

Academic rankings and University governance

Johannes Sorz, Office of the Rectorate (johannes.sorz@univie.ac.at)





„University of Vienna crashes in the Rankings“ (ORF.at, Oct. 2009)

„Ranking: Austrian Universities crash“ (Kurier, Oct.2012)

„Times-Ranking: Our Universities are a total failure“ (Österreich, Oct.2013)



Ziel ist es, drei heimische
Universitäten in die
Top 100 der Weltbesten
zu katapultieren.

Wir müssen in die

**Top
100**



Agenda

- Introduction - What do rankings measure, what are their limitations?
- Impact of rankings on University management
- How can Universities improve their ranking position?

Introduction

- Published by media agencies or Universities
- Part of the academic discourse since ca. 2000
- Highly visible in the public eye
- Basis for decision making of various stakeholders (parents, students, policy makers, university management)

Introduction

- Comparative assessment of Universities based on quantitative indicators
- Set of indicators covering different aspects (teaching, research, internationalization, innovation...)
- Ranking of Universities/research subjects by summarized scores of indicator values (league-tables)
- Multidimensional rankings (e.g. U-multirank, CHE)

Introduction

- More than 50 international rankings, with rising tendency
- Various levels of international and national visibility
- University/Subject rankings
- The "big 3":

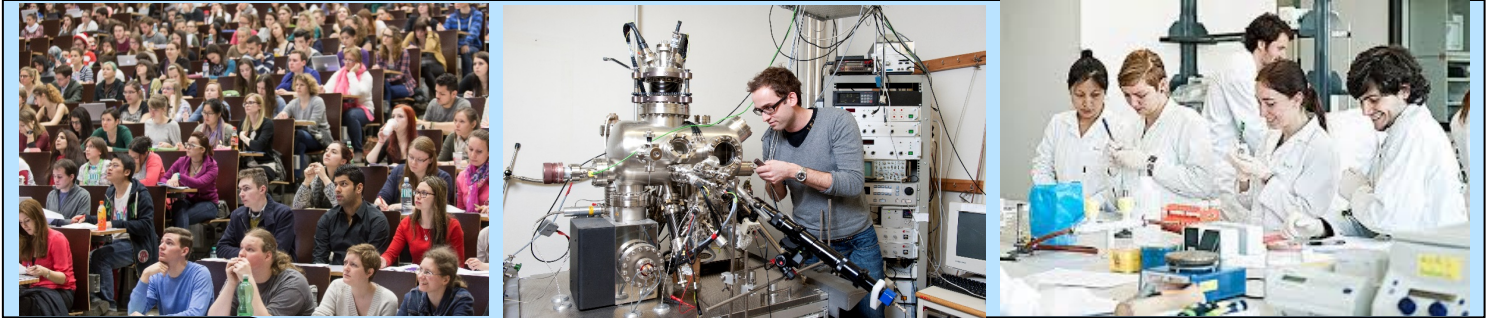


Introduction

- Universities mostly ranked involuntarily
- Data provision possible for some rankings (e.g. THE, QS)
- Data sources:
 - data provided by Universities
 - public available data
 - bibliometric databases (Web of Science, Scopus)
 - peer surveys (QS, THE)

Introduction

academic
performance



indicators

Academic reputation (40%), Employer reputation (10%) staff/student ratio (20%), citations per faculty (20%), international faculty and students (each 5%)

ranking position

155



University of Vienna

Introduction

- Simplified depiction of complex entities
- „Comparing the uncomparable“
- Data quality and validity (“tweaking“)
- Publication databases (SSH coverage, language bias)
- Reputation surveys/statistical effects
- Intransparency/changing indicators and weighting
- Entry barriers for small/new Universities

Introduction

“Comparing the incomparable”



- Two cars (both 500 PS)
- The first car has to provide seating for 80 passengers (state law)
- No restrictions for the second car
- The fastest car wins
- Who will it be?

Introduction

Data quality and validity

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LEBEN UND LERNEN Schlagzeilen | DAX 12.894,51 | Abo

Nachrichten > Leben und Lernen > Uni > Hochschul-Rankings > Uni Ranking: Hochschulen im THE-Ranking

Deutsche Unis im "THE"-Ranking

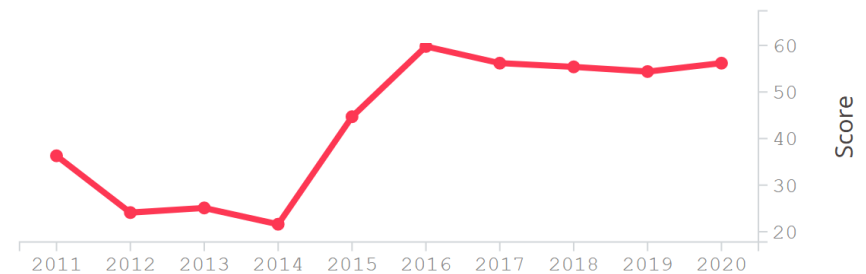
Das Wunder von Tübingen

Die LMU München triumphiert, Tübingen springt sogar 100 Plätze nach oben: Die Gewinner des "THE"-Uni-Rankings feiern sich. Doch selbst die Autoren nennen die Liste "plump" - und berichten von Zahlentricksereien der Hochschulen.

Von *Alexander Demling* ▼



„Das Wunder von Tübingen“

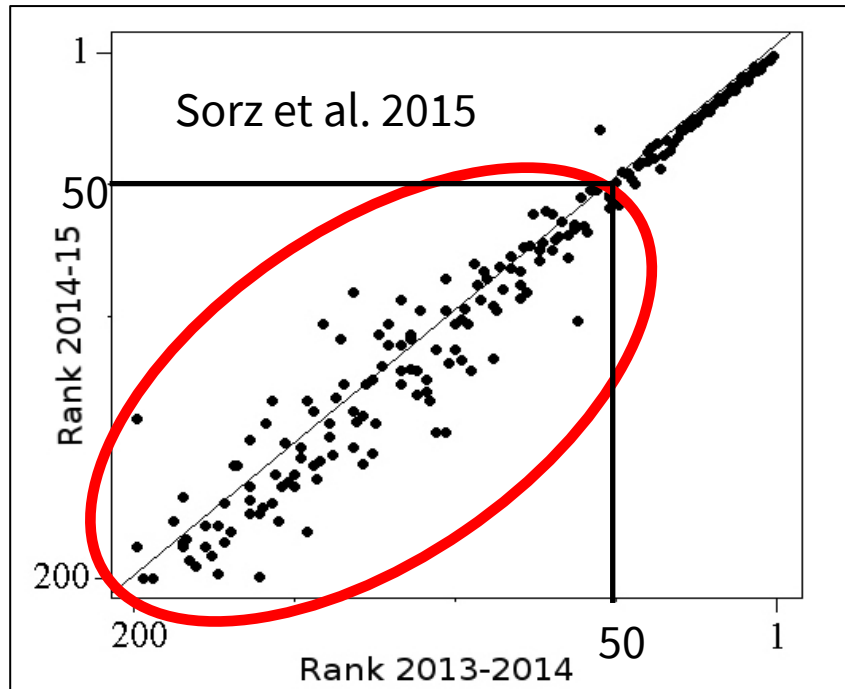


THE 2014: 221-25

THE 2015: 113

Introduction

Reputation surveys/statistical effects

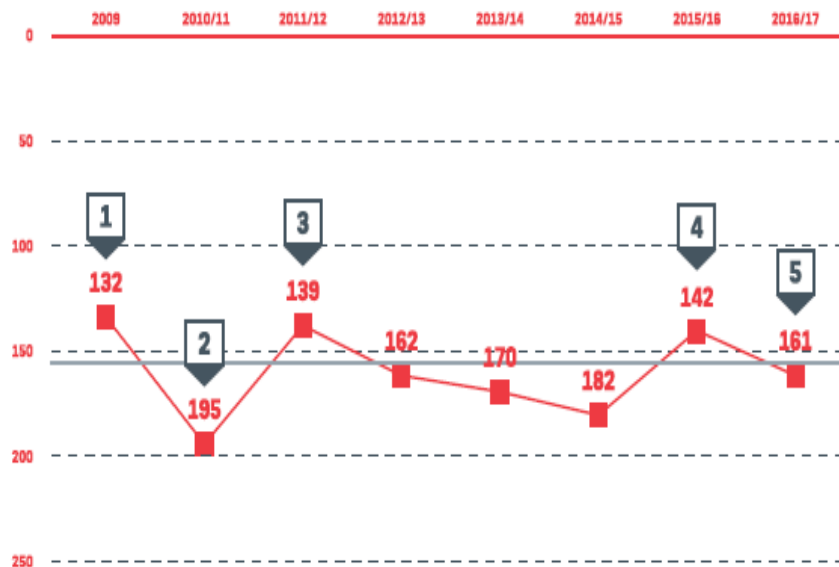


- Peer surveys up to 90% of total score!
- Response rates?
- Very stable “top group”
- “Matthew effect”
- High fluctuations below #50 (THE), most likely not correlated with academic performance
- Small changes in score with high changes in rank

Introduction

Intransparency/changing indicators

Österreichische Top-Platzierung im THE Ranking – Universität Wien



- Changes of indicators/weighting
- Normalization of citations
- No time series!

THE-Ranking:

- 1= Last joint ranking QS/THE
- 2= Separation/major changes
- 3= Normalization of citations
- 4= Change from WOS to SCOPUS
- 5= From 800 to 1000 participants

Introduction

Who succeeds?

- Already prestigious universities with high budgets
- Focus on highly cited areas (e.g. Medicine, Life Science)
- High number of (international) scientists, who publish only in top-journals and acquire a lot of third-party funds (also from industry)
- Low student numbers



A. Rauhvargers, EUA report 2013

Introduction

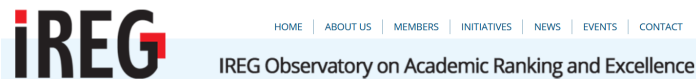
What is missing?

- Teaching dimensions (especially student POV)
- Regional/social involvement (→ THE Impact ranking)
- Knowledge exchange (beyond industry projects)
- Multidimensional approach



Introduction

Who watches the ranking agencies?



[About Inventory](#) |
 [List of rankings](#) |
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Welcome to Inventory

The purpose of "IREG Inventory of International Rankings" is to collect and make available Ranking and Excellence website information on the current state and scope of this important

IREG Observatory initiated the "IREG Inventory of International Rankings" project as a part of the quality of academic rankings and the quality of higher education in general.

The data for the inventory has been collected through a "questionnaire" sent to the public information on collection of data for the inventory has been also posted on the IREG Observatory members of the academic community and experts on higher education all over the world. The data is based on answers to the questionnaire and data collected by the International Education Foundation

University Ranking Watch

Discussion and analysis of international university rankings and topics related to the quality of higher education. Anyone wishing to contact Richard Holmes without worrying about ending up in comments can go to rjholmes99@yahoo.com

Saturday, October 26, 2019

Using Webometrics to Rank University Systems

Recently there has been some interest in ranking higher education systems in addition to institutions or departments. See [here](#) and [here](#). But both of these efforts, from Universitas 21 and QS, rank only 50 countries.

The Webometrics rankings attempt to cover every university in the world or anything that might conceivably claim to be a university, institute or college. The indicators comprise web activity and research output. So, there is data here to create a simple and comprehensive ranking of countries. Below is the list of countries and territories ranked according to the world rank of the highest ranked university. If the Webometrics methodology remains unchanged it will be updated twice a year.

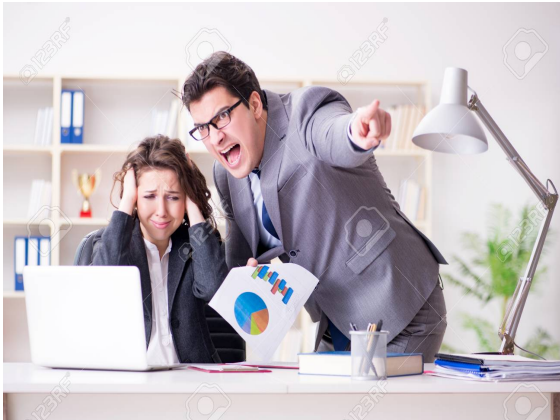


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Impact of rankings on University management



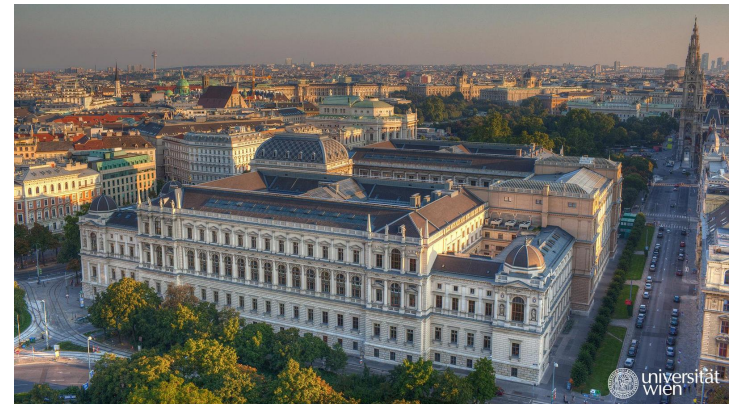
Impact of rankings on University management

- Part of the academic discourse and „here to stay“ (E. Hazelkorn)
- International visibility and potential for marketing
- Highly visible for all stakeholder, policy and public
- Not suitable to assess academic performance
- Should not be used for evaluation purposes or strategic profiling

Impact of rankings on University management

University of Vienna

- Very limited influence on strategic/leadership processes
- Can be useful as a initial assessment (e.g. to identify potential strategic partners), prior to a in-depths analysis
- Subject rankings have more relevance than rankings of whole Universities
- Only of interest: THE, QS, ARWU, Leiden
- Benchmarking with peers, Bibliometrics



Impact of rankings on University management

University of Vienna

- Publication strategy (Affiliations, Nature/Science)
- Optimizing ranking results as good as possible
- Monitoring results and trends
- Exchange best-practices with other Universities
- Active PR-work/stakeholder information



How can Universities improve their ranking position?



How can Universities improve their ranking position?



Get more money!

e.g. Benito et al. 2019:

QS-Top-100 have twice as much budget as
100-200 and triple of 201-300!

How can Universities improve their ranking position?

Directly influencing academic rankings:

- Provide “optimized” data (THE, QS)
- Submit “friendly” peer lists (QS-Ranking)
- Check your institutional affiliations (e.g. Scopus IPW)

How can Universities improve their ranking position?

Indirectly influencing academic rankings:

- Strive to increase funding (public and third-party)
- Strive to improve framework conditions (policy level)
- Strategic profiling

How can Universities improve their ranking position?

Strategic profiling:

- Strengthen fields with high potential to succeed
- High-calibre appointments from abroad (RES, INT, staff-student ratio)
- Publication strategy (affiliations, language, impact; RES)
- Attractive study programmes for students from abroad (INT, TEA)
- Foster internationalization and cooperative research (INT, RES)

How can Universities improve their ranking position?

Strategic profiling:

- Merge!

2018:

Paris-Sorbonne 4: #196 (THE)

Marie Curie Univ. Paris: #123 (THE)

2019:

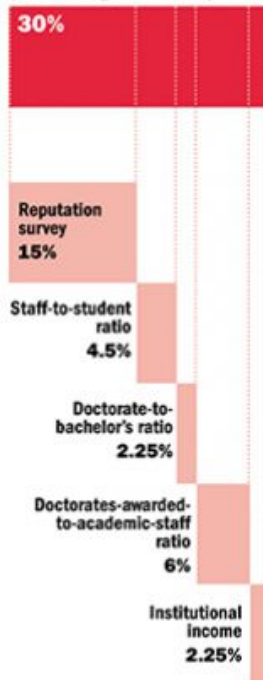
Paris Sorbonne University: #73, THE



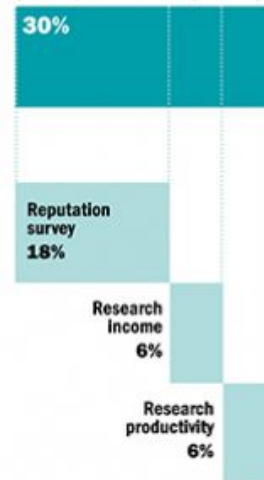
Thank you for your attention!

THE Methodology

Teaching (the learning environment)



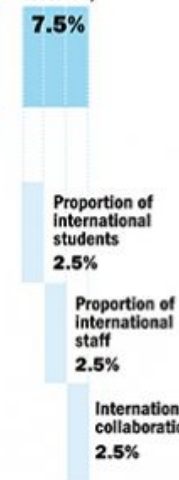
Research (volume, income and reputation)



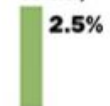
Citations (research influence)



International outlook (staff, students, research)



Industry income (knowledge transfer)



ARWU Methodology

Indicators and Weights for ARWU

Criteria	Indicator	Code	Weight
Quality of Education	Alumni of an institution winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals	Alumni	10%
Quality of Faculty	Staff of an institution winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals	Award	20%
	Highly cited researchers in 21 broad subject categories	HiCi	20%
Research Output	Papers published in Nature and Science*	N&S	20%
	Papers indexed in Science Citation Index-expanded and Social Science Citation Index	PUB	20%
Per Capita Performance	Per capita academic performance of an institution	PCP	10%