

Enhancing Global Competitiveness: University Ranking Movement in Asia

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Abstract

Since Shanghai Jiao Tung University's first publication of Academic Ranking of World Universities in 2003, the competition among the universities across the globe has significantly intensified. Many governments have since come to realize the relative performance of their domestic higher education institutions on an international stage. The indicators adopted by these global rankings to measure institutions convey a strong message to policymakers, senior managers in universities, mass media, and potential customers (i.e., students) that there seems to be an objective way to evaluate the achievement of different universities in various countries. The university ranking movement is beginning to relate to national competitiveness simply because the major functions of modern universities are to produce cutting-edge research, nurture leaders and talent, and foster knowledge application in practices. A better record in the international university rankings tends to be interpreted as enhanced global competitiveness, which is further reinforced by the emergence of a knowledge economy as the role of universities in global competition is becoming more evident. It is against this wider context that some Asian nations have launched a wide range of initiatives to improve their performance in university ranking in order to enhance global competitiveness. The primary objective of this paper employing document analysis is to critically analyze how selective countries in Asia, such as Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, and Taiwan, have strategically used the university ranking movement to restructure their higher education

systems and improve their competitiveness on the global stage. Implications for university governance based on such a movement are also discussed.

Keyword: Global Competitiveness; University Ranking; University Governance