

Research Evaluation in Humanities and Social Sciences

Tokyo, February 15th, 2019

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(*University Research Administration*)

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Abstract

This paper reports on the Symposium for Research Evaluation in Humanities and Social Sciences which was held in Tokyo (Japan) on February 15th, 2019. Although citation-based research metrics might meet the needs in certain academic fields, when this methodology is applied to evaluate fields such as the Humanities and Social Sciences, it may fail to capture a proper picture of research in these fields. This symposium, therefore, brought together research institutes that are evaluated, public agencies which evaluate such institutes, as well as publishers who provide data for evaluation with the objective of discussing how they perceive research evaluation, how it should be, and what they expect from research metrics.

Keywords: research evaluation, metrics, Humanities and Social Sciences, citation, diversity

要旨

本稿は、筑波大学 URA 研究戦略推進室の主催により 2019 年 2 月 15 日に虎ノ門ヒルズフォーラム（東京都）で開催された筑波大学研究大学強化促進事業シンポジウム「人文社会系分野における研究評価～シーズからニーズへ～」の報告である。サイテーションベースの研究評価は、ある分野においてはニーズに合っているが、この手法をシーズとして人文社会系に当てはめても、研究の全体像をとらえられるとは言い難い。そこで、本シンポジウムでは、人文社会系分野のニーズに合った研究評価指標について、

評価される側はどこを見てほしいか、評価をする側はどこをみたいのかを含めて、データを提供する出版社も交えた形で議論を行った。

キーワード：研究評価、指標、人文社会科学、被引用数、多様性

Participants

Elsevier (Global):

- Anders Karlsson, Vice President, Global Academic Relations

F1000 Research (U.K.):

- Rebecca Lawrence, Managing Director

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Japan):

- Hiroyasu Haruyama, Director, Office for Science Policy Planning, Policy Division; Research Promotion Bureau

National Institute for the Humanities; National Museum of Japanese History (Japan):

- Shin Goto, Associate Professor, Research Department

National University Corporation Evaluation Committee; Yomiuri Shimbun (Japan):

- Mina Matsumoto, Evaluation Committee Member; Journalist

Research England (U.K.):

- David Sweeney, Executive Chair

University of Tsukuba (Japan):

- Saburo Aoki, Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Jun Ikeda, Advisor to the President; Professor of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Hideo Kigoshi, Vice President; Executive Director for Research
- Yukihiro Morimoto, University Research Administration, Research Strategy Office

1. Objectives

Although citation-based evaluation would seem to be appropriate for certain fields of research, it cannot give the full picture when applied to research in the humanities and social sciences. The reason for this is that the number of citations is calculated by commercial databases that primarily record English-language articles, and therefore can only provide citation information of languages written in English (or at best languages written in alphabet) calculated as a number. The present symposium, therefore, aims to present research evaluation indicators that can meet the needs of the humanities and social sciences from the triple perspective of Impact, Evaluation and Diffusion.¹

2. Opening remarks

In his opening remarks, Hideo Kigoshi of the University of Tsukuba, gave the social context leading up to this symposium. He noted that the directives of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in June 2015, strongly urging that research and its outcomes in the humanities and social sciences be in conjunction with society and in response to higher societal demands, had been problematic for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. However, in response to the directives, the actions undertaken by the University to address this issue were explained.

The guest greeting that followed, by Hiroyasu Haruyama, gave an overview of the topics discussed by the Working Group for the Promotion of the Humanities and Social Sciences of the Council for Science and Technology. It was pointed out by the working group that in the humanities and social sciences, the publication of a book was as important as that of a research article. Furthermore, that the period from publication of an article to peak of citation tends to be long. Haruyama added that he hoped the discussions of the symposium would enable progress for the humanities and social sciences community as a whole.

3. Presentations

The symposium continued with a video message from Mr. David Sweeney, and the five presentations given below.

- **Jun Ikeda** presented a different method of evaluation developed at the University of Tsukuba. With this method, numbers are calculated according to author affiliation and country of institute; a useful tool for situations where it is difficult to express the degree of influence of research results numerically, and where the language of an academic journal is other than English. He gave a detailed explanation of this innovative journal evaluation index, the iMD², which can be applied to the humanities and social sciences field of research.
- **Shin Goto** explained the tendency in the humanities to accord greater weight to books rather than to research articles, and the importance given to international co-authored books and translations.
- **Anders Karlsson** discussed actions publishers could undertake with regards evaluation of research. He also expressed the importance of evaluation from different perspectives, rather than solely based on citation.
- **Rebecca Lawrence** outlined a research evaluation method that would be accepted by more researchers, introducing the concept of open research publishing through the F1000 Research platform which gives open and transparent reviews.³ She then explained about the transition from quantitative evaluation calculated by a commercial company to qualitative judgment by experts.
- **Mina Matsumoto** outlined how universities are evaluated by the community, and in parallel, the way in which universities define their own value. She concluded by stressing the need for more debate from the humanities and social sciences that have long been addressing issues concerning values of people, life, learning and so on.

4. Panel Discussion

The presentations were followed by a panel discussion with Mina Matsumoto as moderator.⁴ In the discussion concerning the evaluation of research it was agreed that it is important for researchers to be able to make their own evaluation, while it was also pointed out that it is equally important that the scientific community should participate more in evaluation.

In the discussion on the objectives of research evaluation, it was put forward that the objectives of evaluation are vague, leading to the scientific community tiring of evaluation. If, however, the objectives were clarified, then the evaluation index would also have meaning. The discussion took up issues of intellectual property rights and the objectives of research evaluation. In conclusion, it was agreed that it was important to continue researching further methods of evaluation.

In his closing remarks, Saburo Aoki presented the current status of research and performance evaluation, he further gave a practical example of iMD application to a university journal.

5. Questionnaire

Comments from the questionnaire handed in at the end of the event expressed how stimulating it had been to hear of innovative movements such as: the F1000 Research platform, evaluation from the educational aspect of a national university, a reconsideration of the form and purpose of evaluation and assessment itself.

¹ The Report on the Symposium was originally published in Japanese and can be viewed at: <current.ndl.go.jp/e2128>

² Full details of iMD in English can be viewed at: <icrhs.tsukuba.ac.jp/en/tsukuba-index/>

³ For the F1000 Research platform, see: <f1000research.com/>

⁴ For the full text of the panel discussion in Japanese, please see: <tsukuba.repo.nii.ac.jp/index.php?action=pages_view_main&active_action=repository_view_main_item_snippet&index_id=7365&pn=1&count=20&order=8&lang=japanese&page_id=13&block_id=83>