

THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITY RANKINGS IN UNIVERSITY CHOICE

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University rankings have a growing importance as it is an information source for the potential students, while universities consider it a kind of marketing tool. Besides rankings have significant effect on image [6] and reputation. Building the image of the university is not easy to create but a very long professional process and the result of a conscious communication and marketing activity. [8]. While several research was made on the methodology of the rankings, including indices and weights applied for their compilation [3], the number of researches dealing with their effects on recruitment is negligible. A significant research on this topic was made by McDonough et al [7]. According to it the Asian and American students, whose parents have a degree, and who are from a family with higher income, rankings are considered to be a more important factor. Clarke [1] and Hortschräer [5] had similar results and also highlighted those potential students who fulfilled their studies with very good grades. Espinosa et al [4] also highlighted that rankings were found a more important factor when choosing a university by those students who are from a wealthier family compared to their research on the same topic in 1998. In addition to it, students are aware that ranking of their school can have an impact on their labour market prospects and their potential for employment [9]. The copy of Times Magazine dealing with rankings uses employment prospects as an indicator when setting up its list. The data suggests that graduates of the top ranked universities (Oxford, Cambridge, London School of Economics) have the best chances to get better jobs. Universities at the top of the list can also charge higher tuition fees, while admission is easier for a given tuition fee at other institutions having worse place in the list [1]. As for the Hungarian professional literature, Csuka and Banász [2] made a survey among the potential university students. It suggests that three quarters of the respondents know Hungarian rankings, but they have no idea about their methodology and ranks had no relevance when choosing a university. Due to the global rankings, better universities can compete for students worldwide. Without doubts, those universities that have a prominent position on the list can select more talented students and make their position even better than their competitors.

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