Comparative Analysis of the Role of the University Ranking Positions under Conditions of Globalization in the Motivation of Prospective Students in 2011-2014

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Citation: Avralev NV, Rykhtik MI, Baluev DG. Comparative Analysis of the Role of the University Ranking Positions under Conditions of Globalization in the Motivation of Prospective Students in 2011-2014. Global Media Journal. 2016, S2: 10.

Abstract

The article describes Russian and foreign universities as subjects of the new trends of global competition and the integration into the world educational space in general, attempts to analyze the influence of the role of universities ranking positions and brand on the psychological aspects of the motivation of prospective students, as well as guidelines for the development of higher education in modern Russia in this context. It is an attempt to analyze the main trends in the development of higher education in modern Russia, aimed at forming a new innovation-oriented person, professional with a wide range of knowledge and skills and with the ability of continuous learning. It is analyzing the reasons, factors and criteria that have a decisive influence on the choice of the university; recent trends in world ranking practice of institutions of higher education, the variability in the concepts and approaches to the interpretation of the goals and objectives of the process. It is described the key mechanisms of formation the favorable information field for working with prospective students, determined the most effective channels and content of communication, opinion leaders, providing one of the determining influence to the choice of the university, a forecast of its kind in the communications policy, with both local prospective students, and prospects for development in the framework of international promotion nationwide trend to improve the quality of Russian higher education and competitiveness of Russian universities among the world's leading research and education centers. The value of research, according to the authors, is in analysis the dynamics of the most current trends in higher education in 2011-2014 years and prospects for further research.

Keywords: Educational need; Motivation; Brand of the university; Rankings; International recruiting; Global competitiveness; Psychology of choice.

Introduction

The present level of development of any country and its place in the global division of labor are increasingly determined by the quality and quantity of human capital that it has. Improving the human capital, accompanied by an increase in its value, allows increasing the efficiency of using all resources. Therefore, the level of development of the country depends on the creation and maintaining at the proper level of an effective system of reproduction of the human capital, the main component of which is education. In these circumstances, the role of universities can not be overestimated.

The change of Russian economic policy towards the innovative way of development, focus on improving the efficiency of the economy suggest qualitative changes, structural changes, new approaches to the formation and development of the educational sphere. Therefore, the formation of full and effective functioning of the education market is an important factor in the creation of human capital and it should be seen as a necessary condition, and the main means of implementing a strategy aimed at maintaining a high level of production and the country's competitiveness in the global market.

Problems of competition in the field of higher education are

particularly importance in terms of development of market relations. Variability and dynamic environment of the market environment in this period reached the highest degree. Adapting to it and in conditions when universities are becoming as subjects of market relations it leads to the need for assessment of their competitive position. This is largely due to the same time as the actual processes of reforming the education system, have a direct impact on the development of competition between universities. Identification of the competitive position of universities, in addition, is directly related to improving the quality of education in determining the status and effectiveness of the educational process and is one of the most important elements of modern Russian policy in the field of higher education.

Infiltrating in the higher education sector, market actualizes the problem of improving the competitiveness of higher education institutions, which come into competition with each other for prospective students, as well as fighting for the factors of production among themselves and with companies in other industries. Raising the level of competitiveness of the university impact to the quality and quantity of human capital positively, which is the goal of the operation of any institution ultimately.

The obvious reason for the growth of the relevance studying the problems of education and motivation of learning is increasingly close relationship with these problems of socio-economic development of society, as education provides feedback to all spheres of social life: economic, political and cultural. Experiencing the social pressure of these subsystems, it turns them into stable forms of knowledge about the world as repetitive behaviors of students and forms the value system of the young generation, which creates the possibility of further development of society.

The effectiveness of higher education in the new economy becomes a strategic trend of innovation policy in a growing number of countries. Recently, more attention is paid to the importance of research of leading universities and their contribution to the solution of major global problems of mankind. Thus the main objective of higher education is the goal of helping its region in the alignment and acceleration of economic development in the fight against poverty and social inequality [1].

Support for higher education is always has double requirements. On the one hand, society is interested in the system of mass higher education for a large number of students, and on the other hand it is always striving to create the conditions for world-class universities.

World-class universities may have different concepts and not be perfect in all areas; however they should always serve as reference models for other universities. This applies not only to scientific research but also to other areas such as ethical behavior, respect for democratic principles and transparent student recruitment, career development practice.

The history of higher education shows that a world-class educational institution cannot be created by government order. Most of these schools have evolved gradually over a long time cultivating links with scientific communities by supporting initiatives in the area of teaching and research.

Taking into account the needs of society, the labor market and the reasons associated with decision-making, there is a need to assess the activities of the universities.

One approach which is associated with the "quality challenge" is to determine the rankings and the compilation of lists of leading universities. A brief definition of the ranking can be a constant approach with appropriate methodologies and procedures for displaying the status of comparative education as whole or certain areas of their activities [2].

Often it is expressed in idea that higher education institutions should cooperate and compete for high standard of education quality. Borrowing experience as a self-help tool for institutions, combining the advantages of quality improvement it is mainly based on an internal evaluation, sharing of best practices, it fits well with the spirit of cooperation. On the other hand, the rankings primarily stimulate competition between higher education institutions at the national and international levels, the latter contributing to the formation of the so-called world-class university [3]. Some scholars are even regarding universities not merely as state instruments but as semi-independent as actors in the political arena [4]. The world has enough criteria and indicators to evaluate the development of a country and to see the perspective necessary to pay more attention to the fundamental sources of development and primarily education. Arguments about human capital are meaningless without education. In the 21st century people need to get new skills and knowledge than earlier and the modern education system must adapt to this requirements. Globalization of higher education is the most important part of the global innovation economy [5]. Educational and research functions of universities are increasingly become a critical link in global innovation linkages. Today, the effectiveness of the integration of education, science and business to a large extent depends on the prospects for socio-economic development, competitiveness and effectiveness of responses to the new challenges of the global economy [6].

Materials and Methods

One of the main mechanisms for promoting higher education institutions in the rankings is to integrate the resources, talents and motivated young people aimed at the result. International practice shows the increase of competitiveness, it is necessary to create a set of strategic initiatives of the world's leading centers [7].

In recent years the number of international and national rankings is significantly increased, as well as their importance grew for the functioning of institutions of higher education at the level of the higher education system as a whole and individual institutions in particular. In this context, the rapid quantitative growth of higher education in Russian definition of rankings should be seen as a logical step aimed at improving the quality.

Analysis of both rankings and motivations of consumers of educational services provides a basis for adjustment of curricula, and to improve governance in the educational process, as well as to improve the whole university policy aimed at the development of methods to find candidates and attract potential students to the university.

The motivation for higher education is one of the leading places in the structure of personality. Changes in the higher education system are the result of our country's reform and new requirements to all aspects of social activity. The problem of goal-setting in terms of reforming the education of society becomes more actual and as a consequence of it the reform of the higher education system started. The speed and depth of the changes occurring in the environment encourage universities to seek new ideas, build systems and structures that are adequate to the requirements of the labor market and educational services [8].

Analysis of educational needs and motivations of entrants we can see that rankings of universities serve as a tool to detect changes in the prospects for higher education. The reforms of social life in our country have significantly changed the situation in the field of higher education, the system of values in life, the hierarchy of motives for choice of profession by young people.

Any education system is characterized by its main function to create all conditions for adequate human adaptation to the socio-cultural realities that prevail in a given society. The internal content of education depends on the ideas, needs, ideals that exist in a given socio-cultural environment, and aims to maintain its foundations by creating a certain image of man.

Education reflects the level of development of society, its interests and needs, embodies the particular individual as a typical representative of this society. Education contributes to the formation of just such a man who express the interests of society in which he/she was educated.

Currently, Russian education is characterized by high standards of educational services and increasing competition from both public and private universities in order to attract new students. In this regard, an important component is to conduct a serious research of socio-typological characteristics of prospective students. It is also important to study the social status of the parents paying for their children's education, thus expanding the target audience of consumers of educational services.

In a globalized world, education is becoming an international institution. Education becomes a continuous process that occurs throughout life, providing the professional growth of the individual.

Every university has a definite place in total mass of universities. The different criteria may be the basis of a hierarchy of universities, such as number of students, the width of coverage areas and specialties of higher education, the possibility of providing additional educational services (presence of study centers, short and long term rates), the quality of the university services, etc.

Analysis of consumers of educational services, the extent of their interest and motivation creates a foundation for adjustment of curricula, improving the management of the educational process, and for improving the policy of the university, aimed at the development of methods to search for new prospective students and to attract potential students.

The relevance of the study is due to the reform of the education system. Over the past ten years in Russia the market of educational services emerged, on which a large number of both public and private higher education institutions are competing for attracting students.

One of the main target audience and subject of perceiving the image of the university are prospective students. Boys and girls are able to select one or another institution, and external branding university indicators have a certain influence on their choice place of learning. Certain characteristics of the image are motivators in choice of the university. Perceiving the image of the university as an image representation, students compare the characteristics of the image of the university with own motives and general cognitive learning motives, and based on this comparison, decide to study at a particular university [9].

International rankings are traditionally perceived as an important component of economic development evaluation and comparison of the achievements of higher education around the world [10].

In general we can say that the objectives of determining the rankings are:

- Providing the public with information regarding the university to make a decision on an individual or group level (prospective students, parents, politicians, foundations, employers, etc.);
- Developing of competition;
- Stimulating the growth of centers of excellence;
- Providing additional confirmation for the allocation of funds.

Results

Thus, the global rankings already tightly joined the life of the university and national policies of many countries, becoming a prominent factor of the education market.

Meanwhile it is problematic to determine by several reasons which universities are better and which are worse. When it comes to universities in different countries, the assessment of their quality is further complicated. In this regard, in many countries a lot of work related to the development of the global university rankings, designed to inform the public, at least, about the best universities of the world.

Russian universities are increasingly integrated into the global educational environment, engaging also in fierce competition with the leading universities of the world, promoting its educational programs and services to the global education market, increasing the level of internationalization and recruitment foreign students and teachers, as well as leading scientists. Therefore it is very important for students, both Russian and foreign, in the choice of the university to account for rated characteristics, image and reputation of the university in the global educational space [11].

The typical modern Russian student has a number of dominant characteristics. Students have a high level of claims in relation to training, aimed at obtaining the profession which will be demand in society. This social group is characterized by an independent decision-making. Pragmatism in professional work continues to play a dominant role among the goals of student's learning.

Relevance of the topic is high due to the fact that the issue ranking of universities is closely linked with motivation, and is essentially a question of the quality of the education, the success of social and

psychological adaptation of young people in terms of university studies, the effectiveness of training future specialists.

Choice of high ranking universities by prospective students is a task with many unknowns and their future depends on the successful solution in this question. Each entrant understands that education is now an integral part of his/her life. Therefore, the demand for educational services is enough high. Competitive advantages are provided by universities that have a high intellectual potential to create unique expertise implementing the concept of "education throughout life." [Development Strategy of Lobachevsky State University of Nizhni Novgorod – National Research University until 2020] [12].

At present, the task of universities is not only to give young people the prerequisites for permanent, continuous lifelong education, which is an important feature of the modern system of higher education, but also to prepare them for a flexible change of professions and occupations that requires the formation in the young people of relevant personal qualities, skills, competencies, etc [13].

Discussion

As part of the policy of the Lobachevsky University in the implementation of new forms and methods of working with students, forming an integrated image of the University in the school environment, as well as the objectives of the definition of motivational components of the prospective students in 2011-2014 years, during the summer admission campaign, a series of sociological researchs [12].

The main purpose of this study is to analyze how Russian and international rankings of universities influence to the choice of prospective students, as well as the causes and factors that have a decisive influence on their choice.

The researchers raised a number of problems, the main are as follows:

- To determine the demographic portrait of UNN entrant for 2011-2014 years (sex, place of residence, marital status), as well as an educational institution, which he/she completed;

- To identify the most popular sources of information on high school students;

- To determine the efficiency of the official website of the university, the achievement of its goals and objectives in the context of attracting applicants for admission;

- To identify the level of student's awareness about the participation of Russian universities in the domestic and international ranking systems and in particular the inclusion of UNN into QS World University Ranking with position of 701+;

- To analyze the effect of rankings to the motivation of prospective students when they choose the university.

It was conducted the research with aim to identify the motivation of students when they choose university, specifically Lobachevsky University (University of Nizhni Novgorod, UNN) in 2011-2014 years [12]. The research was conducted with the help of the working tools like questionnaire. It was answered by 753 to 913 respondents each year. Time period of research was June, 20 to July 20 every year.

General population in our research was the number of students who applied to the UNN in 2011-2014 years. It is about 3,700 people each year. The sample size is calculated by using traditional statistical methods was:

$$n = \frac{t^2 * \delta^2 * N}{t^2 * \delta^2 + \Delta^2 * N}$$

Where n – the amount of the general population

δ – the dispersion of the studied trait

Δ – set limit sampling error

t – confidence

$$n = \frac{3^2 * 1^2 * 3700}{3^2 * 1^2 + 0.1^2 * 3700} = \frac{33300}{46} = 724 \text{people}$$

Thus, the representativeness of the sample is to be achieved through a research of at least 724 students. Due to the certain time limitations and heterogeneity of stream prospective students sample size ranged from 753 to 913 respondents, which satisfies the minimum value required to achieve representativeness. **(Table 1)**

In this research, applicants were asked a series of questions regarding their awareness of the world rankings of universities and the importance of ranking performance when choosing the university **(Table 2)**.

As we can see from the table above, the majority of respondents have information about the rankings, although it should be noted that there is a tendency to increase the number of students who have heard of the ranking (in the sum of 1 and 2 responses) from 58.8% in 2011 to 73.8% in 2014. This trend illustrates the growing interest of students to the university rankings, so it is needed to continue working to inform students, future students about university rankings, so they can see the rank of the institution where they are going to enter, any of its ranking compared to the other, etc. **(Table 3)**

Comparative analysis shows that the majority of respondents answered that the ranking of the university is an important factor **(Table 4)**.

Comparative analysis of 2011-2014 years shows that if in 2011

Table 1 Selection of UNN applicants in 2011-2014.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number	753	892	913	883

Table 2 Awareness of students of Russian and world rankings.

Year	I know, it is important	I know, but do not attach importance	I've never heard
2011	38.30%	20.50%	41.20%
2012	39,70%	21,40%	38,90%
2013	42,30%	27,90%	29,80%
2014	41,50%	32,30%	26,20%

Table 3 Comparative analysis of the importance of ranking positions for high school students.

Year	Yes, it affected my choice	No, it does not affect the choice of institution	It is difficult to answer
2011	55,10%	19,80%	25,10%
2012	59,7%	29,50%	10,80%
2013	53,20%	28,60%	18,20%
2014	69,50%	20,30%	10,20%

Table 4 Awareness of applicants to join UNN in the Top-700 QS World University Rankings.

Year	Yes, it affected my choice	Yes, but it did not affect my choice	I've never heard
2011	15,30%	24,80%	59,90%
2012	24,20%	27,80%	48,00%
2013	25,20%	28,60%	46,20%
2014	37,60%	42,40%	20,00%

year the majority of respondents (59.9%) have heard about this ranking in first time, then in 2014 year, only one of 5 respondents answered that they hear about the QS World University Rankings in first time.

Conclusion

A sociological research devoted the causes and factors that influence the motivation of students when choosing the university, we carried out a systematic analysis of primary and secondary information. For primary data collection we asked respondents to answer the questionnaire, after which all data was obtained and reduced to a more compressed view and then we analyzed.

We came to the following conclusions when analyzed the results of this research:

– It showed that 27.8% of respondents have heard mostly about the world ranking of universities QS, and 15.5% of the total number have not just heard about fact that Lobachevsky University entered into QS World University Rankings, but also it is stated that it affected their choice.

– 59.4% of the respondents when answering another question noted that the ranking of the University is important factor whenever choosing an educational institution in general;

– Respondents mainly focus on the information obtained from representatives of the University's Open Days, the advice of friends or parents, acquaintances and on their own opinion.

Currently in a period of fierce competition, the role of rankings of universities is important, reflecting the position of universities and forming in the minds of consumers of educational services, the reputation and image of the university.

This research illustrates the current state of awareness of students, the criteria of choice the university, determines the degree of influence of various factors upon admission and many other indicators.

The results can be used for more detailed research aimed at investigating the characteristics and motivation of students when choosing a university, and the impact of ranking on the choice of university.

In the new conditions in global educational market rankings must meet such additional requirements as objectivity in the reflection of the strengths and weaknesses of each university, the increasing focus on applied research results and work.

New trends in the ranking of universities, scientific research, both fundamental and applied nature, shows that it is needed for Russian authorities to support national educational initiative and enhance competitiveness of Russian high school. It is clear that global rankings may not be the only criterion for inclusion of Russian universities in the global educational space. However, the rankings reflect part of the formal indicators such as the share of foreign students and professors, and largely affect the opinion of the academic community regarding domestic universities.

The involvement of Russian universities in the global educational space can be described with the help of the positions of universities in the rankings. The positions of Russian universities in the indicated rankings today are extremely low and and does not fully reflect the peculiarities of Russian education and scientific achievements.

In the modern world there is a constantly growing demand for transparent and objective tools to assess the quality of education [14]. For these purposes there are different accreditation centers and specialized agencies. However, the accreditation process does not solve all the problems associated with the choice of institution and field of study, with the placement of the state order for training of specialists with opening/closing of certain educational programs at the university, etc.

In these conditions the popularity of universities rankings is increasing. Appearing as a tool for internal comparisons (students, faculty, departments), the rankings have gradually become part of the infrastructure of national education and innovation systems. They are largely allowed to make informed decisions at the state level representatives of different target audiences: prospective students and their parents, employers and human resources, the management of universities, the education authorities [15].

Globalization has also affected the field of higher education: in recent years there has been rapid growth of academic and student mobility, dramatically increased the number of programs of "double degree", significantly increased the interest solvent applicants and their parents to foreign training. It is formed the international market of educational services by the end of the 20th century. The annual market is about several tens of billions of dollars. According to some estimates, more than 2.5 million students studying outside their home country annually and this figure is increasing by 20% on average. It is therefore particularly important today, in light of the impact of the ranking position of the university on the preferences of entrants, it is the promotion of the university in the largest and reputable ranking agencies, which in the future will be improving the research climate, the increasing amount internationalization and commercialization of products of intellectual activity in the university, the increase of the interaction with the largest scientific centers of the world of innovative projects, implementation of new management

standards, qualitative transformation of the higher education system in Russia in accordance with the best international standards.

The education system is the leading social institution that creates and produces intellectual potential of society, with the starting point, the catalyst of the system of education, in high school. The core activities of universities are the interaction of students, prospective students and teachers, the principal actors in the field of higher education. It is a process of interaction between the quality and quantity of the intellectual potential of society, its human resources, which have received increasing attention in our country in recent years. It should be noted that education is a significant sphere of human activity that provides social progress, the level of civilization and development of spiritual and cultural sphere. The level of development and characteristics of the formation of the higher education system can be judged from an economic, moral and cultural development of our society.

Ranking is currently one of the different types of systems, comparative evaluation of the educational institution in the field of higher education. Comparative evaluation of universities is interest not only for students and their parents, but also for employers, professional associations and associations of universities, as well as for education authorities. Ranking eases the process of choice the university. Currently in a highly competitive environment, the role of university rankings reflects the position of universities and forming image of the university in the minds of consumers of educational services.

Involvement of Russian universities in the world educational space can be characterized by the position of universities in the rankings. The position of Russian universities in the designated rankings to date is very low and can satisfy neither the domestic academic community, education authorities, students or the public.

Today there is an increasing demand for transparent and objective assessment tools of quality of education. For this purpose it is various accreditation centers and agencies. However, the accreditation procedure can not solve all the problems related to the choice of institution and specialty, with the placement of the state order for training of specialists, with the opening/closing of certain educational programs in high school, etc. [16]

Under these conditions the popularity of universities rankings is growing. Appearing as a tool for intrahigh comparisons, rankings have gradually become part of the infrastructure of national education and innovation systems. It is largely allowed to make informed decisions across the state representatives of different target audiences: students and their parents, employers and professional recruitment agencies, leadership of universities, educational authorities [17].

It becomes important today, in situation of the impact of university ranking positions to preferences of prospective students, to develop mechanisms of promotion university, the consequence of which in the future will improve the research climate, increasing the volume of internationalization and commercialization of intellectual activity in high school, an increase in jointly implemented innovation projects with global major research centers, introduction of new management standards, qualitative transformation of the system of higher education in Russia in accordance with the best international practical standards.

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