University Ranking and Benchmarking. Necessary tools

Prof. Olive M. Mugenda, PhD
Vice-Chancellor, Kenyatta University

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Kenyatta University

- One of the 7 public universities in Kenya, East Africa
- 32,000 students
- Established 25 years ago
- Second largest in the country

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We have heard a lot about ranking since yesterday and today about benchmarking, classification and to some extent accreditation. My view is that all these processes have their own place and are all very important. The tools are good for universities for enhancing quality and for staying competitive.
Uses of Ranking

I. Ranking provides tools used by institutions to:
   - Determine level of performance
   - Build professional reputation/visibility
   - Build brand
   - Seek support and funding
   - Helps students to make choices.
Weaknesses of Ranking

1. May lead to redesigning of strategy to improve in the rankings rather than to do what's right for the local setting
2. Uniqueness of universities lost
3. Sources of information not exhaustive. We may be assessing websites not performance.
4. Strengthens lost by looking at the overall.
5. Can be intimidating and discouraging to hard working universities trying to make a difference.
Benchmarking
Benchmarking transforms organizational processes into strategic tools, helping higher education institutions to compare systematically their practice and performance with peer institutions.
Types of Benchmarking

a. Internal Benchmarking

- this entails knowing yourself and your internal processes by looking within units and across units or divisions to benchmark.

- Looking from within ensures the easiest management of idea exchange and availability of partners, since all the information is “under the same roof”
b. Competitive Benchmarking

- This type of benchmarking process focuses on measuring performance against peer or competitor organizations.

- The goal of competitive benchmarking is to study the product designs, process capabilities, and/or administrative methods used by an organization's competitors or peers.
c. Collaborative Benchmarking

- This type of benchmarking involves a limited exchange of information from a consortium of organizations and usually focuses only on quantitative statistics rather than qualitative analysis.

- Most institutions and their departments within, collect this type of data on a regular basis.
• **Shadow Benchmarking** – This involves making competitor-to-competitor comparisons without your benchmarking partner knowing you're doing it. Shadowing entails no real partner so you aren't dependent on competitor cooperation, and information comes from whatever competitive intelligence you can gather. Shadowing lets you gather new data that will help you improve your processes or prepare yourself for market growth without alerting competitors.
Best-in-Class Benchmarking

➢ This benchmarking process involves comparing processes that are the same regardless of industry with the best-in-class organizations that are outside of your industry who have truly innovative and exemplary performance.

Example. Incubation of business ideas
Conclusion

• Though ranking is helpful, it is obvious that the current methodology of ranking universities globally, continentally and nationally suffers a number of serious drawbacks leading to an increasing negative perception among some members of the higher education fraternity.
Conclusion

- Ranking is still useful but should be done for **comparable universities** classified into defined categories. Considering:

  1. The budget and resources of the university.
  2. The size of the university
  3. The age of the University
  4. The type of the university
  5. The focus of the university
Way forward

• RANKING SHOULD STAY but should be done at.

• National level: so that unique in -country indicators are taken into account.-e.g. Nigeria case. Improvement at national level will show improvement internationally too.

• International level – but within classifications.

• International level: overall but using key agreed upon weighted indicators.
BENCHMARKING should continue and has the advantage of:

- Enhancing healthy competition & growth
- Allowing universities to put in place their own programs of organizational improvement based on principles of:
  - learning,
  - Collaboration
  - Leadership.
ACCREDITATION

- This is a key tool particularly for specific disciplines.
- Has an element of competition too since one must comply with certain requirements to be accredited.
- An institution can decide where to seek accreditation depending on their focus and discipline

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Relevant Questions for enhancement of quality in our institutions of higher learning

• How is the institution fairing in national and international ranking within OWN CATEGORY?
• How is the institution fairing internationally on the proposed ranking system that has various indicators weighted in agreed upon manner?
• Are you benchmarking with institutions with similar objectives? Locally, regionally and internationally?
• Are you accredited with local, reg and inter professional bodies that best reflect your focus?

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THANK YOU