



World University Ranking: Implication for Library and Information Science Education and Practice

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Abstract

University Ranking is a major yardstick for measuring University prestige, attracting students, research funders, this lead many Universities in to making concerted efforts to improve their rankings, with little success. It has been observed that many universities in developing countries did not make it into the world university ranking, (WUR). The aim of this paper is to uncover the challenges militating against universities attaining improved rankings and roles plays by universities library systems in improving the rankings of universities. Content analysis research methodology was adopted for the study; purposive sampling procedure was used, where home pages of four ranking bodies and some documents were considered as sources of data. The finding arising from the study reveals that, most of the ranking bodies studied have similar indicators/criteria in assessing and evaluating the universities; major indicators/criteria were citations, international faculty staff / ratio, academic reputation – teaching quality, research reputation –research volume and focus area and employer reputation. It also discovered that academic library plays a great role in maintaining and upholding the standard of an institution in terms of its academic performance, rankings and prestige among its pairs. It is therefore, recommended that for universities to attend better ranks emphasis should be focus on encouraging staff and students to publish their research output in a world reputable Journal registered with world known bibliometrics (paper/citation metrics) such as Scopus, Thomson Reuters Indexing database, for their work to be present and cited across the globe and many more.

Key words: world universities, Ranking bodies, Nigerian universities, rankings criteria, library services, Librarians.

Introduction

University Ranking being one of the major yardsticks for measuring University prestige, it is increasingly becoming an accepted measure for attracting students, research funders and high ranks. As a result, many Universities are making efforts to improve their rankings. Several units and departments in Universities are contributing towards improving university rankings; one of the departments is the university library systems. Therefore, library educators indirectly play an important role in ensuring that universities improved their rankings.



It has been observed that many universities in developing countries did not make it into the world university ranking, (WUR). However, many universities in the region have taken considerable efforts to improve their rankings but with little success, this is a big challenge for universities. Many reasons have been identified as hindrance to universities in developing countries for not making it to the global ranking. Kpolovie, (2013) stated that the low rating of Universities in developing countries is a product of the escalating rot in the system. Decadent infrastructure, unprecedented number of strikes, in an atmosphere of brain drain, where both teachers and students are moving out in droves to teach and study in foreign countries, because of the nation's poor learning environment, Nigerian Universities cannot rank high among its peers in the world. University in developing countries must rethink and remain focus toward improving their positions as rankings are likely to substantially influence the long-term development of higher education across the world. Particularly that, ranking though still in a process of rapid evolution have arrived and come to stay.

Unfortunately, there exist very little empirical enquiry that identified and discuss various criteria vis a vis the roles of academic units such as the university Library in the ranking process. The consequence of this is that, university administrators, educational planners, and donor agencies with interest in educational sectors find it difficult to allocate resources for desired strategies that would improve university rankings. With specific example from Nigeria this paper, report finding of empirical study that are particularly useful for Universities that are desire of improving their rankings particularly, the ones in low- income economy.

Rankings is the act of comparing two or more organisations, educational institutions such as universities, colleges and etc, with the sole aim of identifying the best among them in terms of identified and stated qualities or indicators, such as facilities, quality of teaching, research output, student teacher ratio and etc. The ranking could be globally, regionally or within a country (Rauhvargers, 2011). University rankings or "league tables," a novelty as recently as 15 years ago, are today a standard feature in most countries with large higher education systems. They were originally created over 20 years ago in order to meet a perceived market need for more transparent, comparative data about educational institutions (Usher & Savino, 2006). Similarly, Marginson (2007) stated that rankings attract more people to the institutions with high ranks within a country and across the globe. Likewise, International rankings are influencing decision-making within institutions and even affecting national systems of education in some countries (Williams, 2008).

ARWU considers every university that has any Nobel Laureates, Fields Medalists, Highly Cited Researchers, or papers published in Nature or Science. In addition, universities with significant amount of papers indexed by Science Citation Index-Expanded (SCIE) and Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) are also included. In total, more than 1000 universities are actually ranked and the best 500 are published on the web.(ARWU, 2013)

According to ARWU, the selection criteria are four namely, quality of education, quality of faculty, research output, and per capita performance. Each one of these has 30%, 40%, 20% and 10% weight points respectively. The indicators are six: (ARWU, 2013)

The following below are the list of indicators for the (ARWU)

- i. Alumni of an institution winning World Nobel Prizes and Field Medals (10%)
- ii. Staff of an institution winning Nobel prizes and Field Medals (20%)
- iii. Highly cited researchers in 21 broad subject categories (20%)
- iv. Papers Published in Nature and Science (20%)
- v. Paper Indexed in Science Citation Index Expanded and Social Science Citation Index (20%)



- vi. Per capita academic performance of an institution (10%)

The (THE) also uses five criteria for its rankings (THE, 2013)

- i. Teaching: the learning environment (worth 30% of the overall ranking score)
- ii. Research: volume, income and reputation (30%)
- iii. Citations: research influence (30%)
- iv. Industry income: innovation (2.5%)
- v. International outlook: staff, students and research (worth 7.5 per cent).

Teaching, carrying a weight of 30%, which is worthy since all global rankings are known to be heavily research-biased. However, the problem lies on the details. The dominant performance indicator (representing 15% of the overall ranking score) used for Teaching results from a survey of worldwide experienced scholars' (about 16,600) perception of the prestige of a particular university in teaching. The reputation of these scholars worldwide seems to be mainly through their research work, hardly through their teaching. In this case, it is clear that these scholars perceive the universities not from the teaching angle but from the research perspectives. To qualify teaching, it requires pedagogical knowledge as well. The other indicators are faculty-student ratio that represents 4.5%, which does give a crude indication of the quality of teaching; the proportion of doctoral degrees awarded as a proportion of bachelor's degrees and as a proportion of faculty, together counting for 8.25%, but it is questionable whether these are indicators of good teaching and learning; and finally, the institutional income per faculty (2.25%), adjusted for purchasing-power parity, aiming to give an indication of the institution's infrastructure and facilities. (THE, 2013) All these are economic matters. Truly, economic situation affects teaching and education, but do not necessarily bring quality.

Research is the second criterion used and it counts 30% of the overall ranking score. Here again, 16,000+ scholars perception predominates the performance indicator (18%) on the university's reputation for research excellence. This means that, the total ranking score of a university is based on the subjective opinion of scholars and their research dominated perception. The other indicators are the institutional research income per faculty (6%) and the number of papers published in quality, peer-reviewed journals per faculty (6%). It should be noted here that any university that publishes less than 200 papers annually such university is excluded from the THE Rankings competition, and this has implications for African universities and many other newly established universities. (Mohammedbhai, 2012)

The paper is divided as follows: 1- background to the study, 2- review of the related literatures, 3- methodology, 4, findings 5- discussion of the findings. 6- Implications of findings, conclusions and recommendations for the research.

Problems Statements of the Study

World University Ranking being one of the major indices used in measuring and determining the quality, standard or prestige of an institution of higher learning, it is also use as bait for attracting students, funders, as well as high skill researchers from across the globe, as such it has become a matter of competition among universities. Yet, most of the Nigerians Universities seems did not give a required attention to it. It appears that, most of Nigerian Universities with the exception of University of Ibadan (UI) and Covenant University ranks very low or not even appears among the tops African universities not to talk of the world ranking league (Kpolovie & Obilor, 2013) and (Okebukola, 2019). This might be attributed to some reasons; which could be stringent criteria used by the ranking bodies.

Unfortunately, very few empirical studies seeks to identified and figure out criteria vis a vis the roles of academic units like Library in the ranking process. The effect of these is that, university



administrators, educational planners, and donor agencies with interest in educational sectors may encounter some difficulty to allocate required resources for desired strategies that would improve university rankings.

The aim of this paper is to uncover the ranking agencies, the criteria adopted by the agencies and the roles plays by universities library systems in improving the rankings of universities.

Research Questions

In order to help universities in developing countries develop strategies for improving ranking, the study sought to answer the following questions.

1. What agencies are involved in the world universities ranking?
2. What are the common criteria adopted by agencies in ranking universities?
3. What roles do libraries play in improving university rankings?

Review of the Related Literature

Agencies Responsible for World University Rankings

As valuable as the rankings, many organisations across the globe engaged in this activity. Likewise, Universities and academic institutions participate with the aims of meeting up with the current global trends in higher educational system. Among the several agencies that carry out rankings, there are most prominent ones that their publications brought prominence and widely attracted the attention of policy makers, the scientific world and the public media: such as the rankings published by the *Jiao Tong University* in Shanghai ('Academic Ranking of World Universities', SJTU 2003; 2004; 2005) and the rankings published by *Times Higher Education Supplement* ('World University Rankings', THES 2004, 2005), Quacquarelli Symonds and webometrics world ranking body. However, these prominent world ranking bodies have been criticized by many scholars for been bias in their criteria, indicators and coverage. For instance, it should be noted here that any university that publishes less than 200 papers annually, such university is excluded from the THE Rankings competition, and this has implications for African universities and many other newly established universities. (Mohammedbhai, 2012)

Problems of Ranking Procedure and Policy Limitations of Ranking Organization

Rankings are also used in many national systems to provide relevant data and information to guide student choice making and in some countries it help in allocating of public funds and also simply to feed public strong desire relevant for data on higher education standard and status at a particular period of time (Marginson and Wende, 2007) this is the main reason why various mass media companies have most a times been in the forefront of rankings development: Relative rankings are engaging in their own right, regardless of the managerial uses to which the data are put and the effects they might have. In the United States, the annual U.S. News & World Report (USNWR) survey, which started in 1983, has become a leading factor in determining institutional prestige and influencing flows of students, faculty, and resources.

On the other hand, another scholar stated that, comparison of 10 rankings by Van Dyke (2005) concludes that although the rankings share broad principles and approaches, they considerably differ in detail related to aims, systems, cultures, and availability and reliability of data. A common problem is that



most rankings systems give reason to evaluate universities as a whole. As Rocki (2005), stressed that in reflecting on the Polish experience, the various ranking procedure and criteria used, suggest that any single, objective ranking could not exist. In another research by Dill and Soo (2005) compared five rankings system, they find that the tables vary in their validity, comprehensiveness, comprehensibility, relevance, and functionality, although they conclude that, nevertheless, definitions of academic quality are tending to converge. This is counteracted by Usher and Savino (2006), who cover 19 league tables and university rankings systems from around the globe. Like Van Dyke (2005), they make the point that the different rankings systems are driven by different purposes and are associated with different notions of what constitutes university quality: Quality in higher education is an extremely challenged idea They also noted that there is an arbitrary character in the weightings applied in construct composite indexes covering various features of quality or performance:

Research Methodology

In order to answer research question 1 and 2 the researchers adopted content analysis. According to Brewer and Hunter (1989) Content analysis is a research method that is used to systematically evaluate the symbolic content of all forms of recorded communications. These communications can also be analyzed at many levels (image, word, roles, etc.), thereby creating a realm of research opportunities. content analysis can assess the effects of environmental variables (e.g., regulatory, economic, and cultural) and source characteristics (attractiveness, credibility, and likability) on message content, in addition to the effects (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) of different kinds of message content on receiver responses. The researchers adopted content analysis procedure. As described earlier that, content analysis method has been widely used in several areas of interest that seek to examine trends and patterns in documents, provides an empirical basis for monitoring shifts in public opinion etc. (Meyer, 2016) hence; this method was found relevant to the study. As it seek to identify the various world ranking bodies, examine their criteria and indicators

Table 1: Tabular Presentation some of Ranking Bodies, their Titles, URLs, Year Established, Data Sources, and Locations

1	Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)	ShanghaiRanking Consultancy	http://www.shanghai-ranking.com/	2003	Thomson Reuters/ The QS Intelligence Unit.	China
2	Times Higher Education World University Ranking	Times Higher Education	https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-ranking	2004	QS/Thomson Reuters	Britain
3	QS Ranking	Quacquarelli Symonds	www.topuniversities.com/Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)	2004/2010	QS Company Limited	UK
4	Webometrics ranking	world Cybermetrics Centre de Ciencias Humanas y	lab, https://www.webometrics.info/en/current_edition	2004	Webometrics	Spain
5	World's Best Universities Ranking US News &	World Report in cooperation with QS Symonds, US	https://www.usnews.com/education/best-global-universities/rankings	2014	Thomson Reuters,	USA
6	Global Universities Ranking	Reitor (Peitrop)		2003		Russia



7	Leiden Ranking	Leiden University	https://www.leidenranking.com/	2014	The CWTS Leiden Ranking is based on bibliographic data from the Web of Science database of Clarivat	Netherlands
8	Performance Rankings of Scientific Papers for World Universities Higher Education	Accreditation and Evaluation Council	http://nturanking.g.lis.ntu.edu.tw/	2007-2011	National University,	Taiwan Taiwan University,
9	CHE University Ranking	Centre for Higher Education Development/die Zeit	http://www.che-ranking.de/cms/?getObject=632	1998	The CHE in partner DIE ZEIT is in charge of publication, sales and marketing	Germany
10	CHE Excellence Ranking	Centre for Higher Education Development/die Zeit	http://www.che-ranking.de/cms/?getObject=632	1998	The CHE in partner DIE ZEIT is in charge of publication, sales and marketing.	Germany
11	U-Map classification	CHEPS	http://www.u-map.eu/	2013	The consultation of stakeholders was a cornerstone of that process. Universiteit Twente	Netherlands
12	U-Multirank ranking	EU funded project	https://www.umultirank.org/about/methodology/data-sources/	2014	The U-Multirank based on a variety of data sources and data collection tools. Self-reported data	Netherlands
13	EU University-Based Research Assessment	AUBR Working Group European Commission		2005		Lisbon

To answer these research questions, a content analysis was conducted, where four out of thirteen identified ranking Bodies were considered in analysing the criteria, indicators, source of data, year of establishment, weight as well as remarks as applied to the ranking bodies. The four ranking bodies are:

Table 2: Ranking agencies in Ranking universities, Locations Year Established and their data source

S/N	Title Of The Ranking	Ranking Bodies	Url	Year Established	Data Sources	Location
1	Shanghai Jiao Tong World University Ranking (ARWU)	Shanghai Ranking Consultancy	http://www.shanghairanking.com/	2003	Thomson Reuters/The QS Intelligence Unit.	Shanghai, People's Republic of China
2	Times Higher Education World University Ranking	Times Higher Education	https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings	2004	QS/Thomson Reuters	Britain
3	QS Ranking	Quacquarelli Symonds I	www.topuniversities.com/Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)	2004/2010	QS Company Limited	UK
4	webometrics world ranking	Cybermetrics lab, Centro de Ciencias Humanas y	https://www.webometrics.org/Socialesinfo/en/current_edition	2004	Webometrics	Spain



What justified the selection of the four ranking bodies by the researchers were based on their prominence, extensive coverage and as well as their influence among world class universities. (Zirulnick, 2010). While the remaining identified rankings bodies were not included because they did not meet up with the said criteria.

Strategies/procedure for content analysis

All approaches to qualitative content analysis required a similar analytical process of seven classic steps, including formulating the research questions to be answered, selecting the sample to be analyzed, defining the categories to be applied, outlining the coding process and the coder training, implementing the coding process, determining trustworthiness, and analyzing the results of the coding process (Kaid & Wadsworth, 1989). Therefore, the study adopted content analysis design in which the above steps were followed. In this regards, each of the ranking bodies was coded as listed by the ranking organisation.

Source for the contents/documents

The source considered as the documents for analysis in the study were: home pages for the four selected ranking bodies which comprises of Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), Times Higher Education World University Ranking (THE), Quacquarelli Symonds and webometrics world ranking body. In addition to the four selected world ranking bodies' home pages documents from recognized scholars were also looked into as secondary sources.

Sampling procedure

Purposive sampling was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling is selecting a sample “on the basis of your own knowledge of the population, its elements, and the nature of your research aims” (Babbie, 1990). In addition, the population is “non-randomly selected based on a particular characteristic” (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 2000). MacNealy (1999) also explains that, the individual characteristics are selected to answer necessary questions about a “certain matter or product” The researcher is then able to select participants based on internal knowledge of said characteristic. This method is useful if a researcher wants to study “a small subset of a larger population in which many members of the subset are easily identified but the enumeration of all is nearly impossible” (Babbie, 1990). The reason behind the used of purposive sampling technique in the selection criteria of the four ranking bodies considered for the study was base on the fact that they are the most prestigious ranking bodies in the world, they have large coverage, they also have similar indicators/criteria.

Findings/Results

In line with the objectives set out for the study, the finding is presented as follows;

World Ranking Bodies /Organisation

Many organisations are engaged in the international ranking across the globe, though some are more universal in terms of coverage, than the others that at times cover only a region or even a country. Below is the list of identified ranking bodies/organisations that are responsible for ranking world universities and their locations. The list is not exhaustive considering the fact that there are numerous ranking bodies across geographical localities in the world that cannot be possible to capture all by the researchers at a time. However, below are some of the prominent ranking bodies in table 2.

The tabular presentation of the four selected ranking bodies and their criteria are as follows:



Table 3: Shanghai ranking, Indicators and weight percentage (%)

Criterion	Indicators	Weight
Quality of education	Number of alumni who earned a Nobel Prize or a Fields Medal in mathematics.	10 %
Quality of staff	Number of researchers who earned a Nobel Prize in physics, chemistry, medicine or economics and/or the Fields Medal in mathematics	20 %
	Number of highly cited researchers in the fields of life science, medicine, physics, engineering and social sciences.	20 %
Research	Number of articles published in Nature and Science.	20 %
Output	Number of articles listed in Thompson Scientific's <i>Science Citation Index Expanded</i> and its <i>Social Sciences Citation Index</i> . Added to the article count in 2006, listings in <i>Social Sciences Citation Index</i> the count double.	20 %
Size of the institution	6. The weighted score of the above five indicators divided by the number of full-time equivalent academic staff. If the number of academic staff for institutions of a country cannot be obtained, the weighted scores of the above five indicators is used.	10 %

Source: (Tong, 2009)

Table 4: Times Higher Education World University Ranking Indicators and Weight

Broad categories	Weight	Indicators
Economic activity/Innovation	2.5%	Research income from industry (per academic staff member) 2.5%
International mix – staff and students	5%	Ratio of international to domestic staff 3% Ratio of international to domestic students 2%
Teaching – the learning environment	30%	Reputation survey – teaching 15% PhDs awarded (scaled) 6% Undergraduates admitted per academic 4.5% PhD awards/bachelor awards 2.25% Income per academic 2.25%
Research – volume, income and reputation	30%	Reputation survey – research 19.5% Research income (scaled) 5.25% Papers per academic and research staff 4.5% Public research income/total research income 0.75%
Citation – research influence	32.5 %	Citation impact (normalised average citations per paper) 32.5%

Source –(Baty, 2011)

Table 5: QS World University Rankings Criteria

Indicator	Weighting	Elaboration
Academic Reputation	40%	Based on an internal global academic survey
Faculty/Student ratio	20%	A measurement of teaching commitment
Citations per faculty	20%	A measurement of research impact
Employer reputation	10%	Based on a survey on graduate employers



International student ratio	5%	A measurement of the diversity of the student community
International staff ratio	5%	A measurement of the diversity of the academic staff

Source: (Bothwell, 2015)

Table 6 : Ranking Web of Universities (Webometrics) Criteria

Indicator	Weighting	Elaboration
Visibility	(50%)	Impact: The quality of the content is evaluated through a virtual referendum, counting all the external links that the university webdomain receives from third parties. Those links are recognizing the institutional prestige, the academic performance, the value of the information and the usefulness of the services as introduced in the webpage according to the criteria of millions of web editors from all over the world.
Activity	(50%)	Presence (1/3) The total number of webpages hosted in the main web domain Oppeness (1/3) The global effort to set up institutional repositories is explicitly recognize recognized in this indicator that takes into account the number of the rich files (pdf, doc, docx, ppt) published according to the search engine Google Scholar. Excellenc (1/3) The academic papers published in high impact international journals are playing a very important role in the ranking of universities. Cited papers (1/3) We only consider the excellent publications, i.e the university scientific outputting being part of the 10% most cited papers in their respective scientific fields.

Table 7: Comparative Analysis of the Criteria Used by the four selected Ranking Bodies

S/N	Ranking Bodies	Criteria	Indicator	Weight	Remarks
1	Shanghai Jiao Tong	Quality of education	1. Number of alumni who earned a Nobel Prize or a Fields Medal in mathematics.	10 %	Applicable to Shanghai Jiao Tong
			Quality of staff	2- Number of researchers who earned a Nobel Prize in physics, chemistry, medicine or economics and/or the Fields Medal in mathematics	20 %
		Research Output	3. Number of highly cited researchers in the fields of life science, medicine, physics, engineering and social sciences.	20 %	
			4. Number of articles published in Nature and Science.	20 %	
			5. Number of articles listed in Thompson Scientific's <i>Science Citation Index Expanded</i> and its <i>Social Sciences Citation Index</i> . Added to the article count in 2006, listings in <i>Social Sciences Citation Index</i> the count double	20 %	Applicable to All The Four Rankings Bodies



	Size of the institution	6. The weighted score of the above five indicators divided by the number of full-time equivalent academic staff. If the number of academic staff for institutions of a country cannot be obtained, the	10 %	Applicable to Shanghai Jiao Tong	
2	Times Higher Education	Economic activity/Innovation	Research income from industry (per academic staff member)	2.5%	Applicable to Times Higher Education
		International mix – staff and students	Ratio of international to domestic staff	3%	Applicable to Times Higher Education and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)
			Ratio of international to domestic students	2	
		Teaching – the learning environment		30%	Applicable to All The Four Rankings Bodies
		Reputation survey – teaching		15%	
		PhDs awarded (scaled)		6%	
		Undergraduates admitted per academic		4.5%	
		PhD awards/bachelor awards		2.25%	
		Income per academic		2.25%	
				%	
		Research – volume, income and reputation		30%	Applicable to Times Higher Education and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)
			Reputation survey – research	19.5%	
				5.25%	
			Research income (scaled)	4.5%	
	Papers per academic and research staff	0.75%			
	Public research income/total research income				
	Citation – research influence		32.5%		
	Citation impact (normalised average citations per paper)		32.5%		
3	Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)	Academic reputation Employer reputation	(40%)	Applicable to Times Higher Education and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)	
			(10%)		
	Research citations		(20%)		
	Student-to-		(20%)	Applicable to	



	faculty ratio			Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)
	International faculty ratio (5%) and international student ratio (5%)		(10%)	Applicable to Times Higher Education and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)
4	Webometrics	Visibility Impact	(50%)	
	Activity	Presence (1/3)	(50%)	Applicable to Webometrics ranking body.
		Oppenness (1/3)		
		Excellence (1/3)		Applicable to All The Four Rankings Bodies
		Cited papers (1/3)		

Common Key Indicators among the Four Selected Ranking Bodies

The most prominent world ranking bodies share most of criteria/indicators which they normally considered in ranking an institution, while at the other hand there are some peculiar indicators that are specific to some ranking bodies as indicated below respectively:

- i- Citations
- ii- International Faculty Staff / Ratio
- iii- Academic Reputation – Teaching Quality
- iv- Research Reputation – Research Volume and Focus Area
- v- Employer Reputation

Other Peculiar Indicators

- i – Size of the Institution
- ii- Visibility on the Web
- iii- Economic Activities / Innovation

The Role of Library in Improving University Rankings

The ranking procedures of the world ranking bodies, such as ARWU, THE and etc have actually come with a lot of challenges in relation to some institutions particularly the ones in African continent, like Nigeria universities. The challenges has somewhat directly linked to the position occupies by the universities in the region in the world universities rankings. Some of the problems are in the forms of; citation, international faculty staff ration, academic reputation- quality of teaching, and etc. Other denting challenges have to do with funding problems, security problems, and historical background.

Academic Library, being one of the important parts of any university, plays a great role in maintaining and upholding the standard of the institution in terms of its academic performance, rankings and prestige among its pairs either locally or globally. According to Pelikan (1992) in his philosophical treatise on the university, stated that, universities needed libraries for their roles in advancing, extending, interpreting, and diffusing knowledge. “Such dependence implies the need for the university library to be involved as a genuine and full partner of the other components of the university in both short-range decisions and long-range planning”. In the same vein, reiterated that, the university and the library would increasingly integrate and also highlighted that:



“No single institution in the contemporary world of scholarship has a greater bearing on the future of the university than the library, just as nothing in the history of the university has had a greater bearing on its scholarship . . . the relation between scholars and libraries is a symbiosis”

Libraries' role in the university rankings is obvious, these roles specifically involves research support services, supplying bibliometrics information of authors within the institutions, these support services all focuses on scholarly activities that revolves around the library, to curate, advise on and preserve the manifold outputs of research activity within an institution(MacColl, 2010) Quality of teaching and research being one of the indices for measuring an institutional prestige depend largely on a qualitative library and information services. This is supported by Wilkinson (2000) who stated that, “without the collaboration of librarians, attempts to improve teaching and learning are less likely to succeed”(Fallahay Loesch, 2010). However, library activities, resources, and services are intertwined with other institutional activities, resources, and services so that it is challenging to disaggregate the library's contribution to institutional outcomes from the contribution of the other campus units (McClure, 2003; Thompson, Cook, & Kyrellidou, 2005). Librarians who are well-integrated into their schools enhance the quality and increase the depth of the campus experience for students (Dewey, 2005). Some of the roles of academic librarians are to provide reference service, select materials for library collections, and teach library instruction sessions (Cardina & Wicks, 2004). Because these roles are cross-institutional, librarians have much direct contact with faculty, administrators, and students.

Library administrators and professional organizations are beginning to develop measures that represent the contribution of the library to outcomes (Blixrud, 2003; McClure, 2003) “Academic libraries . . . provide intellectual value to users . . . as they do so, they provide benefits to other groups—their funders, employees, and managers—strengthening the societies they serve. This cumulative effectiveness is vital but difficult to determine”(Edgar, 2006)

Discussion

The results of our content analysis of the world ranking agencies/organisations indicated that many organisations are engaged in the international ranking across the globe, though some are more universal in terms of coverage, than the others that at times cover only a region or even a country. Even though they have large coverage in terms of application but their criteria and indicators favours old established universities in advance countries which are financially stable with a lot modern facilities as well as reputable scholars. Similarly, accesses to internet and advancement in modern technology has given them an edge over their under developed counterpart and these to a large extent affected most universities in African region for not appearing in the list of top universities in the world or occupying the least positions in the rankings. In addition, sound library system equipped modern technology and tools, high skill manpower would be the foundation for universities to attain their pinnacles in terms of the academic excellence, reputation and ultimately attaining improved ranks.

A better Approach to University Rankings

- **Citation:** University staff and student should publish their research output in a word reputable Journal registered with world known bibliometrics (paper/citation metrics) such as Scopus, Thomson Reuters Indexing database for their work to be present and cited across the globe
- **International Faculty Staff / Ratio:** University should respect the policy of hiring international lecturing staff in order to encourage international students to seek admission in the university.



This could be by away building partnerships and collaboration with world leading institutions in form of student / lecturers exchange this would enable the university to earn high rank among its pairs in the world.

- **Academic Reputation** – Teaching Quality: University should recruit reputable academics and providing intrinsic motivating factors (research grants, good working environment, good facilities, publication allowance etc.) as well as opportunities for training and equally, monitor the performance of faculty’s members in order to occupy good position.
- **Research Reputation** – Research Volume and Focus Area: University should have clear focus on specific areas of research and training (research priorities, teaching programs, knowledge transfer activities, international focus, and regional engagement) as these would enable scholars across the globe to identify where most significant research is currently taking place within their field. This will no doubt help the University to be ranked high.
- **Employer Reputation**- University should pay serious attention in recruitment of highly professional and technical staff across all cadres, training and re-training of the staff should also be given attention for maximum service delivery. This would definitely assist in getting higher ranks.

Conclusion

A ranking of the university is very important and issue of concern that attracted a lot of attention in the contemporary global higher education business. Unfortunately, most universities do not or appear at the lowest level among the world class institution in the recent reports of most of the ranking bodies. Indeed, to improve university rankings, Nigerian Universities most have a clear understanding of the criteria for ranking, agencies responsible for ranking; Educational Units that are major stakeholders in facilitating teaching, Learning and research. This call for redefining the strategies for better approach to rankings by ameliorating the hitches in the ranking which includes: poor citation rate, poor academic reputation, poor funding, as well as awareness from the side of the institution and the staff about the entire nitty-gritty of the ranking procedure. Academic Library, being one of the important parts of any university, plays a great role in maintaining and upholding the standard of the institution in terms of its academic performance, rankings and prestige among its pairs either locally or globally.

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