

# The Influence of University Rankings on Perceived Quality of Higher Education: Insights from Students

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**Abstract**

Global university rankings increasingly influence the higher education landscape, intensifying competition among institutions. While academics experience mounting pressure to enhance their university's ranking through research and publication, students often lack similar insights. This study specifically recruited master's students, as they are presumed to have a deeper understanding of the university context following their graduation. However, an analysis of responses from 60 non-local master's students studying in Hong Kong reveals a notable disparity: although these students heavily relied on rankings when selecting their overseas master's programs, their comprehension of the underlying significance of these rankings is limited. Thematic analysis indicates that most students associate university rankings primarily with "teaching and teacher quality." This pilot study underscores the need for improved awareness and education regarding the implications of university rankings among prospective students, ensuring they are equipped to make informed decisions about their academic pursuits.

