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## WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS AS A METHOD OF ANALYSIS THE UNIVERSITY COMPETITIVENESS

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*The article is devoted to the analysis of world rankings, where Polotsk State University is represented, and contains recommendations for increasing the competitive positions of PSU in the research rankings.*

In modern conditions of management, competition is present not only in the production sphere, but also in the sphere of education. The entry of the Republic of Belarus into the Bologna Process obliges higher educational institutions of the country to compete not only in the domestic market but also in the world market of educational services through the effective use of all types of resources, which in its turn ensures the improvement of the quality of knowledge, skills, generally – the competence of graduates.

Recently in the Republic of Belarus there has been a fierce struggle between higher education institutions for potential applicants due to the reduction in their number and, as a result, the oversaturation of the educational services market. Education is an indicator of development in all civilized countries of the world and in fact, countries compete not only with goods and services, but they compete with their systems of social values and education systems.

To assess the competitiveness of universities use a variety of methods of economics and statistics, develop special tables that contain data on the educational institution and its main competitors. The analysis of these tables allows establishing the true position of the university in the market of educational services, to identify the key factors of success. Many universities based on these rankings study and take into account the achievements of competitors.

One way to assess competitiveness is ranking. These are the official rankings of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus and world rankings on the Internet.

As a rule, foreign applicants and their parents, when choosing a university, are guided by international rankings of universities. It should be noted that the first rankings were created for this target audience and only later they became used as management tools both inside the university and at the state level, and today they have become one of the most important tools of competition.

Under the ranking of the university's competitiveness, we will understand a general evaluation of strategically important parameters of its activity in the target segments of the activity markets, ensuring an adequate comparability of the effectiveness of this organization in comparison with the analogous parameters of competitive universities.

The effectiveness of increasing the competitiveness of universities is to achieve their status as a full participant in the world academic community. This, in its turn, implies the conformity of the scientific and educational activities of universities to the criteria of global ratings.

The most prestigious rankings of universities in the world are QS World University Rankings, The Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE WUR), Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), Ranking Web of Universities (Webometrics) [1, c. 10].

There are a lot of world rankings of universities, but not all Belarusian universities are represented in it, in particular Polotsk State University. Belarusian State University is represented in the largest number of world university rankings.

Despite this fact, there are two world university rankings that are popular and in which universities of the Republic of Belarus can be found.

The first and most popular ranking of Webometrics is calculated by the Cybermetrics group of the National Research Council in Spain. The university ranking is determined on the evaluation and content of university web sites, as well as the influence on the Internet. Ranking data are calculated twice a year.

Webometrics ranking criteria:

- presence – 10 % – the number of pages, including valuable files, indexed by the Google search engine hosted on the domain and all subdomains of the university;
- visibility – 50 % – number of unique external links to the pages of the site;
- openness – 10 % – data from Google Scholar Citations;
- excellence – 30 % – Scimago databases are used for a five-year period [2].

The easiest way to change the factors of presence and openness, which are determined on the basis of the number of indexed pages of university sites and available formatted documents.

## Economics

The ranking of Webometrics among the classical universities of the Republic of Belarus is presented in Table 1 [3].

Table 1 – The ranking of Webometrics among the classical universities of the Republic of Belarus

University	The ranking among the regional universities of Belarus	National ranking	Global ranking
BSU	1	1	487
GrSU	2	4	3359
GSU	3	7	4323
PolesSU	4	10	5670
BrSU	5	11	5992
VSU	6	13	6298
PSU	7	15	6903
MSU	8	22	8777
BarSU	9	30	12537

The ranking of Webometrics among the regional universities of the Republic of Belarus is presented in Table 2 [3].

Table 2 – The ranking of Webometrics among the regional universities of the Republic of Belarus

University	The ranking among the regional universities of Belarus	National ranking	Global ranking
PolesSU	1	10	5670
PSU	2	15	6903
BarSU	3	30	12537
BSAA	4	31	12607
MSPU	5	43	14834

On the basis of Table 1, we can conclude that among the represented classical universities Polotsk State University ranks 7<sup>th</sup> place and gives way BSU, GrSU, GSU, PolesSU, BrSU and VSU. The main aim of Webometrics is to motivate universities to publish their scientific and educational materials in public. Webometrics is based on the analysis of the university's representation on the Internet and indirectly allows evaluating the educational and research achievements of the university. Among all universities of the Republic of Belarus, according to the Webometrics, PSU takes 15<sup>th</sup> place and 6903<sup>d</sup> place in the world.

The second world ranking, in which the universities of the Republic of Belarus are represented and there is a separate ranking of Belarusian universities, is the UniRank. This ranking is determined by the popularity and attendance of universities and colleges websites in 200 countries.

The ranking methodology is constantly changing. This year, in addition to 4 established indicators: Moz Domain Authority, Alexa Global Rank, Majestic Referring Subnets and Majestic Trust Flow, a new indicator was added – Similar Web Global Rank, which takes into account the number of unique visitors and page views of the university website [2]. UniRank among the classical universities of the Republic of Belarus is presented in Table 3 [4].

Table 3 – UniRank among the classical universities of the Republic of Belarus

University	The ranking among the classical universities of Belarus	National ranking
BSU	1	1
GrSU	2	2
GSU	9	3
PolesSU	10	4
VSU	12	5
PSU	13	6
BarSU	17	7
BrSU	19	8
MSU	32	9

UniRank among the classical universities of the Republic of Belarus is presented in Table 4 [4].

Table 4 – UniRank among the regional universities of the Republic of Belarus

University	The ranking among the regional universities of Belarus	National ranking
ПолесГУ	10	1
ПГУ	13	2
БарГУ	17	3
БГСХА	27	4
МГПУ	34	5

In Table 3, you can see that in UniRank Polotsk State University gives way BSU, GrSU, GSU and PoleSU, which means that the site of Polotsk State University is less popular than the sites of the above-mentioned universities. These rankings are calculated from the data presented on the Internet. However, there are many rankings that evaluate a variety of indicators, including the academic reputation of the university, the index of citations of scientific works, the number of foreign students and employees, and many other indicators, depending on the purposes of presenting the world ranking. If Belarusian State University is included in the world rankings, without occupying a leading position there, then other classical universities are not represented in any of the world rankings.

Based on the analysis of Webometrics, it is necessary to work on the site to improve the indicators and, therefore, to improve the places in rankings. In order to improve the "Visibility" indicator, it is necessary to take the following measures.

1. Improve the quality of the content of the site: the selection and inclusion of keywords on each page of the site, the expansion of analytical material on the scientific, innovative, educational and other projects of the university.

2. Registration in catalogs of universities, including international ones, to participate in scientific conferences, Internet forums, referring to the material posted on the university's website. Publications of staff and teachers of the university should contain links to materials and resources of the university, both in the content and in the list of literature.

3. Presence of the multilanguage version of the site. For PSU it is important to constantly improve the English and Chinese versions of the site, which contain about 30% of the Russian version (according to Webometrics recommendations), so it is important not only to translate information texts of the main sections into foreign languages, but also to stimulate the English-language and Chinese publications of university staff. In foreign languages, not only the main page and the main sections of the site should be presented, but also sections devoted to research work, scientific publications, necessarily with attached files in formats .pdf, .doc, .docx, .ppt, .pptx. Update information in a foreign language, including news, announcements, events.

4. Preference for authoritative resources, from which there is a link to the site.

5. If university staff participate in professional Internet-forums, it is necessary to refer to the content of the university's website. The content should contain relevant information, as a rule, analytical, scientific articles, educational materials in the public domain.

In order to increase the "Presence" indicator, it is necessary to carry out a number of actions.

1. Increase the number of pages of the university's website with unique content due to the expansion of the presence on the site of units, projects, directions, conferences, events and development versions of the site in other languages.

2. Use of the data of the corporate information environment of the university as data that can be automatically published on the sites of departments and faculties. Information on such pages is always relevant, and their creation does not require additional efforts on the part from developers. The content management system has the ability to display the same object as a different page if access to it was performed from different contexts. This allows you to create multiple views of the same object and generate several pages. Examples of such objects on the site of the university can be: scientific publications, disciplines, curricula, teaching materials, scientific projects, employees, graduate students, students and much more.

To improve the indicator "Scientific excellence" it is necessary to increase the publication activity of scientific employees of the University in journals of international databases, first of all, Scopus and Web of Science.

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**Economics**

To improve the "Openness" indicator, it is necessary to perform a number of tasks [5, p. 9].

1. Opening of scientific publications and dissertations of staff, teaching materials of teachers, materials of journals published at the university, materials of conferences held at the university, graduate and dissertational works of students and undergraduates, where these materials are presented in formats .pdf, .doc, .docx., .ppt, .pptx.

2. Publications of normative materials on the university website in attached files.

Polotsk State University needs to pay more attention to assessing its own web resources, to develop a program to increase the visibility and accessibility of results of its intellectual and academic activities to the world community, to develop a clear and accessible strategy to increase its contribution to the development of social and scientific progress.

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