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Abstract

University ranking has become ritualistic in higher education. Ranking results are taken as bona fide by rank users. Ranking systems usually use large data sets from highly heterogeneous universities of varied backgrounds. This poses the problem of Simpson's Paradox and the lurking variables causing it. Using QS 2011?2012 Ranking data, the dual problem is demonstrated. The ranking procedure seems to work reasonably well for the top 100 universities as evidenced by the expected positive correlations among the indictors and with Overall. Beyond these, the problem becomes increasingly severe for lower-end universities as the correlations change magnitude and even direction. The need to read the rankings and consumer education for rank users cautiously, are briefly discussed. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)