

INORMS SCOPE Workshop Case Study:

Emerald Publishing: Evaluating the diversity of editorial boards May 2021

SCOPE is a five-step framework for evaluating research responsibly.

It invites evaluators to:

S - START with what they value about the entity being evaluated;

C – Consider the CONTEXT in which the evaluation takes place;

O – Explore all the OPTIONS for evaluating – both quantitative and qualitative;

P – PROBE their approach for unintended consequences;

E – EVALUATE - and evaluate the evaluation.

CASE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

What was being evaluated?

How to evaluate the diversity of Editorial Boards.

How did they go about it?

Two workshops: the first to understand with a group of editors and editorial board members what they valued about diversity (i.e., to explore the 'S' in SCOPE); the second to consider with Emerald Publishing staff the options for responsibly evaluating this dimension.

What were the outcomes for Emerald Publishing?

- A better understanding of how Editors and Editorial Board members view and value diversity within the broader context of their work.
- A clear action plan with short, medium and long-term goals for evaluating and enabling greater diversity of editorial advisory boards.
- An ambition to work with Editors to develop 'Diversity Pledges' including context-sensitive, journal-specific diversity improvement plans and progress indicators

What were the learning points for the SCOPE team?

- There are many dimensions to diversity, many beyond protected characteristics.
- When seeking to evaluate a long-term goal, evaluating a commitment to that goal may be a useful first step.
- Enabling diversity is just as important as evaluating it.

1 Overview of the evaluation activity

- Partner organisation name: Emerald Publishing (EP)
- Partner organisation lead contact: Juliet Harrison
- INORMS REWG members involved: Elizabeth Gadd, Laura Himanen
- Focus of evaluation: "How to improve Diversity and Inclusion through Editorial teams?"
- Brief overview of the workshop(s):
 - a) Date(s): 3 February 2021: SCOPE Values (Context) and Options; 19 March 2021: SCOPE Options & Probe
 - b) Focus of each workshop: as described above
 - c) Meetings held to prepare: Three meetings prior to workshop 1 to plan how to use SCOPE and decide on the focus of the workshop were held with the EP core team: Juliet Harrison and Sally Wilson, and other colleagues as appropriate. During these three meetings starting points for the exercise were decided (as described above). One meeting after workshop 1 to plan workshop 2. One meeting after workshop 2 to get feedback on the SCOPE process.
 - d) Any learnings from the preparation stage? It took several meetings and emails to agree the focus of the workshops. Discussing the possibilities and limitations of the SCOPE model with regard to EP's expectations and needs was very helpful and needed more than one meeting. Clarifying the use of SCOPE as an evaluation design framework, rather than as a tool for a generic focus group was important. There is a difference between the two. The discussions started by considering how to evaluate the level of diversity in EP's content and ended up by deciding to focus in on evaluating the level of diversity in editorial boards and especially looking at what editorial board diversity might mean.

2 The process

- a) Exploring what the organisation VALUED about the entity under evaluation.

The high-level 'super-value', diversity, was agreed upon before the workshops. What diversity meant in terms of editorial boards was explored in the first part of the 90-minute workshop session (i.e., workshop 1) conducted as a Teams meeting. Participants of workshop 1 were ten editors or members of editorial boards, representatives of Emerald Publishing and the INORMS team. The participants were told in advance that they would each be asked why diverse editorial boards matter. This was meant to work as an icebreaker to get everyone to talk right at the beginning. Then there was a group discussion on 'what does a diverse editorial board look like' and 'what aspects of diversity actually benefit a journal'. There were no break-out room discussions, and a member of the EP team gathered all feedback to a Miro board during the discussions.
- b) Articulating the CONTEXTS in which they sought to evaluate that entity
The context for evaluating was decided before the first workshop in discussion with the EP core team. It was evaluating to encourage (or 'incentivise' in SCOPE terminology) greater diversity in editorial boards. It was discussed that when evaluating to incentivise, the question 'should we evaluate at all?' would be considered, with a view to exploring whether the value should be *enabled* rather than evaluated.
- c) Exploring the OPTIONS for evaluating this value in these contexts
Options for evaluating was discussed in the second part of workshop 1 with Emerald first presenting some examples of what can be assessed using existing systems and approaches. The participants were asked to discuss some of the ways we could look to evaluate, and if there are any external factors that needed to be considered. A question regarding Probe was in the original plan, but it was decided that the Probe stage should be undertaken by Emerald after analysing the feedback received from the editors.

A second 90-minute workshop was run to explore Options with the Emerald Publishing, Editorial & Rights/Legal team members. This was conducted via Teams. The participants were first introduced to the key options that came up in the first workshop. Most of the options were more about enabling than evaluating diversity, but considering the context – encouraging or ‘incentivising’ diversity, this made sense. The enablers that were identified in workshop 1 were listed, so that the participants of workshop 2 could prioritise them. The rest of the workshop concentrated on the top three enablers or actions chosen by the participants. The participants were then invited to write down on a Miro board more specific actions, or thoughts under the top three enablers. A lot of practical ideas, as well as identified challenges in terms of the actions and thoughts documented were discussed. The Teams chat offered a good channel to a) ask/repeat questions, and b) offer practical solutions.

d) PROBING the proposed solutions for the 4 key questions

Throughout the entire workshop a lot of probing was done in the Teams chat. The probing was not restricted to the four questions of SCOPE, it also encompassed practical issues and challenges in implementing some of the ideas put forward during the workshop. It was the original idea to consider Options and Probe simultaneously, but it also happened naturally – when an option was suggested or discussed, participants very quickly started considering the challenges involved. This reflects the position of the participants as enablers of editorial work.

e) Setting up an EVALUATION of the evaluation

The last stage of SCOPE was not discussed in the workshops. All agreed that increasing diversity in editorial boards is not going to happen overnight, and next steps were discussed. The material from the workshops was summarized in a table that presented the actions and ideas under three headings: 1. recommendations for immediate implementation, 2. to discuss further, and 3. requires more analysis/resource. Revisiting this document and checking if the understanding reached in workshop 1 regarding the value, diversity, is still shared and valid, if the actions planned have incentivized more diversity, and have the chosen options had (negative) unintended consequences is advisable. The EP team plans to have a check-up in about six months (Autumn 2021) to measure success in implemented actions.

3 Learning points for SCOPE

a) VALUES

The SCOPE process was designed by research managers working in universities or other research organizations, so utilizing it in a business context was a good test of its flexibility. This setting was particularly interesting as not only did the company seek to balance commercial and non-commercial values, but their own values as a company with those of their editors and editorial boards. A key learning point here was that the editorial board members’ views of diversity included subject diversity, diversity in the way knowledge is/can be disseminated as well as regional diversity. EB members also felt that a commitment to diversity should be taken as part of a wider review of editorial board processes and policies, e.g., dormancy in editorial boards and whether boards would benefit from shorter-term appointments. Also, they felt that diversity within editorial boards was necessarily affected by the broader challenges around the prevailing model of creating scientific knowledge (e.g., the use of unpaid editorial positions) and global inequality more broadly.

b) CONTEXT

Incentivising diversity had been pre-agreed as the Context, however, interesting discussions were held as to who was being incentivised in this context. Were we seeking to incentivise Emerald Publishing, Editors and/or Editorial board members? Ultimately it was agreed that Editors should be the focus of any enabling and evaluating activity, but the relationship between publisher and editors is a carefully balanced one. The other important conversation here was whether this value needed

enabling or evaluating. Interestingly, the workshop members felt it needed both, and that some sort of 'badges' or external signifier that the journal was at least committed to improving diversity, would be welcomed.

c) OPTIONS

While a mixed evaluate-and-enable approach was agreed upon, many of the actions and ideas that came from the workshops were focussed on enabling diversity. In workshop 1 poverty was mentioned as one of the biggest barriers of having more diverse EBs, so one option floated was to pay EB members to allow more inclusive participation. Training was also emphasized as a necessary tool to raise awareness of the importance of diversity. Another option explored was the introduction of a Diversity Editorial Pledge whereby editors could be rewarded for a commitment to diversity, and partner with EP staff to explore what this might look like for their journal and how they might achieve it. The participants of workshop 2 were professionals working for EP, and this was reflected in how they discussed and suggested options and at the same time considered the practical challenges, including sensitivities around diversity-related data, and possibilities involved.

d) PROBE

Probe came naturally as part of workshop 2 discussions on options. A key learning point here is that depending on what kinds of consequences you wish to probe for, choose your workshop participants accordingly. In other words, it might make sense to have two different groups, one probing for the more academic consequences and one for the more practical consequences – both points of view are important in planning an evaluation!

e) EVALUATION

The key learning point here is that it is important to indicate to participants that the results of the workshop will be utilised and that evaluating the evaluation is on the agenda. However, workshopping how to evaluate your evaluation while you are still in the stage of planning an evaluation is not necessary. E is an important part of SCOPE, but should be considered as a separate exercise, once you have conducted an evaluation that can be evaluated. The EP team plan to check up on developments in six months' time, where they will consider how to collect data to evaluate the evaluation.

4 The outcomes for Emerald Publishing

a) The outcome of the workshop. How will the organisation now be evaluating this dimension? The workshops resulted in a range of short, medium and long-term actions for EP to pursue. These actions were categorised as 1. recommendations for immediate implementation, 2. to discuss further, and 3. requires more analysis/resource. All of the actions are appointed a departmental owner, and some of them have also individual owners. The immediately actionable items included:

- building expectations around diversity into contracts/job descriptions for Editors;
- Making diversity a rolling agenda point for Editorial meetings and reporting on progress around diversity in Editorial Advisory Board (EAB) meetings;
- Encouraging editors and EABs to identify their own success EDI indicators in line with their values.

b) Feedback on the use of the SCOPE framework

i) Did working to the SCOPE framework help you think through your evaluation problem?

Yes. The EP team felt they were starting with a problem that was 'too big'. SCOPE helped the team to focus in from a broad ambition around improving diversity, to the specific goal of seeking to improve diversity on editorial boards. Especially helpful was the 'step-by-step' process which helped them to keep centred on what they valued.

ii) Which elements of SCOPE were most/least useful?

It was felt that S and C were the most useful stages of the model. The importance of starting (and remaining) with what was valued rather than with the available data was thought to be particularly helpful. In addition, having a neutral outside organisation from an adjacent 'industry' to facilitate the discussions lent credibility to the process and was helpful particularly when it came to Probe, as issues regarding publishing and editing can be sensitive. Having a pre-stated structure to the workshops (i.e., SCOPE) was very useful in keeping discussions on topic, and it avoided the tendency to shift into problem-solving mode too quickly. The least useful aspect was probably the length of the workshops – there was a lot to get through in a short time – but it was recognised that if the workshops were too long they may have attracted fewer participants.

iii) SCOPE can be used as a 'skeleton' (i.e., an invisible internal framework that holds something up) or an 'exoskeleton' that is highly visible. SCOPE workshops are the latter - did this work for you? Did it help or hinder?

The visible framework of SCOPE was helpful. Even though the topic was a sensitive one, the framework took the emotion out of it and kept discussions on track. The EP team described the SCOPE framework as "powerful yet accessible" relative to other process-based methodologies such as Six Sigma and PRINCE. They suggested that 'SCOPE Train the Trainer' training might be made available to those who wish to apply SCOPE in their own settings more regularly. A SCOPE 'kitemark' might also be considered for evaluations that had been developed using the process.

iv) Do you think the outcomes are different to what you might have developed if you had not used SCOPE?

Yes. Using SCOPE helped to create clear and measurable actions, that are more focused on the issue at hand. It was felt that the roll-out of the actions will be much more straightforward as a result of using SCOPE.

v) Did the process of engaging with SCOPE bring about other benefits - not necessarily related to the evaluation design?

Having the second workshop with staff as participants gave the earlier career professionals who feel strongly about diversity an opportunity to contribute to the discussion. The workshops also helped raise awareness among the participants.

vi) Anything else the team wanted to share?

The EP team plan to share the SCOPE model to see if other areas of their business would find it a useful tool, as well as to 'evaluate their evaluation'.