

Evaluation of Scientific Activity in the Humanities and Social Sciences: Impact and Influence

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Abstract

Scientific activity is the backbone of progress and development in all fields, including the humanities and social sciences. While the evaluation of scientific research has traditionally been associated with the natural and physical sciences, there is a growing recognition of the importance of evaluating research in the humanities and social sciences as well. In this article, we will delve into the challenges and approaches involved in evaluating scientific activity in these fields, emphasizing the unique characteristics and considerations that distinguish them from the natural and physical sciences.

Keywords: Research impact • Scientific activity • Physical sciences

Introduction

Research in the humanities and social sciences encompasses a wide range of disciplines, including philosophy, history, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political science, among others. The complexity and diversity of research output make it challenging to develop standardized evaluation metrics that can be uniformly applied across disciplines. Unlike the natural sciences, where experiments and quantitative data analysis are predominant, research in the humanities and social sciences often relies on qualitative methods, critical analysis, and interpretation [1]. The impact and relevance of scientific research in the humanities and social sciences may not always be immediately quantifiable or tangible. The outcomes of such research often manifest in societal changes, policy implications, cultural shifts, and public engagement. These aspects are not easily captured by traditional bibliometric indicators like citation counts and impact factors, which are more commonly used to evaluate natural science research. Therefore, alternative evaluation methods need to be developed to capture the influence and reach of research in these domains [2].

Literature Review

Peer review plays a crucial role in evaluating scientific activity in all disciplines, including the humanities and social sciences. The expertise and judgment of peers in the respective fields are essential for assessing the quality, rigor, and originality of research. However, it is important to acknowledge that peer review has its limitations, including biases, subjectivity, and potential gatekeeping. Striving for diverse and inclusive reviewer panels and employing transparent review processes can help mitigate these challenges. To complement traditional metrics, altimetry's offer a valuable tool for assessing the societal impact and engagement of research in the humanities and social sciences. Altimetry's capture online attention, such as mentions on social

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media, news outlets, policy documents, and public forums. Additionally, qualitative indicators, such as expert evaluations, assessments of public engagement, and the influence of research on policy and public discourse, can provide valuable insights into the broader impact of research [3-5].

Discussion

Embracing open science practices, such as sharing data, methods, and preprints, can enhance transparency, reproducibility, and collaboration in the humanities and social sciences. Collaborative research projects and interdisciplinary endeavours can foster innovation and generate research outputs with broader applicability and impact. Evaluating the extent of collaboration, interdisciplinary, and engagement with open science principles can provide a comprehensive picture of scientific activity in these fields [6].

Conclusion

The evaluation of scientific activity in the humanities and social sciences presents unique challenges due to the diverse nature of research output and the intangible societal impacts it generates. While traditional evaluation methods, such as peer review, remain important, incorporating altimetry's, qualitative indicators, and embracing open science practices can provide a more holistic understanding of research impact. Balancing discipline-specific evaluation criteria with the need for standardized assessment is crucial for recognizing and promoting excellence in these fields. By developing appropriate evaluation frameworks, we can support and advance scientific activity in the humanities and social sciences, enabling researchers to contribute meaningfully to societal progress and well-being.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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