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## **1.INTRODUCTION**

Critical Perspective on US MBA Rankings unmasking the Façade. While university rankings offer a seemingly convenient pathway to navigate the complex world of MBA programs, a closer examination reveals significant flaws that necessitate a more critical perspective. This essay goes beyond the limitations mentioned earlier and delves into the potential biases, hidden agendas, and ethical concerns associated with these rankings.

## **Beyond Biases: The Power Dynamics Behind the Rankings:**

The methodologies employed by various ranking institutions are not simply objective evaluations. They often reflect underlying power dynamics and priorities within the business education landscape. Consider these aspects:

* Institutional Biases: Ranking methodologies might favor certain types of institutions, such as Ivy League schools with established reputations or those adopting specific pedagogical approaches. This can create a self-fulfilling prophecy, where highly ranked programs attract more qualified applicants, further bolstering their ranking positions.
* Sponsor Influence**:** Some rankings receive financial support from universities or corporations, raising concerns about potential influence on the ranking criteria or methodology. These sponsorships might subtly or overtly shape the ranking system to favor specific programs or aspects that align with their interests.
* Data Manipulation: While seemingly objective, ranking data can be manipulated or misrepresented. Average figures might mask significant variations within a program, and the selection of specific data points can favor programs with specific strengths.

## **Hidden Agendas and Ethical Concerns:**

The very purpose of ranking systems can be questioned. Are their primary objectives truly to serve the best interests of potential students, or do they serve other hidden agendas? Consider these concerns:

* **Commodification of Education:** By reducing complex educational experiences to simplified rankings, these systems potentially commodify education. They might prioritize prestige and financial success over factors crucial for individual student growth and development.
* **Exacerbating Inequality:** Rankings can exacerbate existing inequalities within the educational system by perpetuating the dominance of well-resourced institutions and further marginalizing smaller or less traditional programs. This can limit the choices and opportunities available to diverse student populations.
* **Ethical Dilemmas:** The potential for manipulation and hidden agendas raises ethical concerns about the integrity and transparency of ranking systems. This can erode student trust and undermine the credibility of business education.

**Moving Beyond the Rankings Game:**

Considering these critical considerations, it becomes crucial to move beyond the rankings game and embrace a more holistic approach to selecting an MBA program. Here are some key points to remember:

* **Focus on individual needs and goals:** Understand your unique career aspirations and learning styles. Prioritize programs that align with your personal strengths and weaknesses and offer experiences that will help you achieve your long-term goals.
* **Seek diverse perspectives:** Engage with current students, alumni, and faculty from various programs. Attend information sessions and leverage online forums to gain a comprehensive understanding of program cultures, teaching methodologies, and career support systems.
* **Value qualitative factors:** Don't solely focus on quantitative rankings. Consider factors like faculty mentorship opportunities, experiential learning options, and the overall campus environment. These qualitative aspects can significantly impact your learning experience and professional development.

## **1.1. General Overview of the contents**

US MBA rankings offer a seemingly straightforward path to program selection, but a critical eye reveals limitations and potential biases. Rankings often rely on averages and quantitative data, neglecting individual experiences and intangible program aspects like culture and mentorship. Additionally, concerns exist about biases favoring certain institutions or agendas of financial sponsors influencing the rankings. Moreover, the very purpose of rankings can be questioned as they might prioritize prestige over individual growth. To truly find the best fit, individuals should prioritize self-reflection, research individual programs, and consider qualitative factors like campus culture, ultimately moving beyond the limitations of rankings and focusing on their unique needs and goals.

## **1.2. Motivation**

The primary motivation behind this document is to empower individuals seeking MBA programs to approach university rankings with a critical perspective. It aims to:

* **Educate:** Raise awareness about the limitations, biases, and ethical concerns associated with US MBA rankings.
* **Empower:** Encourage individuals to go beyond rankings and prioritize their own needs and goals when selecting an MBA program.
* **Advocate:** Promote a more holistic approach to program selection, emphasizing factors like individual fit, career aspirations, and qualitative program features beyond quantitative rankings.

Ultimately, this document aims to equip individuals with the knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary to make informed decisions about their MBA education, moving beyond the limitations of rankings and focusing on their unique needs and aspirations.

## **1.3. Goals**

While US MBA rankings offer a seemingly convenient tool for program selection, a closer look reveals significant limitations and potential biases. These rankings often rely on averages and quantitative data, neglecting individual experiences and intangible program aspects. Additionally, concerns exist about methodological biases favoring specific institutions or agendas of sponsors influencing the rankings. Furthermore, the very purpose of rankings can be questioned, as they might prioritize prestige and financial success over individual growth and learning. To truly find the best fit, individuals should prioritize self-reflection, research individual programs, and consider qualitative factors like campus culture and mentorship opportunities, ultimately moving beyond the limitations of rankings and focusing on their unique needs and goals.

## **1.4. Company Background**

For decades, the U.S. News & World Report MBA ranking has served as a prominent reference point for prospective students navigating the complex landscape of graduate business education. Launched in 1988, this ranking aims to provide a standardized comparison of programs, leveraging a weighted average of various factors to assign an overall score. However, a closer examination reveals both the potential value and inherent limitations associated with this influential ranking system.

The current methodology considers five key categories: student selectivity (25%), faculty quality (20%), employer reputation (20%), expert opinion (15%), and student graduation rate and placement success (10%). While this approach attempts to capture different facets of an MBA program, it faces several criticisms that warrant critical consideration.

Firstly, the ranking heavily relies on quantitative data. While measuring factors like average GMAT scores and student-faculty ratio can offer some insights, it potentially overlooks crucial qualitative aspects of the learning experience. Aspects like the program's curriculum, faculty mentorship opportunities, and the overall campus culture are not directly reflected in the ranking, potentially misrepresenting the true value proposition of certain programs.

Secondly, concerns exist regarding methodological biases. The weight assigned to each category and the specific criteria employed can favor specific types of programs. For instance, a heavier emphasis on student selectivity might advantage established institutions with historically high entry requirements, potentially overlooking the strengths of emerging programs catering to diverse student profiles.

Furthermore, the ranking primarily focuses on traditional, full-time MBA programs. This potentially neglects the growing range of alternative options available to students, such as online and part-time programs. These alternative pathways might cater to working professionals seeking to balance their career commitments with educational pursuits, and their offerings might not be adequately captured by the current ranking framework.

It is crucial to remember that the U.S. News & World Report MBA ranking should be just one piece of the puzzle when choosing an MBA program. Prospective students are advised to prioritize their individual needs and goals and conduct thorough research beyond rankings. This might involve engaging with current students and alumni, attending information sessions, and evaluating factors like curriculum, faculty expertise, career services, and overall program culture. By adopting a more nuanced and holistic approach that transcends the limitations of any single ranking system, individuals can make informed decisions and find the MBA program that best aligns with their unique aspirations and career trajectory.

## **2.PROBLEM DEFINITION**

 The problem lies in the inherent limitations and potential biases within US MBA rankings, particularly those like the U.S. News & World Report, when used as the sole criterion for selecting the "best" program. This overreliance on rankings can lead to misguided decision-making by prospective students who may overlook programs that are a better fit for their individual needs and goals, ultimately hindering their chances of achieving academic and career success.

Several key issues contribute to this problem. Firstly, rankings often overemphasize quantitative data like average GMAT/GRE scores and placement rates, neglecting intangible factors like program culture, faculty mentorship, and the overall learning environment. This narrow focus can lead to programs excelling in one area potentially being overlooked for not performing as well in another, even though they might be a perfect fit for specific students. Secondly, methodological biases within the ranking systems can favor certain types of programs, such as established institutions with rigorous entry requirements. This can disadvantage emerging programs or those catering to diverse student profiles, even though they may offer an equally valuable education. Finally, the limited scope of existing rankings, primarily focusing on traditional full-time programs, excludes the growing range of alternative options like online and part-time programs, further restricting the choices available to prospective students and potentially hindering access to diverse educational opportunities. These limitations and biases within rankings can have significant consequences for students, potentially leading to misinformed decisions, the commodification of education, and the exacerbation of inequalities within the educational system.

## **3.LITERATURE REVIEW**

The U.S. News & World Report MBA ranking, while influential, faces criticism for its limitations and potential biases. The literature highlights an overreliance on quantitative data, neglecting crucial qualitative aspects like program culture and mentorship. Additionally, concerns exist about methodological biases favoring specific programs and a lack of transparency in the ranking process. Furthermore, the limited scope, primarily focusing on traditional programs, excludes a growing range of alternative options. In response, scholars advocate for alternative approaches that consider individual needs, comprehensive research, and a broader evaluation of program offerings alongside rankings. By critically examining these limitations, students can move beyond a singular ranking and make informed decisions aligned with their unique aspirations and career goals.

## **4.APPROACH / METHODOLOGY**

### 1. Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA):

* **Descriptive statistics:** Calculate summary statistics (mean, median, standard deviation) for each ranking criterion across different programs. This helps understand the central tendency, spread, and variability within the data.
* **Data visualization:** Create visualizations like histograms, boxplots, and scatterplots to explore the distribution of ranking scores, identify potential outliers, and visualize relationships between different criteria.

### 2. Correlation Analysis:

* Calculate correlation coefficients between different ranking criteria to understand if and how strongly they are related. This can reveal potential redundancies or synergies between factors considered in the ranking.

### 3. Regression Analysis:

* Build a regression model (e.g., linear regression) to predict the overall ranking score based on individual ranking criteria. This can help identify which factors are most statistically significant in explaining the overall ranking position.
* Use this model to explore how changes in individual criteria might affect the overall ranking score.

### 4. Cluster Analysis:

* Group similar programs together based on their ranking scores across different criteria. This can help identify clusters of programs with similar characteristics and potential competitors within the ranking.

### 5. Text Analysis (if applicable):

* If qualitative data like program descriptions or student reviews are available, use text analysis techniques like sentiment analysis or topic modeling to extract insights about program strengths and potential biases within the ranking system.

### 6. Scenario Analysis:

* Simulate different scenarios by modifying individual ranking criteria or weights to understand how these changes might impact the overall ranking of different programs. This can help assess the sensitivity of the ranking system to different factors.

By applying these data analytical approaches, researchers and prospective students can gain deeper insights into the U.S. MBA ranking system, its strengths, and weaknesses, and make more informed decisions about their MBA education path.

## **5.DATA COLLECTION**

**Ethical Data Extraction and Analyzing US News MBA Rankings**

While the U.S. News & World Report MBA ranking data offers valuable insights, directly extracting this data through code might pose ethical and technical challenges. This essay explores the importance of ethical considerations and outlines a general process for analyzing and understanding the data, respecting the website's terms of service and user privacy.

**Ethical Considerations:**

Before embarking on any data extraction, it's crucial to prioritize ethical considerations. Websites often have a **robot.txt** file that outlines their rules for automated processes like web scraping. Disobeying this file can lead to website blocking or legal repercussions. Additionally, it's essential to be mindful of the **frequency and volume** of data requests to avoid overburdening the website's servers. Finally, **respecting the website's content** is key. Extract only the specific data required for your analysis, avoiding unnecessary downloads that can be considered intrusive.

**General Process for Analyzing US News MBA Rankings (Conceptual):**

While directly offering code snippets might conflict with terms of service and website structure changes, we can explore the general process of analyzing US News MBA ranking data, focusing on ethical considerations. Here's a conceptual outline using Python as an example:

1. Import Essential Libraries:

*from bs4 import BeautifulSoup  
import warnings  
warnings.filterwarnings("ignore")  
import requests  
import pandas as pd*

2. Retrieve the Webpage:

*import pandas as pd  
df = pd.read\_excel("URLS.xlsx")  
urls  = df.iloc[:, 0].dropna().tolist()  
print(urls)*

*URL Sample:*

* 'https://www.usnews.com/education/online-education/indiana-university-bloomington-OBUS0276/mba',
* 'https://www.usnews.com/education/online-education/carnegie-mellon-university-OBUS0100/mba',
* 'https://www.usnews.com/education/online-education/university-of-north-carolina-at-chapel-hill-OBUS0736/mba'

3. Parse the HTML Content:

*ranking = soup.find('p', class\_='VillainProgram\_\_Rank-f2cmj8-3 eXXVjA').strong.get\_text()  
    df = pd.read\_excel("Column Names.xlsx")  
    second\_column\_values = df.iloc[:, 1].dropna().tolist()  
    #print(second\_column\_values)  
    dict ={}  
    data = [['Name of the Unviersity',title],['Ranking',ranking]]  
    found=['Name of the Unviersity']  
    value=[title]  
    notfound=[]*

4. Identify Data Containers**:**

The crucial step in ethical data extraction involves understanding the website's structure. Use a web browser's developer tools (e.g., "Inspect element") to locate the HTML elements containing the desired data. Look for specific HTML tags, classes, or attributes associated with the data points (e.g., table rows, cells, or specific class names).

*for i in second\_column\_values:  
        p\_tag = soup.find('p', text=i)      
        # If the p tag is found, find the next strong tag and display its value  
        if p\_tag:  
            strong\_tag = p\_tag.find\_next('strong')  
            if strong\_tag:  
                #print(i," :","Value:", strong\_tag.get\_text(),"\n")  
                found.append(i)  
                value.append(strong\_tag.get\_text())  
                dict[i] = strong\_tag.get\_text()  
                data.append([i, strong\_tag.get\_text()])  
            else:  
                notfound.append(i)  
                data.append([i, "NA"])  
                #print("No value found")  
        else:  
            notfound.append(i)  
            data.append([i, "NA"])  
            #print("Label not found")  
    dict ={"Field:": found,"Value": value}*

5. Extract Data (Conceptual):

While providing code snippets that directly extract data might violate terms of service, we can explore the conceptual approach. Here's an example, emphasizing the need to adapt selectors based on the actual website structure:

*result =[]*

*c=1*

*for i in urls:*

*print(str(c)+")fetching data from URL:",i)*

*data=generatedatafromurl(i)*

*result.append(data)*

*c+=1*

## 6. Store or Process the Extracted Data (Conceptual):

Once you have extracted the data (assuming you are following ethical guidelines), you can store or process it for analysis. This could involve saving it to a CSV file or using data analysis tools for further exploration.

*import pandas as pd*

*# Define the data  
data = result*

*rows = []  
for sublist in data:  
    university\_data = {}  
    for item in sublist:  
        university\_data[item[0]] = item[1]  
    rows.append(university\_data)*

*# Create DataFrame  
df = pd.DataFrame(rows)*

*# Write DataFrame to Excel  
excel\_file = 'universities\_data.xlsx'  
df.to\_excel(excel\_file, index=False)*

*print("Excel file written successfully:", excel\_file)*

## **6. References:**

* **U.S. News & World Report**. (2023). 2023-2024 Best Business Schools (MBA) - US News Rankings. Retrieved from [U.S. News & World Report](https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-business-schools/mba-rankings)
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