

PEER REVIEW AND IN DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH PUBLISHERS AS A MEANS OF ASSESSING QUALITY OF RESEARCH MONOGRAPHS

Elea Giménez-Toledo*
Spanish National Research Council (CSIC)
Human and Social Sciences Centre (CCHS)
26-28 Albasanz, Madrid, 28037, Spain.
E-mail: elea.gimenez@cchs.csic.es
* Corresponding author

Adelaida Román-Román
Spanish National Research Council (CSIC)
Human and Social Sciences Centre (CCHS)
26-28 Albasanz, Madrid, 28037, Spain
E-mail: adelaida.roman@cchs.csic.es

Background

- Monographs are the preferred mean of publication by scientist in Humanities (and in some of the Social Sciences) and the most frequently cited publication type.
- If monographs are not included in researcher's evaluation process, a significant part of their scientific output is excluded, and the scientific activity undervalued.
- Several criteria have been defined by different groups of experts but up to now there are no sources providing information on the quality of publishers or specific monographs
- Some institutions have considered monographs in their evaluation systems (CHASS –Australia- or ANEP –Spain-), but very few trials have been run applying specific models so as to evaluate publishers (Nederhof, Luwel and Moed, 2001; Gros, 2005)



Objective

The aim of this work is to present the methodology of a study carried out on publishers. The purpose is to push forward the study of monographs to provide evaluators of research activities with a number of consistent scholar books quality indicators. The aim is to avoid letting these kind of publications out of the evaluation process, or giving them a lower weighting than scientific journals.



Researcher in Humanities or Social Sciences

Methodology: a dual approach to the evaluation of publishers

Step 1

200 Spanish **researchers** in various fields of Humanities and Social Sciences were asked about

1. Their research area
2. The five best Spanish publisher in their field
3. The five best foreign publisher in their field
4. Aspects that determine the quality of a publisher:



System of evaluation of original manuscripts by reviewers

- Specialized reading boards
- External reviewers
- Information on the process of selection of original manuscripts

Subject specialization

- Specialized publishers
- Publishing company with specialized collections

Prestige

- Evolution of the publishing company
- Positive reviews in the best journals in the area

Good quality system of dissemination and distribution

- Presence in national specialized bookshops
- Presence in international specialized bookshops
- Presence in national specialized libraries
- Presence in international specialized libraries
- Presence in international databases
- Translation into other languages
- Book marketing

High quality of the publication

- Formal presentation
- Content structure
- Index of authors, subjects, onomastic references, etc.

Other (specify)

The Publisher



Step 2 (in progress)

In depth interviews (lasting two hours aprox.) with **publishers** that have been most valued by researchers (and making it as broad as possible), covering aspects mentioned above. The question will be: which of these aspects are key to being considered as a good publisher?



Expected results of the research in progress

- This dual approach to the evaluation of monographs aims to obtain the points of view of researchers and publishers on the factors which determine the quality of a publisher
- It is expected that final results could be presented as an exchange between what researchers expect and what publishing companies offer or could offer
- This research will open the way for the creation of guidelines defining publishers' quality, which may be used by those involved in evaluating the scientific output of researchers in the Humanities.
- It will also be the first step in the evaluation of monographs which will need to be completed, in further phases, by an analysis of citations, monographs reviews, and their dissemination through specialized databases and catalogues.
- Collaboration with other institutions working in the same area is welcome.



An evaluator saving the academic promotion of a researcher (by evaluating his research monographs)

Images from Getty Images
(Stock Illustration)

References

- FERNÁNDEZ-IZQUIERDO, F. et al. (2007) Bibliometric study of Early Modern History in Spain based on bibliographic references in national scientific journals and conference proceedings. In: Torres-Salinas, D. and Moed, H.F. (eds.), Proceedings of ISSI 2007. 11th International Conference of the International Society for Scientometrics and Informetrics. Madrid: CSIC, v. 1, 266-271.
- GROS, B. (coord.). (2005) Estudi sobre l'avaluació de la recerca en humanitats i ciències socials. Available at < http://www10.gencat.net/dursi/ca/re/aval_rec_sist_estudi.htm >
- HEMLIN, S.; GUSTAFSSON, M. (1996). Research production in the arts and humanities: A questionnaire study of factors influencing research performance. *Scientometrics*, 37(3), 417-432
- MOED, H. F.; LUWEL, M.; NEDERHOF, A. J. (2001). Towards research performance in the humanities. *Library Trends*, 50(3), 498-520.
- NATIONAL EVALUATION AND FORESIGHT AGENCY ; SPANISH FOUNDATION FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (2007). Quality criteria for research in Humanities. Available <http://www.mec.es/ciencia/anep/files/2007-criterios-hh.pdf>. 19-36 (english version)
- NEDERHOF, A. J. (2005). Bibliometric monitoring of research performance in the social sciences and the humanities: A review. *Scientometrics*, 66(1), 81-100
- NEDERHOF, A. J.; LUWEL, M.; MOED, H. F. (2001). Assessing the quality of scholarly journals in linguistics: An alternative to citation-based journal impact factors. *Scientometrics*, 51(1), 241-265
- ROMÁN, A.; ALCAIN, M. D.; GIMÉNEZ-TOLEDO, E. (2007) Evaluation of scientific publications in the Humanities. In TORRES-SALINAS, Daniel and MOED, Henry F. Proceedings of ISSI 2007. Madrid: ISSI: CINDOC, v. 2, 672-676.
- SANZ CASADO, E. et al. (2002). Creación de un índice de citas de revistas españolas de Humanidades para el estudio de la actividad investigadora de los científicos de estas disciplinas. *Revista Española de Documentación Científica*, 25 (4), 443-454.