РАЗЛИЧИЯ В МЕТОДОЛОГИИ ОПРЕДЕЛЕНИЯ ВЕДУЩИХ РЕЙТИНГОВ ВУЗОВ

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Эбзеева Юлия Николаевна, к.психол.н.; доц.; заведующая кафедрой иностранных языков,
первый проректор – проректор по образовательной деятельности
Российского университета дружбы народов, Москва

ebzeeva-yun@rudn.ru

Исследование посвящено рассмотрению складывающейся теории ранжирования высших учебных заведений в российском высшем образовании, вводятся основные термины данной теории (глобальный, ведущий, институциональный, предметный, специальный, многомерный, многофакторный рейтинги). Масштабная деятельность по ранжированию университетов мира мотивирована ростом конкуренции между университетами; наличием конкуренции среди образовательных систем различных государств мира; необходимостью для ряда целевых групп (абитуриенты, научные работники и преподаватели, работодатели, государство) в получении объективной информации из независимых источников о рынке услуг высшего образования. Мировое образовательное пространство использует рейтинги более 50 лет, для российских университетов задача продвижения в них является актуальной около 10 лет, что вызывает необходимость ознакомления с принципами и механизмами их формирования, выбором ориентиров и формирования политики развития в соответствии с целью продвижения в рейтингах. В исследовании проводится анализ трех глобальных рейтингов-лидеров: Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) и Times Higher Education (THE) – с позиций их истории, критериев оценки, особенностей методологии. Материалом исследования являются данные QS, ARWU и THE, полученные с сайтов рейтингов. Описаны пути получения информации и ее верификации указанными рейтингами. К наиболее значимым критериям в системе рейтингов относятся категории: качество преподавания, качество исследований, интернационализация, цитирование, востребованность выпускников работодателями. В заключении сделаны выводы о том, что для российского рынка образовательных услуг глобальный рейтинг стал маркером эффективности и успешности, присутствие университета в трех глобальных рейтингах может быть представлено с большими различиями, что связано как с процедурами внутри критериев оценки рейтинга, так и с самим списком критериев. Тем не менее совокупная информация, полученная из данных трех рейтингов, убедительно отражает тенденцию движения конкретного университета к их топовым позициям, что является шагом к признанию рейтинга значимым инструментом построения политики развития университета.

Ключевые слова: мировой рейтинг, ранжирование, качество преподавания, научные исследования, имидж университета.

Introduction

For more than 10 years, *world ranking* has been used as a term in the scientific and legal literature devoted to the problems of higher education. So, in the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated May 7, 2012, № 599: we meet this term in the following context «…entering the first hundred (universities) of the world's leading universities according to the *world university rankings*»[1]. This term has synonymous terminological combinations *global ranking* and *international ranking*, and, as a rule, operates with the results issued by three largest ranking companies: Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) and Times Higher Education (THE). Rankings are the result of the activities of non-governmental agencies funded by publishing companies or universities, for example, ARWU is a product of Jiao Tong Institute of Shanghai University (first ranking publication dated 2003), THE comes from the British publishing house Times Higher Education (since 2004), QS belongs to the British company Quacquarelli Symonds (since 2010).

Research results and discussion

Currently, Russian universities are included in all known world rankings. If we evaluate their achievements by three rankings at once, then we get a rather scattered impression, however, studies on the correlation of evaluation criteria and the results of well-known international rankings have shown that, in general, the trends can be comparable. Thus, Lomonosov Moscow State University in 2018 gets the 86th place at ARWU, in 2020 it is the 93rd. According to QS ranking Lomonosov Moscow State University is on the 90th place in 2018,

and on the 74th in 2020. This reflects the presence of Moscow State University within the first 100 universities in the world. Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology is in the range of 401–500 according to ARWU in 2018, in QS it is ranked 312th; in 2020 it remains at the same level in ARWU, but in QS it is ranked 290th, i.e. the deviation increases.

Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that the ranking as a tool for building a university development policy has not found its full recognition in Russian higher education. Currently, research on rankings has been developed, the basic principles of their classification have been formulated. Scientific works [Antonova, Sushchenko 2019; Bolotov et al. 2021; Galynsky, Zhuk 2021; Karpenko et al. 2007; Polozov 2011; Ebzeeva 2022; Yagudina, Yagudin 2016; Ebzeeva et al. 2019] include the following factors as the reasons for the growth of their influence:

1) growth of competition among the educational systems of various countries of the world, which is due to economic and political factors and image aspects (primarily, the leadership of the intellectual component). It is known that countries such as Germany, China, France and Japan were the first to embark on the path of promoting the implementation of national projects with the aim of placing national universities into the top lists of international universities;

2) growing competition among universities and the need for a number of target groups to obtain objective information from independent sources about the market of higher education services. These target groups include, first of all, enrollees and their parents, who faced the choice of a place to receive basic higher education; students who choose a university for master's and postgraduate studies, as well as the possibility of internships and exchanges; studies and internships at top universities contribute to networking. The 2017 QS Enrollment Solutions International Student Survey found that nearly two in ten respondents (19.6%) said rankings played a major role in their decision of which country they would like to study in. In addition, just under a quarter (23.5%) said that university rankings, in turn, are the most important factor in choosing a university and subject. QS examines articles and studies that highlight the importance of subject rankings.

3) researchers and teachers assess universities in terms of getting more profitable and prestigious jobs. Employers (industrial enterprises, private structures and state institutions) consider universities as a source of replenishment of their staff with the most qualified graduates. Target group should also include state institutions that consider achievements of universities as a way to select those universities that are funded under national projects. Focusing on rankings allows universities and government bodies to set strategic goals and evaluate the success of their implementation. A survey by the European University Association[2] showed that 47% of universities in their development strategy formulated the goal of achieving inclusion in international rankings, 14% – only in national rankings, 86% of universities constantly monitor their positions in the rankings.

Currently, according to the **coverage** of universities, it is customary to classify rankings into *world*, *regional* and *national*. *World rankings* include lists that consider universities of all countries as part of their analysis: Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), QS World University Rankings, The Times Higher Education World University Rankings, Webometrics, U.S. News Best Global Universities Ranking, etc. *Regional rankings* analyze universities in a particular region, several regions or countries with a similar level of economy: THE Asia University Rankings, TNE BRICS & Emerging Economies, QS Latin America, QS Emerging Europe & Central Asia, etc. *National rankings* look at universities in a particular country and are created by agencies in that country. In Russia, such agencies include Interfax[3] and Expert-RA[4]. Researchers note the recent trend of ranking universities in one country by the world's leading agencies (THE Japan Universities Ranking).

Based on the **purpose** of the analysis, rankings are divided into *institutional*, *sectoral*, which can also be called *subject*, and *special*. *Institutional rankings* combine lists of universities from different countries, collected and evaluated regardless of a narrow set of characteristics, but included in this list based on a quantitative assessment according to the methodology of this ranking, for example, thresholds can be based on the number of publications of lecturers or points according to the criterion of reputation with employers. *Institutional rankings* also include the leaders of the world rankings – Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), QS World University Rankings. *Subject rankings* evaluate universities in certain areas, which there may be several. University ranking specialists advise to carefully study how the university is ranked in the overall ranking, but most of all – in subjects, because often the university assessed by the enrollee will not have the highest overall ranking. Evaluation of the subject ranking is especially important if the enrollee is interested in a technical specialty or if s/he plans a career in a specific narrow field of knowledge. The UK is very popular with ranking tables Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide, Guardian University Guide and Complete University Guide. The en-

rollee can filter the tables by the subject areas of interest and see which universities have high marks in these areas.

Special rankings are created in response to the request of the target group or as a refinement of existing institutional rankings, for example, QS Graduates Employability Rankings, QS ranking of universities Top 50 under 50, THE Young Universities Rankings and a number of others.

Classification of rankings by **methodology** includes rankings based on an *integration approach*, *multidimensional* and *multi-factor* rankings. Rankings based on the *integration approach* are a list of universities where the ranking is related to the highest cumulative index – i.e. assessment takes place according to a single set of indicators marked with a weighting factor: ARWU, THE, QS, US News, Webometrics, etc. *Multidimensional* and *multi-factor* rankings include lists of universities compiled according to specialized indicators selected by users, for example, the Leiden Ranking (CWTS Leiden Ranking) is an annual global ranking of universities, which is based on bibliometric indicators, and the source of bibliographic data is Web of Science (Clarivate Analytics), ranking takes place in accordance with the number of academic publications, their volume and citation. Another example is U-Multranik – a multidimensional ranking – a ranked list of universities with similar institutional profiles with the ability to create your own query. The ranking was created in 2013 at the initiative of the EU Commission.

The terminological combination *leading international rankings* usually refers to three rankings: QS World University Rankings (QS), Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE) and Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU).

QS World University Rankings (QS) Methodology

QS Quacqarelli Symonds is the world's leading provider of analytics services for the global higher education sector, whose mission is to enable education needs, international scientific mobility and career development. QS World University Rankings – an annually published university ranking, a product of the QS Quacquarelli Symonds system – includes overall and subject rankings, the tools of which are 51 subjects and 5 subject areas (data for 2022). QS World University Rankings is considered the world's most popular source of comparative data on universities success. It also publishes independent regional tables (Asia, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, etc.). QS presents alumni employability rankings, top campus listings, higher education system performance rankings, rankings by location, and business school rankings, including global MBA, EMBA, distance online MBA, and more.

The website www.TopUniversities.com, which hosts QS rankings, was viewed 149 million times in 2019, with more than 94 000 stories related to or mentioning QS rankings published by the media around the world. In addition to publishing rankings of the world's leading universities, QS also compiles QS International Student Survey, the world's largest study of the moods, motivations and preferences of prospective students. A series of student events – QS World Grad School Tour, QS World MBA Tour and QS World University Tour – provided 225 000 enrollees with the opportunity to meet admissions leaders from some of the world's leading universities through 365 events around the world. During the COVID-19 pandemic, QS has been holding its events online so that organizations around the world can still communicate with international enrollees. QS's response to the pandemic also included the development of a series of digital marketing resources for educational institutions designed to provide continuous, high-quality interactions with potential students, and the launch of a series of webinars to allow faculty and university administrators to share best practices and continue to collaborate as educational products migrate to the virtual classroom. The QS Intelligence Unit is the research and professional services division of QS, which provides universities around the world with individual performance benchmarking according to each institution's key metrics: teaching excellence, research impact, reputation, student employability and internationalization. QS hosts international conferences for higher education leaders: these include Reimagine Education – the world's leading conference for teaching and learning innovation; EduData Summit – a space that brings together the world's leading practitioners at the intersection of the world of databases and education; QS APPLE is Asia's premier association for leaders in higher education and a number of thematic summits held with QS partner universities.

QS develops and successfully applies comparative data collection and analysis methods that are used to identify the strengths of educational organizations. QS carried out its first study in 1990, when it conducted a global survey of MBA employers. QS World University Rankings was launched in 2004 and is currently the company's most respected research project. It measures 4 types of indicators: quality of research, demand for graduates by employers, quality of teaching, internationalization. To measure universities reputation, QS uses polling and voting of representatives of the academic community and employers; it also implies quantitative indicators, namely the number of teachers and stu-

dents' citations, the number of international students and teachers. Reputation and quantitative indicators each account for 50% of the final index. The reputation of universities is determined by evaluating the results of voting by experts in five areas: life sciences and biomedicine, social sciences, natural sciences, technology, arts and humanities.

Citations per employee are measured based on WoS, Scopus, and Google Scholar databases. The number obtained from the bases is divided by the number of full-time professors, associate professors and researchers.

To determine the ratio of the number of teachers and students, data are taken from the websites of state education management organizations, statistical bureaus, etc. If it is not possible to calculate the number of full-time students, the total number of students is taken. If employees meet two indicators – the number of teachers and the number of researchers, it is the number of researchers that is considered. Indicators for international teachers are calculated as shares of international employees and students.

Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE) Methodology

Times Higher Education World University Rankings is a global university ranking published annually by Times Higher Education magazine. From 2004 to 2009, Times Higher Education collaborated with QS Quacquarelli Symonds and together published THE – QS World University Rankings. Between 2010 and 2013, there was a collaboration agreement between THE and Thomson Reuters, and in 2014 the magazine signed a new agreement with Elsevier, which provides THE with the data used to compile rankings.

THE publishes an overall world ranking, subject rankings, reputation rankings and 3 regional ranking tables: Asia, Latin America and the BRICS countries. THE ranking is highly appreciated by experts due to the introduction of a new improved ranking methodology since 2010. However, manifestations of subjectivism in the methodology of researching reputation cause criticism and concern of the academic community outside the English-speaking world.

The creation of the original Times Higher Education ranking – QS World University Rankings – is presented in the work by Ben Wildavsky *The Great Brain Race: How Global Universities are Reshaping the World.*

The methodology originally used in 2010–2011 included 13 isolated indicators grouped into 5 categories: teaching (30% of final grade), research (30%), research citations / impact (32.5%), international cooperation (5%), income (2.5%). The number of indicators has grown since THE – QS World University Rankings, which used only 6 indicators.

This methodology has been used since 2010. The original plan was to use 13 indicators, and it was expected that in the future their number could increase to 16. The project outlined categories of indicators such as research indicators (55%), institutional indicators (25%), economic activity / innovation (10%) and international cooperation (10%). The category names and weights for each were changed in the final methodology released on September 16, 2010.

The ranking methodology was changed in 2011–2012. Phil Baty, editor of the project, said that THE is the only world university ranking that focuses on research into the learning environment of universities, while competing rankings focus more on describing research. The advantage of this ranking was also the attention to research in the field of arts, humanities and social sciences, without a predominant emphasis on technical and natural sciences. According to the world academic community, this statement has not been true since 2015, when QS introduced the coefficients of different areas of scientific knowledge into the overall assessment, explaining that citations will be evaluated in such a way that universities specializing in the field of natural and technical sciences do not receive unjustified benefits.

In 2014, Times Higher Education magazine announced the next step in reforming the methodology: the innovation was that the collection of institutional data would now be carried out at its own expense, thus the ranking breaks its connection with Thomson Reuter and focuses on data on publications based on international Elsevier Scopus citations.

Times Higher Education attaches great importance to citation as an indicator of the effectiveness of education. Rankings researchers believe that this criterion is not objective in many respects, because it puts universities where English is not the primary language at a distinct disadvantage, as it is English that is accepted as the international language for most academic communities and journals. Another disadvantage of the methodology is the fact that the results of research in the social sciences and humanities are often published in print publications that are rarely cited or in publications that do not have digital versions.

In Times Higher Education listings, each university has a detailed profile with a breakdown of its overall ranking scores and additional data designed to help students. For example, they provide information on the ratio of staff to students at each university, total income per student, share of international students, etc. Some universities have expanded profiles to showcase their offerings to stu-

dents, as well as their individual strengths and qualities beyond the generally accepted ranking data.

To help students make the most of the rankings' data, THE has created a dedicated section that provides student news and tips, as well as a wide range of student tips blogs.

THE rankings are widely used by educators to inform career decisions, university leaders to set strategic priorities, and governments to monitor education policy as THE ranking is based on one of the richest databases of university success in the world.

All ranking tables can be filtered by country and personalized to create a new ranking for any of the five key performance areas according to the user's preferences. To create the 2021 THE World University Rankings, THE team used an extensive database of hundreds of thousands of data points from over 1 900 global research universities and conducted a global survey of over 22 000 top academics who provided their expert opinions on top world universities in order to form a criterion of academic reputation. In addition, 86 million citations from 13.6 million academic publications (from the Elsevier Scopus database) published over a five-year period from 2016 to 2021 were analyzed.

THE ranking is represented by the following:

1) *Asian University Rankings*, whose methodology emphasizes the assessment of knowledge transfer, income and research productivity, while the reputation of teachers and researchers plays a lesser role. This reflects the close ties of Asian universities to industry, as well as the fact that they tend to be younger than their Western counterparts and therefore usually not as well known to the global academic community.

2) *World Reputation Rankings*, which examine the reputation of the world's top universities based on the largest invitation-only academic survey.

3) *Young Universities Rankings*, which include the best universities in the world that are 50 years old or less. Their methodology reflects the characteristics of young universities, paying less attention to subjective indicators of academic reputation.

4) *Emerging Economies University Rankings* include only institutions in territories classified by the London Stock Exchange's FTSE group as developing countries with advanced economies, aftermarkets or frontier markets. This methodology places less weight on research excellence, reflecting the less mature research systems in many developing countries, and more weight on industry links and international collaboration.

5) *Latin America University Rankings* place less weight on citation impact and more on learning and research environment metrics.

6) *Impact Rankings*. In 2019, the first Impact Ranking was launched, the only global ranking table that ranks universities against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Along with the overall impact rankings, there are 17 tables showing the progress of universities towards each of the SDGs. THE uses carefully calibrated indicators to provide comprehensive and balanced comparisons across four broad areas: research, advocacy, leadership and training.

7) *Europe Teacher Rankings*. These rankings are geographically focused because learning-related data and issues tend to be local rather than global. These rankings give students and families the information they need to choose where to study and are based on a student survey. The overall methodology explores four key areas called pillars: resources, engagement, results and environment.

8) *US College Rankings* are based on a poll of more than 170 000 American college students collected as part of the annual US Student Survey. The methodology consists of 15 performance indicators.

9) *Japan university Rankings* are based on 16 performance indicators, three of which are taken from a poll of Japanese students.

Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) Methodology

Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), also known as the Shanghai Ranking, is compiled at the Institute of Higher Education of Shanghai Jiao Tong University and includes the main institutions of higher education, ranked according to a formula that takes into account: the number of Nobel or Fields Prize graduates (10%), Nobel or Fields Prize-winning staff (20%), Highly Cited Researchers list (20%), articles published in Nature or Science (20%), Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) citation – indices for the sciences and humanities, Science Citation Index and Social Sciences Citation Index, as well as indices of the leading journals – in Arts and Humanities Citation Index (20%), the cumulative result of previous indicators in relation to the number of university staff (10 %).

The ranking methodology was compiled by Liu Niancai and Chen Ying, who explained that the original purpose of this ranking was to describe the causes and extent of the gap between Chinese universities and world universities, primarily in terms of academic and research activities.

Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) was first published in 2003 by the Center for World-Class Universities (CWCU) and the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Graduate School of Education. Since 2009, Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) has been published and copyrighted by Shanghai Ranking Consultancy, an independent higher education research or-

ganization that is not subordinated to universities or government agencies at the legislative level.

ARWU currently uses six objective metrics to rank world's universities: the number of alumni and staff who have received Nobel Prizes and other high honors; the number of highly cited researchers selected by Clarivate Analytics; the number of articles published in Nature and Science journals; the number of articles indexed by the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE) and the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI); academic activity of the university in terms of one person. The annual ranking is based on information about more than 1 800 universities and publishes a list of top 1 000 of them.

Candidate Universities. ARWU considers all universities that have Nobel Laureates, Fields Medalists, highly cited researchers, or articles published in Nature and Science. It also includes universities that have a significant number of articles indexed by the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE) and the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI). In total, more than 2 000 universities have been included in the ranking and information about the top 1 000 has been published.

Criteria and proportionality of ranking. Universities are ranked by several indicators of academic or research activity, including Nobel and Fields Prize winning alumni and staff, highly cited researchers, articles published in Nature and Science journals, articles indexed by major citation indexes, and university academic performance per person. For each indicator, the institution with the highest score is assigned 100 points, and the other institutions are calculated as a percentage of the highest score. The distribution of data for each indicator is examined for significant confounding effects; if necessary, standard statistical methods are used to adjust the indicator. The ranking of a university reflects the number of institutions above it.

Conclusion

Thus, we can see that the differences between the rankings are due to the fact that each of them evaluates universities according to their own criteria. For example, the Shanghai Ranking does not take into account a university's reputation among academics or employers, preferring instead to rank universities based on the level of academic research they provide and the number of awards their employees receive. While THE and QS strive to take research quality into account, neither does so at the expense of the university's reputation in one form or another.

In the case when rankings evaluate the same parameters, their methods, as a rule, differ. 40% of a university's total score in the QS World University Rankings is determined by academic reputation. To evaluate this parameter, scientists from all over the world are interviewed, and they are also asked to evaluate research conducted by other universities. A similar indicator in THE – the reputation of the university teacher – is assessed, on the contrary, by polling scientists with a request to evaluate the quality of teaching at universities, and is only 15% of the total score of the university. This difference is likely to cause both rankings to provide mismatched results.

As our study showed, most ranking companies focus on evaluating the scientific activities of the university; they pay much more modest attention to the mission of universities in society (and, mainly, through the impact of scientific research on regional labor markets and university-related sectors of the economy), the assessment of the quality of education becomes insignificant (due to the lack of data on this sector of the university's activities in the world level). The agency that compiles international university rankings does not disclose information about itself: about its financial and organizational activities, about lists of experts, about calculation methods, this is precisely the reason for the discrepancies in the positions of a particular university according to different ranking agencies. It is important to note that the high positions of universities in global rankings and the number of top universities in the world rankings form a certain contribution to the image of the state, and the attractiveness of the university for foreign applicants increases the share of the educational sector in the country's export structure.

Примечания

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DIFFERENCES IN THE METHODOLOGY TO DETERMINE LEADING UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

Y.N. Ebzeeva

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Moscow

The paper is devoted to the emerging theory of ranking higher educational institutions in Russian higher education and introduces the main terms of this theory (global, leading, institutional, subject, special, multidimensional, multifactor rankings). The massive activity of world's universities ranking is motivated by increased competition between them; competition among the educational systems of various countries and the need for a number of target groups (enrollees, researchers and teachers, employers, state) to obtain objective information from independent sources about the higher education market. World educational space has been using rankings for more than 50 years, for Russian universities promotion in them has been relevant for about 10 years. This fact makes it necessary to get acquainted with the principles and mechanisms of their formation, the choice of guidelines and the formation of development policy in accordance with the goal of promotion in the rankings. The study analyzes three global leader rankings: Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) and Times Higher Education (THE) in terms of their history, evaluation criteria, and methodology features. The research material is QS, ARWU and THE data obtained from ranking websites. The paper also describes the ways of obtaining information and its verification by the indicated rankings. The most significant criteria in the ranking system include the categories of teaching quality, research quality, internationalization, citation, demand for graduates by employers. The conclusion states that for the Russian market of educational services a global ranking has become a marker of efficiency and success, the presence of a university in the three global rankings can be associated with large differences connected with the procedures within the ranking evaluation criteria and with the list of criteria itself. Nevertheless, the aggregate information obtained from these three rankings convincingly reflects the tendency of a particular university to move to the top positions in the rankings, which is a step towards recognizing a ranking as a significant tool for building university development policy.

Keywords: world ranking, ranking, teaching quality, scientific research, university image.