

THE USE OF UNIVERSITY RANKINGS IN LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

ALEX USHER
HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGY ASSOCIATES



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Purpose and Scope

- Existing literature very centred on US and Western Europe
- Yet, non-OECD countries have been the source of significant innovation in rankings
- Survey countries in Latin America, Asia, Africa and East-central Europe to redress balance

Pre-conditions for Rankings

- A working definition of educational quality, with a selection of indicators appropriate to the definition.
- Sufficient data to populate the indicators
- Lower-income countries may not have the latter

Drivers of Statistical Systems

- Competitive education market (needed for marketing)
- Specific Managerial Structures (NPM-like) which favour benchmarking
- Specific Public Accountability regimes (significant institutional autonomy is a prerequisite)

4 Main Points on Domestic Rankings

- Latin America: Market forces drive a commercial model
- The rise of governments as rankers: “Sunlight as a Disinfectant”
- Lack of data spurs innovation; bibliometrics and accreditation data
- Evolutionary pressure on reputational rankings: India

The Evolution of International Rankings

- International Rankings 1.0: *Asiaweek*
- International Rankings 2.0: *Shanghai Jiao Tong ARWU*
- International Rankings 2.5: *Iberamericano, OIS rankings*
- International Rankings 3.0: *Webometrics*

The Importance of Webometrics

- Majority of countries in the world have no entry in the Shanghai rankings
- Strong demand for tools with which to benchmark progress
- Webometrics has some face-value validity as an indirect measure of research intensity, and it can rank 17,000 universities every six months
- Webometrics thus meets an important market need

Conclusions & Implications

- Domestic rankings in low- & middle-income countries and international rankings share common data challenges
- Clearly a major demand for indicators suitable for benchmarking, both on a national and international level
- Some innovations in data collection may be worth exporting
- Probably a good case for international effort to improve HE statistical capacity at regional/continental level

THANK YOU!

Alex Usher: ausher@higheredstrategy.com