How do early career researchers perceive success in their fields? Report on interviews with humanists, theologians, and scientists-artists in Poland

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper presents the Polish researchers' opinions on success perception in science and examines the role of bibliometric and altmetric indices/metrics. It also provides respondents' statements on how their work is evaluated at Polish universities.
Methods: The data come from in-depth interviews (spring 2023) with early career researchers in Linguistics, Literary Studies, History, Philosophy, Polish studies, Theology, Arts, Music, Plastic/Fine Arts, and Film.
Results: The respondents' attachment to indices used in the periodical evaluation of scholars at Polish universities, such as the number of publications, ministerial score points, and external grants, was observed. The respondents were critical of citations as the determinant of success. They were generally not very interested in altmetrics.
Value: The importance of this research (National Science Centre grant No 2022/45/B/HS2/00041), which is the Polish continuation of the two international projects (2016–2022), lies mainly in providing a platform to researchers in art and humanities, not included in earlier studies devoted to the sciences and social sciences.

Keywords

Altmetrics. Citations. Early career researchers. Humanists. Reputation. Scientists-artists. Theologians.

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1. Introduction and theoretical background

Success, recognisability, reputation, prestige, renown, recognition – these are all words often used in scientific circles, reflecting – on the one hand – the permanent evaluation typical of them (which involves being appraised by other researchers) and, on the other, being the goal and motivation for research work.

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This issue has been attracting the attention of researchers for a long time (Reif, 1961; Merton, 1968).

The current review of the abundant literature on the subject describes several factors that facilitate or hinder success, as well as the ways of building and presenting this reputation in scientific communication changed by technology (Herman, Nicholas, 2019; Herman, 2018; Nicholas et al., 2015). A researcher's reputation is always built through formal and informal communication channels. The prime importance in both – at least in relation to one's academic career – is attributed to mutual evaluation by scientists (*peer review*), i.e., recognition in one's professional circles. The success of a researcher is generally assessed by the number of publications in peer-reviewed, indexed, high-impact journals. A wide range of bibliometric tools and indicators can be used to build reputation (Agarwal et al., 2016). However, a Danish study on perceptions of researchers' success as determined by rankings, including citations, concluded only a moderate degree of consensus among researchers (Andersen, 2000). Surveys among chemists indicated that peer judgments of importance and significance differ from metrics-based measurements (Borchardt et al., 2018). Citing behaviour is not always motivated solely by the wish to acknowledge other scientists' intellectual and cognitive influences; sometimes, non-scientific factors play a role in the decision to cite (Bornmann, Daniel, 2008). Other studies show that altmetrics could reflect an alternative dimension of research performance, connected more to science popularisation and networking abilities than citations' impact (Ortega, 2015).

Building a reputation is crucial for early career researchers. This includes finding their first job at a university or research institution and obtaining a doctorate degree. Moreover, habilitation in Poland is also important, symbolising independence in the Polish science and higher education system.

The international Harbingers projects, conducted by the team led by Prof. David Nicholas of CIBER Research Ltd., which deal with scholarly communication in a broad sense, are focused on early career researchers. The opinions of young researchers on success, prestige, and reputation in science are analysed, among other issues. Previous research (two projects: Harbingers 1 and Harbingers 2) has focused on science, technology, life sciences, medicine, and social sciences. Unfortunately, the humanities were beyond the interest of these funders (Publishing Research Consortium: Harbingers 1 project in the years 2016–2019 and Sloan Foundation: Harbingers 2 project in the years 2020–2022). The continuation of that research, but this time concerning the arts and humanities, became possible only thanks to the grant of the National Science Centre in Poland (no. 2022/45/B/HS2/00041).

The important background for the Polish follow-up is provided by the findings of previous international Harbingers projects, which have already been published. Longitudinal interviews conducted in several countries (the US, UK, France, Spain, China, Malaysia, and Poland) were a source of valuable knowledge on methods

to evaluate early career researchers and methods to build a reputation in science and social sciences (Nicholas et al., 2018).

For example, according to the statements in the interviews of 2016–2018, individual evaluations were made for early career researchers in all the countries mentioned above except France, where such evaluations were made for research teams rather than individuals and for experienced researchers rather than early career researchers. Publications and grants (e.g., in Spain, mainly publications) were the most frequently applied evaluation criteria. An extensive and detailed evaluation of American researchers was performed. It included not only scientific activities but also those related to teaching and organisation, as well as recognisability at home and abroad. When it comes to the main reputation indices, they included citations, which were confirmed in all the countries concerned, although with certain differences. For example, UK researchers paid less attention to citations and more to the number of publications. Altmetric indices were of little importance compared to citations in all countries considered. Furthermore, the ResearchGate service was shown to be of considerable importance in building and monitoring the reputation of Harbingers project respondents.

Sciences, medical sciences, and even social sciences widely employ such indices as the Impact Factor, which refers to the number of citations from a journal, and the Hirsch Index, which indicates the number of citations of a scientist. They are also associated with the perception of success in these areas. However, applying such numerical indices/metrics in specific areas, such as humanities and arts, is difficult. Attempts are made, for example, in Poland, whose emanations include, for example, a ministerial list of scored journals (Komunikat..., 2023) and a list of artistic achievements with the number of points granted for them (Rozporządzenie..., 2019; Załącznik..., 2019), which concern all disciplines in all fields in the science classification (Rozporządzenie..., 2022). A periodical evaluation of work at a Polish university mainly comprises the evaluation of scientific and artistic achievements, with specific points assigned to them. In addition, teaching, organisational, and popularisation-related activities are considered, although to a lesser extent. The Senate of each university establishes detailed rules for the evaluation of staff members.

In general, humanists and artists are studied less frequently than representatives of the sciences, are sometimes part of more disciplines analysed (Harley et al., 2010), and are rarely the main focus of inquiry. Representatives from arts and humanities were also not included in the aforementioned international Harbingers studies due to a lack of interest from earlier funders, as was said. This paper aims to show the opinions of Polish early career researchers in the humanities, theology, and arts on evaluation and success in their disciplines.

2. Methodology and organisation of research

The Harbingers study and its Polish follow-up under the NSC grant (2022/45/B/HS2/00041) are conducted through longitudinal, partly structured interviews, i.e., interviews with early career researchers, repeated annually. This paper deals with the first round of interviews in spring 2023 (the second is planned for early 2024). Each interview lasted about an hour and a half and was recorded (via Skype). The interview transcription was sent by email to the respondents for corrections and supplementation. The record was manually coded using a heuristic approach and a standardised thematic framework. In other words, the Polish continuation of the earlier international projects (Harbingers 1 and Harbingers 2) uses the same methodology, which helps to observe changes in the attitudes and behaviour of young researchers and to compare them within countries and time intervals.

This article discusses the evaluation and perception of success in areas of interest by early career researchers, that is, a fragment of responses from an extensive (over 50 questions) questionnaire of an interview on various aspects of scholarly communication. The main part of the interview scenario has been the same in eight countries since 2016. It consists of several parts, such as the status and role of the respondents, the reputation of scientists, general communication practices, authorship and publishing, and transformations (Świgoń & Nicholas, 2023). Minor modifications have been introduced in response to external factors, both global (such as the COVID-19 pandemic) and national (e.g., reforms of science in Poland).

Regarding success and reputation, the following research questions were formulated in this study:

- How are the Polish respondents evaluated at their university?
- What are the factors that, in their opinion, are a sign of reputation and success?
- In their opinion, are citation indices and altmetric indices associated with reputation and/or usefulness?

To answer these questions, the content of the interview excerpts was analysed in relation to evaluating employees and doctoral students at Polish universities, determinants of success and reputation in the discipline, including bibliometric and altmetric indicators. The respondents' statements were qualitatively analysed (Marying, 2000; Magnani, Gioia, 2023; Gioia, 2022). The responses provided highlighted the keywords around which the narrative was built. An attempt was then made to combine similar keywords to reduce the number of response categories that emerged, with the categories being both informant – and theory-centred. If possible, the number of mentions in the responses to the question was summed. Regarding responses about the relationship of bibliometric and altmetric indicators with reputation and usability, the coding of responses into categories like *yes, partly yes*, or *no* was used which allowed the number of respondents. The analysis

results were illustrated with quotations, which are particularly important due to the limitations of this research, namely, a limited group of respondents from only one country. A list of all the responses to the questions analysed in this study is deposited in the RepOD open data repository.

The respondent group comprised 25 Polish researchers in 12 scientific disciplines grouped in three fields (humanities, theology, and art) in the Polish classification of sciences (Rozporządzenie..., 2022): archaeology (1 person), philosophy (2 respondents), history (3), linguistics (2), literary studies (1), science of culture and religion (2), art (1), Polish studies (2); theology (5), film and theatre (2), music (2), fine art and conservation of art (2). The group of early career researchers consisted of 6 doctoral students and 19 doctors, all of whom had obtained their degree no earlier than 2016. In other words, the age criterion (early career researchers are sometimes defined as individuals under 35 years old) in the respondent selection in all the Harbingers cycle studies is of secondary importance relative to the short period of research work.

The names of the Polish early career researchers were searched in the RADON database (RADON, 2022), which contains information on the dates of obtaining the doctorate degree, as well as on the place of work and the declared discipline. In addition to the RADON database, respondents were searched on the websites of specific doctoral schools in universities. An email invitation was sent to potential respondents who met the criteria. Participation in the research was voluntary and anonymous.

3. Results and discussion

For most of the 25 respondents in this project, an academic career was their goal, at least according to the data obtained in spring 2023. According to the responses of 84% of the study participants (21 people), they were interested in working at the university, being involved in scientific research and accumulating achievements, including for future habilitation (which has not been obligatory in Poland since 2018). The other four interviewees (16%) did not see their professional future tied solely to a university. Therefore, the questionnaire questions on evaluating and perceiving success in science proved to be highly justified in this group of respondents. The responses are discussed below in several separate sections.

3.1. Evaluating doctoral students and doctors

Both doctoral students and university lecturers in Poland undergo periodic evaluations. The evaluation frequency varies depending on the university, the duration of the contract, and the individual circumstances. As mentioned above, the type of

science is of lesser importance, as the ministerial system of evaluation of scientific and artistic achievements common to all fields of science is applied (Załącznik..., 2019). The following scores are granted to scientific publications, pieces of artistic work, and other types of scientific and artistic activities, depending on the work's importance: 20, 40, 70, 140, and 200 pts. The maximum score is usually given to international achievements, both publications and pieces of artistic work. This system of evaluation uses the collective ministerial list of scored journals, containing over 30 thousand titles indexed in the Web of Science and Scopus, as well as Polish journals not included in those international databases (the maximum number of points can also be obtained for articles in selected Polish journals).

An important element in doctoral schools is the so-called 'mid-term evaluation', performed after two of the four years of study, which involves an evaluation of how an individual research plan of a doctoral student is being carried out, i.e., the overall progress of work on the scientific dissertation.

> In our doctoral school, we have an evaluation after two years of education, i.e., mid-term (one of the most important evaluations during the four-year study). Its outcome determines whether we will still receive the scholarship. The committee checks our progress in writing the doctoral dissertation and if we are accomplishing our individual research goals. In addition to that, our doctoral thesis supervisor evaluates the progress of our work every six months. (science of culture and religion)

> First, the mid-term evaluation is conducted after the second year, but the dean pays a lot of attention to each publication in scored journals. This is usually what determines our future employment at my faculty. (history)

Respondents from doctoral schools, but also doctors, talked in their interviews about the impact of the pandemic on the evaluation criteria; that is, the requirement of participation in scientific internships and attending conferences was temporarily suspended as these were made impossible during the pandemic.

Doctors in these three fields (humanities, theology, and arts) employed in universities as assistants, researchers, and lecturers are subject to periodic evaluation of their work, mainly scientific, but also of teaching and organisational. According to the responses, electronic employee evaluation sheets are used in some universities, where individual types of scientific achievements are entered, types of teaching activities conducted, and organisational activities performed. Some respondents, including the so-called postdocs, were employed under labour agreements for a finite period. In such cases, they were evaluated when such agreements were renewed.

According to the responses given by the interviewees, although such a three-area evaluation (of one's scientific, teaching and organisational activity) is common in Polish universities, the evaluation of scientific achievements is of the highest importance. It covers mainly publications and grants and can account, depending on the university, for approximately 70% of a whole periodical evaluation of a teaching and research staff member. Interestingly, none of the respondents mentioned that citation or altmetric indices were considered in a periodic evaluation. According

to the responses, the number of citations was required only when respondents applied for external grants. The evaluation of teaching activities was based mainly on anonymous opinions of the students and observations from the class performed by experienced staff members. Researchers doing the teaching work are sometimes required to publish textbooks. Organisational tasks are set and evaluated by superiors, depending on the rules adopted in a specific research institution. However, it should be noted that some respondents complained about being overwhelmed with such administrative tasks.

> We are evaluated by a committee; there are different rules for each discipline. Obviously, the number of points for scientific activity is the most important. Points are also granted for teaching (we are also evaluated by students) and organisational activities, but this score is much lower than for the research. (Polish studies)

> We have an electronic evaluation sheet, where activities in the three areas: research, teaching (including anonymous student surveys) and administrative are entered (we also enter the organisational activities that we are required to do). (theology)

As already mentioned, the rules of granting points apply not only to scientific publications but also to works of art and other artistic achievements.

> We get points for artistic activity, from 20 to 200 points, depending on the importance of an event, e.g. a concert (for example – a concert abroad is worth 200 points, while one in Poland – 100 points). We grant these points to ourselves, and then the faculty verification committee checks the points entered on the sheet, and it can modify them. (music)

Most responses testified to the transparency of the rules applied at a university, but some negative exceptions must be noted, illustrated by the following quotations.

> The evaluation system at my university is very unclear and nontransparent. A staff evaluation sheet does not exist in a digital form, it is kept somewhere in an employee's file. We don't know how our work is evaluated, what and how it is evaluated, except that we get points for class observation and points for publications. (science of culture and religion)

> Three areas of our activities are evaluated: scientific, teaching and organisational; we do not get points here. A form is filled out every two years, but only those with insufficient activity receive some feedback. (arts)

Moreover, some Polish universities give periodic quality-orientated pay raises, for example, every two years. However, some employees were not entitled to them because of an insufficiently long period of employment. The different rules applied at various universities are important, but basically, high-score publications and grants from external sources are of the greatest importance.

3.2. Perception of success in one's field

In general, descriptions of Polish early career researchers of success in arts, humanities, and theology referred to four determinants, identified through qualitative analysis (keywords and mentions): 1) a list of scientific and artistic achievements

(all 25 respondents, 100%); 2) citations and recognisability, while pointing out the flaws of the citation indices (15 responses; 60%); 3) external grants (11; 44%); 4) international cooperation, including one's achievements being known internationally (9; 36%).

Therefore, these factors have already been mentioned in other studies worldwide (Herman, Nicholas, 2019; Nicholas et al., 2018; Agarwal et al., 2016). Moreover, individual mentions of an important role of teaching work (by individual respondents from all three areas), which is not much appreciated as the effects of scientific work. The prevalence of teaching research has already been discussed in the literature (Blackmore, 2016).

The respondents in arts were not as well orientated in the numerical measures and indices of success used in scientific disciplines. As a representative of the musical arts said: *Such terms as IF, IH do not mean anything to me*. If they were interested in the numerical indices at all, those were the ministerial points, which, as has been said, are an important part of the achievement evaluation at Polish universities. The six art respondents were familiar with ministerial scoring. However, the respondents discussed a problem with evaluating the importance of artistic achievements in the minister's regulation (Załącznik..., 2019).

> My work at the university is evaluated (...) by the number of points for a specific activity, e.g. the authorship of an outstanding piece of music = 200 points, of a less significant piece of music = 50 to 100 points. However, the ministerial score does not always coincide with the importance of a specific musical event, because sometimes a concert given a lower number of points according to the ministry table is of much greater importance to us artists (...). Ministerial points are important only in a university, for example, for promotions and quality-orientated pay rises. They are not of importance in building a musician's reputation outside of the university. (music)

> The ministerial rules of granting points are sometimes wrong and inadequate. What is 'an outstanding piece of art', for which we get 200 points? It has been accepted that international renown is such a determinant. (fine arts)

One of the musicians pointed out that some additional aspects of artistic activity not included in the minister's regulation so far should be considered.

> It is a pity that the ranges on the Internet do not count. They are not taken into account at all in the evaluation of scientific activities in the arts. (music)

Although text publications are neither common nor required of scientists-artists, the group of respondents (three out of six) included a musician, a fine artist, and a filmmaker, with not only artistic achievements in their portfolio but also scientific articles and monographs.

> Monographs or scientific articles are not a measure of success in the film arts, which is why few of us publish them. Filmmaking is the most important thing to us. I occasionally publish texts, so the academic career (and everything connected with it – scientific degrees, ministerial points, attending conferences, joint monographs) is a measure of success. However, I am part of the minority in my discipline. (film)

> I see considerable differences with respect to foreign centres: In some countries, it is important to publish texts on design, art, etc. – in Poland, this is a theoreticians' domain. (fine arts)

The six representatives of the arts also mentioned various activities that testify to one's success: taking part and winning prizes in contests, festivals, exhibitions, issuing records, giving concerts, obtaining subsidies, and being invited to a jury.

> The awards at film festivals are definitely the most important. (film)
>
> Important contests and other significant musical events certainly count (...). The things important to instrumentalists include: first performances of pieces of music, the prestige of a musical event and its range, preferably international. Such events are highly valued in scientific circles, but their artistic merit may not be too high. (music)
>
> A success of an artist-scientist is measured mainly by winning international contests and exhibitions and the prestige that arises from them, including invitations to work in juries, to take part in exhibitions, to attend conferences, and other international events associated with such contests. (fine arts)

The majority of humanist responses regarding scientific success often mentioned evaluating a text based on its merit, author recognisability, and international cooperation. They also mentioned citations but also pointed to their drawbacks, which supports the conclusions of the literature (Andersen, 2000; Bornmann, Daniel, 2008; Borchardt et al., 2018). They stressed, like scientists-artists, that the numerical indices were of no great importance to them.

> I would define a success in our discipline rather as the number of publications and the subject matter dealt with, evaluated based on its merits (...). A problem with the number of citations is that the number of researchers working in some areas of linguistics is very small; therefore, naturally, the number of citations is also small. (linguistics)
>
> The indices, statistics, IF – all this is not the main measure of success in humanities. What counts are scientific achievements, their quality, citations, (...) erudition, knowledge of the achievements in many domains, and originality of thought. (literary studies)
>
> The number of citations is a double-edged weapon. You never know whether someone cites you because they agree or disagree with you. The number of citations is one of the measures of success, but it is not a good measure in itself. A high quality of the text is the most important. (philosophy)
>
> Internationalisation, that is, the recognisability of my texts abroad, is a measure of success for me. Moreover, obtaining grants is also such a measure, as well as looking after other scientists, that is, a sense of a causative power (...). The number of citations is also important, but in humanities they are generally hard to come by. (science of culture and religion)
>
> Publications in prestigious foreign-language journals are the most important. What counts are also organisational activity, conferences, and contacts with other researchers, which are in high demand after the pandemic. The number of citations is indicative of a scientist's prestige, but it's not the only indicator. (history)
>
> Prestige is also associated with multi-year grants from the NPRH [National Humanities Development Programme], NCN [National Centre for Science], with large sums of money granted. (Polish studies)

Ministerial scores, citations, and grants were frequently mentioned in most of the responses of doctoral students, which can be attributed to the will to meet the requirements of doctoral schools but also their plans to find a job at a research institution.

> Grants are difficult to obtain, so whoever managed to do it certainly achieved success. Citations are also important. Additionally, publishing in journals included in the ministerial list is a requirement in a doctoral school. (science of culture and religion)
>
> Publications, grants, citations, all this counts in the further scientific career and in promotions. (archaeology)
>
> The number of articles in high-score journals and attending conferences, and grants – all these are measures of success. I am interested in these categories and in the ministerial scoring and the number of citations most of all. (linguistics)

In general, respondents from the three disciplines often referred to 'chasing points' ['punktoza'] in Polish science.

> Several years ago, no one talked about it; now everyone focusses on points (...). It's funny that now we know who received what grants, what funds, how many points they earned, but we don't know what these grants are for and not much is talked about the topic of research. And this is insane; it is going to result in the degeneration of the whole system: the subject matter of an article is less important than the points of the article. (Polish studies)
>
> The ministerial list of journals is a 'game in the dark';we don't know its rules, we don't even know we are playing (...). There are many professional journals that are not recognised by our ministry. (science of culture and religion)

Some respondents pointed to the low score for journals in humanities and theology on the ministerial list compared to those in science. Researchers working in regional studies reported problems with publishing their findings abroad.

> There are much fewer high-score journals in our discipline than, for example, in science. (theology)
>
> History journals usually have much lower scores than those in science. Moreover, researchers in regional studies face obstacles when attempting to publish in journals abroad; a British or American reader is not interested in the history [of a small town in Poland]. (history)
>
> There is a clear division in Poland between regional study researchers and those dealing with more universal subject matter, for example, national or international. The latter come across fewer obstacles when trying to publish in high-score journals or to obtain a subsidy for their research. In my opinion, due to the generally accepted indices, humanists are marginalised relative to researchers in other disciplines. (literary studies)

There are also opinions about the need to publish not only in one's native language.

> Unfortunately, there is a kind of deadlock in history, because we publish mainly in Polish and do not have high scores in terms of citations or points for publications. There is no comparison between us and science researchers. (history)

Like humanists and artists, theologians stressed very strongly the importance of monographs in building a reputation.

> The success of theology is measured mainly by publications in Polish and foreign journals. Recognisability is also important (...) such indices as the Impact Factor, Hirsch Index, and ministerial points count. Scientific monographs are important. (theology)

> The success of a researcher in my discipline is measured by the success of his book. The Hirsch Index, scores that are strange to the specific nature of humanities – all this does not count, because if a researcher manages to write a book, which you must read, must cite – this is a success. (theology)

Some respondents (five out of 25 from all disciplines under analysis) pointed to the underestimated role of teaching in perceiving the success of a university staff member.

> I attach more importance to teaching than to research; I believe that it is most important to develop the creativity of my students, to inspire them to achieve results that would make it easy for them to find a good job. I perceive my own development as working on relationships with students, sharing experience and opinions with them, so that they can use what we learned together in future work. However, I realise that now such teaching commitment counts much less than all the points and grants. (history)

> It is important to me whether a scientist is a man of conscience, whether he is an authority for young researchers. (theology)

Finally, notable responses of early career humanists and artists on the perception of success were provided:

> It is also a measure of success when you do what you love, then you don't feel like you work. (archaeology)

> My success is measured by achievements that I personally care about and want. (music)

3.3. Citations and usefulness

Half (12 out of 25) of Polish early career researchers in the described disciplines confirmed the relationship between the number of citations and the usefulness of the text. In contrast, the other half either denied it or were undecided about it when asked if citations testify to the usefulness and wide use of publications. Such divided opinions about citations have long been signalled in the literature on the subject (Andersen, 2000; Bornmann, Daniel, 2008; Borchardt et al., 2018).

It must be reiterated that even respondents who confirm the relationship between citations and the usefulness of publications pointed to some flaws in the citation indices. Publications in narrow specialties have few citations, but, on the other hand, they clearly indicate who is an expert in the subject, so the texts of such an author will be very useful for the interested, as small as they may be. Another doubt was associated with negative citations, which are not recognised by algorithms.

> I use the achievements of narrow-discipline specialists, who do not have many citations, and yet they are valuable. Or, I cite texts of authors who are not as often cited now because their findings are outdated, but they are important in the context of my considerations. (...) It is difficult to establish such a simple hierarchy based on the number of citations in the humanities. (literary studies)

> There are fashionable, popular topics, and there are other, niche, marginal ones. The latter are not less significant, although they don't have as many citations as the former (...). (Polish studies)

> I am aware of instances where citations are given with a condescending smile without acknowledging the author's hard work. Additionally, there are some niche specialisations in which citations are not expected at all. (film)

The respondents pointed out that text availability can significantly increase the number of citations. This applies to both articles/books accessible online and a wide range of readers, far more expansive than the scientific circles.

> Citations are more evidence for better dissemination of (and to easier access to) a text. In other words, a text with a higher number of citations may not be more useful, but it may be more easily accessible online or better promoted. (philosophy)

> Citation indices are for scientific circles rather than for the general readership, ordinary people, which is important to me as an evangeliser. I would like my studies to help married couples, families, and children live happy lives. (theology)

3.4. Altmetrics and usefulness

The answer to a question about the connection between altmetric indices (number of mentions on social networks, downloads, hits, likes, followers, subscribers, etc.) and the usefulness of a text was much more frequently (19 out of 25, 76%) positive (or partly positive) than negative (6 out of 25).

Altmetry was particularly important to art researchers because it is a manifestation of the popularity of an artist or piece of art. However, altmetric indices have some flaws, as has been stressed. For example, they are used for unfair practices.

> On the one hand, such indices are very important to us musicians. YouTube is an important service for us (it's here that we upload audio or audio/video files) and the number of subscribers and likes is important to artists. On the other hand, there is something I find negative, a common practice of buying subscribers or likes. This is neither fair nor reliable. (music)

> Popularity is not the same as wide use of a piece of work. Filmmaking art is susceptible to marketing influence, especially on social networks. (film)

An interesting statement appeared in the context of the evaluation of social impact, first introduced in Poland at the last parametrisation of universities (for the years 2017–2021). It suggests the need to improve its rules.

> After the contest (...) a lot of people saw the film in which my work is described as winning a prize, but this did not count in the evaluation or parametrisation. But when my poster was published in a school textbook, issued in a large number of copies in the USA, this was taken into account in the parametrisation (...). (fine arts)

Humanists and theologians also generally confirmed the existence of a connection between altmetric indices and text usefulness, although not as clearly as artists.

> If more people download a text, they use it to a lesser or greater extent, or at least skim through it to verify the subject matter usefulness for their research. (history)

> What counts are Academia.edu and Research Gate, as well as LinkedIn. You can create your individual repository there. Here you can see the usefulness of your texts and presentations. (science of culture and religion)

Some said more precisely that the altmetric indices better reflect the popularity (of a person, a subject) than the actual usefulness.

> They testify primarily to the interest in a subject, but not necessarily to the wide use of the text. (Polish studies)
>
> The number of text downloads is certainly proof for the author of the popularity of research. Perhaps the use of this particular paper is the actual use of the text. (literary studies)
>
> Political (in)correctness may be a factor in the discipline of history, and it may affect the perception in the media. (history)

A humanist, who studied the media professionally, was an altmetry enthusiast.

> From my point of view, such indices are very important. I study Instagram and Facebook, so in my world, counting likes, shares, and hits is very important and is a measure of the usefulness of the work. (science of culture and religion)

A theologian mentioned the role of social networks in communicating the message to young people.

> I'm not only a representative of the young generation, but I also write about young people, and social networks are very important to them, so any feedback from such sources is important to me and I take it into account. (theology)

Critical opinions on altmetric indices pointed to their strong links to friend networks rather than the actual use of a paper.

> Reactions on social networks are usually caused by someone being a friend, so it is difficult to talk about the actual use and usefulness of what is published there. (history)

3.5. Altmetrics and reputation

Regarding the connection between citations and reputation, the respondents' opinions were divided on the relationship between altmetric indices and reputation. Responses confirming and denying the existence of such a connection were distributed approximately equally (50/50%) in the three scientific fields (humanities, theology, and art). At the same time, many respondents indicated a connection with the popularisation of science rather than with the researcher's reputation. Such opinions have already been expressed in the literature (Ortega, 2015).

Characteristically, none of the respondents claimed direct equivalence of altmetric indices and reputation. Some respondents clearly separated the importance of signals from social networks in the academic world, in which they are not considered in an employee evaluation, from its importance in a non-scientific world, where they may, to some extent, be proof of some renown. However, they were all unanimous in the opinion, as mentioned earlier, that altmetry reflects popularity (of people, subjects). These studies have shown that they can also be instrumental in popularising scientific and artistic achievements.

> Altmetric indices reflect popularity rather than reputation (...). The feedback from social networks is not a reliable indicator of success. (film)
>
> They show a musician's reputation, but not necessarily in scientific circles, but outside of them. (music)

> The number of likes on Facebook or followers on Instagram is not equal to success. A craftsman who creates nice and pleasant things will enjoy greater popularity than an original artist, whose work reception can be difficult. (fine arts)
>
> In the case of new media researchers (...), social media ranges, reputation in the creative industry, etc., may bring cooperation on the border between science and business. In addition, it contributes to the popularisation of science in general. (science of culture and religion)
>
> It is difficult to treat altmetry as an indicator for the evaluation of scientific research. Not all research is attractive on Facebook or Instagram, but others are. It is difficult to make ordinary people interested in specialist research (...). (Polish studies)
>
> I can see it, for example, in the Research Gate, where the increasing number of times my text is read does not result in later citations. (philosophy)

Finally, a more extensive explanation from a young literary scholar.

> You must consider whether an author enjoys respect or writes about topics that are popular and widely commented on, which affects their popularity on social networks. Some scholars are just more 'media-friendly'; they feel good promoting their work on the Web, and they create their own vlogs, programmes, blogs, channels, or interest groups.

4. Conclusion

Perception of one's success, reputation, and renown in a field of science or art depends both on external factors, such as reviews written by other researchers, and on various measures and indicators, for example, the number of publications, grants, citations, mentions on social media and inner, i.e., individual thoughts on the issue. The numerical measures apply much more to sciences and natural sciences than to humanities and arts. This is confirmed by the findings of the Harbingers cycle projects, the two previous ones concerning science and their Polish continuation in humanities and arts.

The qualitative analysis used in this study made it possible to identify the four success indicators most frequently found in the respondents' statements; these were a list of scientific and artistic achievements, recognisability, external grants, and international cooperation. Regarding the evaluation of the work of early career researchers in the three fields, the need to appreciate monographs in the humanities and theology resounded, as well as altmetric indicators in the arts. Respondents also pointed to the need to improve the understanding of didactics. This is particularly important in Polish universities, where the overwhelming majority of staff are employed in research and teaching positions.

The responses from early career researchers in humanities, theology and arts, quoted in this paper, show clearly that although they try to adapt to the science and higher education system in which they work and try to meet the requirements imposed on them (they attach considerable importance to grants and high-score publications in journals from the ministerial list), they still retain some independence of opinions on the rules of evaluation of their achievements. The responses of

early career researchers contained such phrases as *doing what one loves*, achievements that I care about, writing a book one must read, *an achievement of a greater value to me than the ministerial evaluation*. These are highly valuable attitudes in the context of current reforms of the science sector in Poland and future changes, which will be implemented by this generation of scholars who are now beginning their scientific careers.

Open Data

Świgoń, Marzena, 2023, «Opinie o ocenie i sukcesie w humanistyce i sztuce – dane z wywiadów», RepOD, https://doi.org/10.18150/QFX7YO

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Jak początkujący naukowcy postrzegają sukces w swoich dziedzinach? W świetle wywiadów z humanistami, teologami i artystami w Polsce

Abstrakt

Cel: Opisano opinie polskiego młodego pokolenia badaczy na temat postrzegania sukcesu naukowego, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem roli wskaźników bibliometrycznych i altmetrycznych w tym kontekście. Ponadto przedstawiono wypowiedzi na temat sposobów oceniania ich pracy na polskich uczelniach.

Metoda: Dane pochodzą z pogłębionych wywiadów (przeprowadzonych wiosną 2023) z przedstawicielami m.in. takich dyscyplin, jak: językoznawstwo, literaturoznawstwo, historia, filozofia, polonistyka, teologia, nauki o sztuce, sztuki muzyczne, plastyczne oraz filmowe.

Wyniki: Stwierdzono przywiązywanie przez respondentów wagi do wskaźników stosowanych w okresowej ocenie pracownika naukowego polskiej uczelni, takich jak m.in.: liczba

publikacji, punkty ministerialne czy granty zewnętrzne. Respondenci mieli krytyczny stosunek do cytowań jako wyznacznika sukcesu. Wykazywali ogółem słabe zainteresowanie wskaźnikami altmetrycznymi.

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Słowa kluczowe

Altmetria. Cytowania. Humaniści. Naukowcy-artyści. Początkujący naukowcy. Reputacja. Teologowie.

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