes of internationalization of the research results of the two international laboratories: «Work and Organizational Psychology for Vocational Guidance, Career Counseling, Career Development, Talents and Healthy Organizations»; and «Cross-Cultural Positive Psychology, Prevention, and Sustainability».

His support was fundamental and able to make the difference when, in addition to Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, the two international laboratories expressed their desire to consolidate their collaborations with the Asian world. In 2014, in addition to the relationships present in China, in Beijing, the link that José María Peiró facilitated with the Chinese University of Hong Kong was invaluable. Thus began a period of a profoundly cross-cultural approach, which José María Peiró had always supported and facilitated in relation to the main topics of these two international laboratories: healthy organizations and sustainable development in a preventive framework.

The psychology of sustainability and sustainable development (Di Fabio, 2017a, 2017b; Di Fabio & Cooper, 2023; Di Fabio & Peiró, 2018, 2023; Di Fabio & Rosen, 2018, 2020; Peiró et al., 2023; Rosen & Di Fabio, 2023), officially born in

2016 (in the scientific journal *Sustainability Science*, Springer Publisher, with the first dedicated section in charge to the University of Florence Italy, still active).

In this current and challenging area of research and intervention, working jointly for some years with José María Peiró, an advancement for the leadership construct on an international level was achieved and a new construct and scale, Human Capital Sustainability Leadership.

(Di Fabio & Peiró, 2018) was published, in order to promote sustainable development and healthy organizations. Various versions of this scale are realized in other countries: the Malaysian version (Seok et al., 2022) and the Japanese version (Tsuda et al., 2023), and other versions are in preparation such as the Argentinian version, the Indian version, and other European versions. Furthermore, José María Peiró has contributed to promoting cross-cultural perspectives on well-being and sustainability in organizations. An example to cite is his valuable foreword (Peiró, 2022) to the book *Cross-cultural Perspectives on Well-being and Sustainability in Organizations* (Springer).

Finally, thanks to the contribution and support of José María Peiró, the University of Florence has become a reference point for applied psychology. It is the headquarters of the International Congress of Applied Psychology (ICAP), which takes place every four years, in 2026, and the world conference of the IAAP, the International Association of Applied Psychology, the oldest and most prestigious association of applied psychology, founded in 1920 with currently 18 divisions. The ICAP is a very important event for applied psychology on a global level, and approximately 4,000 participants are expected in Florence (Italy) from all over the world.

Most relevant work and activities of José María Peiró in brief...

Attempting to summarize among his most relevant work and activities, we can mention the following: his numerous studies on work stress and «burnout» contributing to occupational health psychology; his handbook *Psicología de la Organización* (1983, 2 vols.); his book *Madurez Vocacional* (Salvador & Peiró, 1986), a research area where José María Peiró collaborated with Alicia Salvador, a distinguished psychobiologist and also his wife and colleague; his handbook *Tratado de Psicología del Trabajo* (1996), co-authored with Fernando Prieto. Furthermore, his extensive research on youth employment and employability since the beginning until now can be emphasized.

Professor at the University of Valencia for more than 50 years, José María Peiró founded and led the Research Institute of Personnel Psychology, Organizational Development and Quality of Working Life (IDOCAL) (2008). He established a significant Employability Observatory for youth, in addition to the Erasmus Mun-

dus Master's programme. He is currently an extremely committed and dedicated Professor Emeritus at the University of Valencia.

It is also possible to underline his involvement in scientific associations in Spain: the Professional Association of Psychologists of Spain and the Spanish Society of Psychology. Furthermore, his involvement in international scientific associations may also be emphasized: he greatly contributed to the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology (EAWOP), and the American Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP). He has contributed in an exceptional way to the development of applied psychology at an international level as Past President of the International Association of Applied Psychology, the oldest and most prestigious association of applied psychology in the world, founded in 1920. Furthermore, he has made an exceptional contribution to the implementation of the Europsy Programme, which aims to unify the recognition of psychology degrees among EU member states. Of course, the passages and contents that were expressed in the Laudatio and that are shared here in this contribution will omit many other significant contributions in terms of publications, collaborations, invitations, lectures etc.

In conclusion, also the Doctorates Honoris Causa that he received from the Methodist University of Sao Paulo, Brazil (2010); the «Miguel Hernandez» University of Elx, Spain (2017); the University of Maastricht, the Netherlands (2019); the University of Coimbra, Portugal (2023); the University of Almería, Spain (2024); and The National University Federico Villarreal, Perú (2024) must be mentioned.

Furthermore, among the numerous awards he has received, we should underline the Aristotle award from the European Federation of Psychology Associations in 2015 and the Psychologist of the Year «Jose Luis Pinillos Award» from the Professional Association of Psychologists of Spain («Consejo General de la Psicología de España») in 2016. He has received other awards from the International Council of Psychologists, the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology, and very recently the Distinguished Teaching Contribution Award from the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) in the United States, making him the first foreign professor to obtain it.

One final recommendation, faithfully quoting a reference from a colleague as important as Helio Carpintero (2022) during the International Conference on Work and Organizational Psychology in honour of the career of José María Peiró, organized by The Spanish Council of Psychology, at UNED (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia) in Madrid, Spain, September 15th-16th, 2022: «If I could just suggest something at the end of these words, I would ask our honouree to leave future readers with an autobiography comparable to those we have today from Piaget, Pieron, Freud, Skinner, or many others who have shared their experience of «master psychologist of psychologist», a category to

which, without question, Jose María Peiró belongs in his own right». Jointly with Helio Carpintero, for this reason, we dedicate this well-earned tribute and also this contribution to José María Peiró. He is an invaluable source of inspiration and the construction of his extraordinary career lays testimony to the value of excellence and progression in the processes of the flourishing of one's talents in the service of others, and of the community, for the benefit of society as well as of the world. If the process of building, recognizing and developing talents (Di Fabio, 2022) is one of the most relevant topics in the psychology of work and organizations, in the current challenging scenario, it requires some coordinates that the path of José María Peiró continuously expresses. It asks for respect for talent and potential, both objective and subjective (Di Fabio, 2014, 2022), for sustainable talents (Di Fabio, 2022), and on the other hand for promoting awareness in choices as well as in balancing life roles, by building paths anchored to meaning and purpose for the flourishing not only of an excellent career but of an excellent life. Thank you to José María Peiró for testifying to all this in a full and exemplary way.

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