Improve the Rankings of Vietnamese Universities in the Regional and the World University Rankings

Nguyen Quang Giao

Assoc. Professor, The University of Danang, Vietnam

Abstract: *Annually, a number of educational and media organizations around the world issue a ranking of world's leading universities to assess the educational capability of universities as well as the education of a country. Ranking universities took place more than 30 years ago but it has become an influential factor on the academic performance of universities as it is a quick and easy access criterion for students to select a university to study. Therefore, the position on the ranking is the concern of most of the universities in the world including universities in Vietnam. However, at present, Vietnamese universities are not listed on the world university rankings and in the QS Asia University Rankings 2018, Vietnam has only five universities ranked. The paper discusses the importance of university ranking, the current ranking of Vietnamese universities, and suggests ways to improve the ranking of Vietnamese universities on the regional and world university rankings.*

Keywords: Ranking, university, university ranking, improve, Viet Nam

1. Introduction

The quality of education in general and the quality of higher education in particular play an important role in the development of all countries in the world. Therefore, the mission of all universities is to constantly improve the quality of the university. In addition, universities are constantly striving to find objective means of quality recognition and promotion in which improving their ranking on the international university rankings is one of the most effective solutions, especially in the context of the increasing globalization of higher education today. In addition, university rankings and evaluations are an ongoing trend among countries in the world. Universities in Vietnam now need to adopt more consistent and feasible measures to improve their ranking on the regional and international university rankings in order to confirm the quality of institutions while increasing the presence of Vietnam's higher education on the world's higher education quality map.

2. The Importance of University Rankings

University ranking appeared more than 30 years ago but it has received the attention of the society because it is a convenient and fast channel of information for students, parents, and employers to recognize the quality of the training of a university. The university ranking was originally conducted by the media (primarily from the United States), with the goal of providing customers (students, parents, employers) with necessary information when selecting a university or searching for trained human resources to recruit based on the rank of that university on the rankings. The essence of university rankings is the list of ranked university groups according to a series of indicators in a descending order. Similar to performance indicators, the indicators used in the ranking are comprised of a series of individual indicators that provide a statistical picture of the quality or overall performance of the university. In this case, the indicators are used to emphasize the difference between universities, while also weighting for each indicator, then aggregating the scores of some indicators to rank the

universities with the highest total number of scores in a decreasing order. However, the indicators used for the ranking depend on each institution that ranks the university. University ranking has now become a standard feature in most countries with a large university system, a global phenomenon, and a common concern of all communities in the countries of all the continents of the world.

The impact of the ranking has drawn the attention of the universities, especially the large universities, because university rankings have become a quick and relatively meaningful source of reference information for involved parties on the quality of training of the university. University rankings are a great source of information to help students and their parents have the opportunity to choose a college and to help recruiters in selecting the right employees for their organizations. University rankings are also a parameter for universities to compare their training quality with other similar universities. Through ranking, students can choose universities that match their academic ability, and parents can choose universities for their children according to their family's financial situation. Through these rankings, universities can also look at the quality of their training, thus offering a way to innovate the quality of teaching and learning. In addition, ranking will help universities compete with each other to improve their training quality.

3. Current status of Vietnam's Universities Ranking on International Rankings

Until now, the world has more than 16 international rankings. Each ranking group has its own approach and goals, including the three most prestigious QS, THE, and ARWU rankings in the world. All these three rankings are fairly comprehensive in terms of their training, research and internationalization. In particular, the ARWU rankings, which started in 2003, tend to be too biased toward research criteria. The QS ranking has been in place since 2004, with more attention paid to the balance between training and research. The THE rankings have the same origins as QS, but more emphasis is placed on the academic achievements of

the university. In addition to evaluating the scientific performance with high coefficients, the THE ranking also appreciates the university's level of attracting funding from enterprises. However, there are no Vietnamese universities in the global rankings of ARWU, QS or THE.

In the QS Asia 2018 rankings, Vietnam has 5 universities, among of which VNU Hanoi ranks 139, VNU Ho Chi Minh City ranks 142, Hanoi University of Technology is listed in the top 300, Can Tho University is ranked in the top 350 and Hue University is in the top 400. In fact, it is required that Vietnam universities need to invest significantly in international reach and especially in raising the ranking on the international rankings.

(https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2018)

4. Proposed solutions to improve the ranking of Vietnamese universities

4.1 Solutions for developing faculty members

- Increasing the number of lecturers with doctoral degrees and academic titles at universities and for each specialization.
- Improving foreign language skills (especially English) for lecturers.
- Developing the international faculty teaching/ researching at universities and faculty members teaching / researching at foreign institutions of higher education.
- Strengthening the policy of rewarding and motivating lecturers to achieve doctoral degrees and academic titles.
- Applying the rewarding policy, encouraging lecturers to study, publish and achieve international awards.
- Applying the policy of inviting international prestigious lecturers (who win international prizes) to teach/ study at the university.
- Annually, recruiting lecturers with academic titles and degrees to reduce the ratio of students/ lecturers through each year.
- Delivering assignments to faculties in the development of international faculty members to teach/ research at the faculties.

- Recruiting researchers with academic titles, honors, and high academic prestige.
- Paying special attention to the organization of community service activities for participating trainers.

4.2. Solutions to strengthen relations with employers

- Developing/ signing relationships with reputable employers (focusing on companies with international brands).
- Regularly receiving recruitment information from reputable employers and promptly notifying the learners (posting on the website).
- Annually, organizing job recruitment fairs with the participation of prestigious recruiters and organizing performance assessment to timely propose measures to increase the percentage of learners recruited at career fairs.
- Periodically surveying the feedback of the employers about the quality of training products and adjusting and improving the quality of training programs based on survey results.
- Applying the policy of recruiting employers to participate in teaching at the university.
- Recommending reputable employers to allow the post of links on the website of the university and its affiliated institutions on the website of the company.

4.3. Solutions to develop learners

- Developing the number of international learners to study at universities and learners of universities to study at overseas higher education institutions.
- Delivering assignments to faculties in the development of international students to the faculty.
- Ensuring the annual enrollment scale (which can be reduced gradually) in order to reduce the ratio of students/ lecturers each year and at the same time promoting the enrollment of postgraduate students, especially research students.
- Promoting start-up activities among learners.
- Enhancing vocational training and job search support for trainees, especially jobs suitable to training majors.
- Organizing the survey of learners' opinions on the quality of the university on a regular basis and systematically.
- Paying attention to the level of satisfaction of the students about the quality of the university including the satisfaction level across each year.
- Focusing on organizing community service activities for learners.

4.4. Solutions to develop training programs

- Developing training programs with international standards.
- Announcing the training program of specializations (in English) on the university website.
- Strengthening the accreditation of training programs in accordance with international standards and promoting accredited training programs.

4.5 Solutions for the development of scientific research

- Developing a scientific database of university lecturers (focusing on articles published in prestigious international academic journals).
- Requesting lecturers to update (at least once a month) scientific articles posted on the CV and Google Scholar.
- Implementing consistently the regulation that lecturers must use the name of the university when publishing internationally.
- Establishing the scientific resume and database of faculty members in English.
- Publishing information/ statistics of the research paper and work of the university in English on the website.
- Applying policies encouraging faculty members to cite papers and scientific work of their colleagues, especially for articles published in internationally renowned academic journals, with a focus on increasing the citation rate according to the faculty/ department / major.
- Encouraging university lecturers to combine with international lecturers/ researchers (focus on highly respected faculty in academics) to study and publish joint research.
- Strengthening the reward system for articles published in prestigious international academic journals.
- Promoting intellectual property activities and enhancing the publicity and updating of products with intellectual property certificates of lecturers and learners of the university.

4.6. Improving the identity/ public image of the university

- Strengthening the organization and promotion of the image of the university and higher education institutions through the organization of international conferences.
- Building/ editing interface which is friendly, full of key information and easy to find (in both Vietnamese and English).
- Enhancing the articles in English on the website.
- Regularly disclosing the university records and update the university records (publicly available in English).
- Strengthening the application of information technology in management and administration.
- Applying network security measures to ensure the operation of the network and database.
- Conducting and publishing annual reports/ quarterly reports/ monthly reports (in English) on the website.
- Regularly carrying out self-assessment to improve the quality of school management.

5. Conclusion

University rankings help promote the image of universities as well as affirming the quality of the school's product. University rankings are one of the measures to improve quality and are a trend in the context of integration and development today as higher education is gradually being regionalized and internationalized. As for higher education in Vietnam, according to the Prime Minister's Decision No. 121/2007 / QD-TTg approving the master plan for the network of universities and colleges in the 2006-2020 period,

Vietnam must have one university which is ranked among the top 200 universities in the world by 2020. This requires universities to implement well the quality assurance of schools while paying attention to the investments into fields with indicators set by the institution/ organization to apply the system of measures in a consistent manner to ensure the achievement and continuous improvement of quality.

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Author Profile

Nguyen Quang Giao is the Acting Vice Director of Center for Education Accreditation, The University of Da Nang, Vietnam. He is a Assoc.Prof. Dr. in Education. His research areas are the management of higher education quality. He has performed seven scientific researches and more than 40 scientific papers published in the special journals of the Ministry of education - training and the Da Nang University in 2004 so far as: Journal of Education; Journal of science education; Journal of science - technology of Da Nang University. In addition, many works have been reported in the national and international science education proceedings and workshops.

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