



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Academic International Rankings: Reality and Ambition of Jordanian Universities

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: May 7, 2024	<p>The importance of international academic rankings for universities around the world has increased recently, and it is time to consider the status of Jordanian universities in this regard. Thus, this paper explores the position of Jordanian universities in terms of the three most common rankings (ARWU, QS, THE). By providing a comparative analysis of universities' rankings and identifying the most important challenges they encounter, the study's findings indicate that some indicators differ significantly across the selected rankings. There is a weakness in the capabilities of Jordanian higher education institutions to meet global competitive standards, especially in the areas of scientific research, citations, and international cooperation. Therefore, this study is needed by Jordanian universities to exert more effort in complying with international academic ranking criteria, such as developing scientific research, attracting foreign students, academic staff, academic reputation, and building partnerships, which enhances the academic ranking positioning and improves academic competitive advantage among local, regional and international universities. The study's practical implications for Jordanian universities are more future conducted studies concerning international and local academic studies.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

The global rankings of universities are a critical issue in the increasingly competitive global higher education landscape (Kethüda, 2023), noting that rankings have changed the conditions of higher education and are expected to increase their impact at the national and international levels, their popularity in academia is increasing daily, and the education sector is undergoing tremendous growth and influential changes in compliance with national and global developments (Qureshi M. S., 2023). Besides, the whole sector is influenced by technological progress, which is the major driving force of competition, which plays an essential role in structural changes and the creation of new sectors (Porter, 2023). Thus, when conducting a quick Google search on "Global University Rankings", more than 250 million sites appeared, especially those related to ARWU, THE, and QS institutions, which are the world's top three in higher education (Shahjahan, 2023).

This popularity is attributed to the value of international rankings for educational institutions, considering that such importance of HEIs' global rankings stems from their role in paving the road map for universities to function as one of the most important means for demonstrating competitive

advantage, highlighting academic quality and research productivity, and providing assistance to HEIs and university leaders in decision-making, standard-setting, as well as promoting the choices of potential students (Hou, 2022); (Qureshi M. S., 2023); (Gavroglu, 2022). This is the reason why (Megdadi, 2021) stresses that academic rankings should be constituted and more attention should get paid by universities governance councils to help universities to join the world's reputable universities and academic ranks rankings through a number of standards to meet (Jam et al., 2011).

Although most Western countries and America have the best universities in international rankings, and they are considered a destination for international students, which is one of the most important axes of the evaluation, the developments brought about by developing countries in the field of economic development, education, and links and relations between countries have enhanced their attractiveness as alternative destinations for international students. This came as a result of securing a position on the adult list, at a time when the movement of international students increased threefold towards Asia, South America, Africa, and the Middle East (Glass, 2023); (Hou, 2022)).

In this regard, Jordanian universities challenge with raising their academic international ranking for a number of reasons, such as the lack of international academic partnership, low level of graduates' employability, low rate of publishing scientific research quality in high indexed journals, lack of interest in building academic reputation, lack of attention to human and financial resources, and lack of clarity in the vision for future strategic plans (Al-Wahdna, 2021) . However, Jordanian universities have recently realized the importance and role of academic ranking despite their financial and human inability to cover the requirements of ranking standard costs, which is considered one of the biggest challenges facing universities, especially the costs of publishing. Hence the study problem focused on the consequences of the decline in the international academic rankings in comparison with regional and international universities. The researchers aim at studying the reasons and challenges that undermine the ability of Jordanian universities to acquire international academic rankings, a case that negatively impacts universities' academic performance, reputation, and educational and research outcomes. In addition, the research tries to show the many changes implemented by Jordanian universities to handle their problem with international ranking systems at the different levels.

Study problem

The study sheds light on the rankings of Jordanian universities using a qualitative analysis method and citing reports issued by international academic ranking institutions, including (QS, Shanghai, THE), on the global ranking of universities, including Jordanian universities. However, the study is limited to the universities that are ranked globally according to the report and academic rating agencies. Hence, the researcher believes that Jordanian universities included in international rankings require to pay more attention to academic future purposes and the academic challenges they face based on international ranking criteria, which should maintain their reputation and improve their academic and scientific research capabilities in the education sector.

Research questions

The study problem aims to answer this main question:

Q.1 Have Jordanian universities achieved advanced positions in international academic rankings?

To answer this question, a set of sub-questions are addressed:

Q1.1. What are the current positions of Jordanian Universities in international rankings?

Q.1.2. Why are Jordanian universities ranked like this?

Q.1.3. What improvement actions can be taken?

Q.1.4. What are the future challenges?

LITERATURE REVIEW AND PRIOR STUDIES

Many studies have addressed the issue of ranking. According to (Rafique, 2023), the ranking systems are a key tool in evaluating the international performance of universities, which enables the stakeholders (students, university management, investors, recruitment chiefs, and teachers) to assess the university's standing on normative grounds, such as academic performance, student success rate, H index, international faculty ratio, etc. (Li, 2023) indicated that the rank of a university has been widely perceived as a reputation measure, as ranking institutions rely on criteria and indicators with different weights for comparison between universities. Thus, the final result represents the university's performance ability, the standard of scientific research, and the degree of research cooperation and publishing.

Furthermore, (Peris-Ortiz, 2023) highlighted that the importance of the ranking is due to changes in the direction of the higher education market, participation, social trends, and higher education policies, which necessarily requires a change in the approach of university management, where universities with the best positions enter the world-class rankings and are considered to be very innovative with sufficient resources to carry out high-quality research projects. Additionally, (Nassa, 2021) pointed to the rated number of universities in the ranking system is a performance indicator and a basis for comparison in the list of rated institutions. However, despite the experts' agreement that this existed to remain in the education market, it should get praised for being an important tool for providing information to students, researchers, finance agencies, policymakers, and other stakeholders as well as for instilling the competitive spirit of universities. This becomes more significant if we consider that universities are interested these days with issuing policies related to sustainability and climate issues to support their ranking state (Leal Filho, 2021), (un, 2024), (Monteiro, 2024)).

In addition, (Fauzi, 2020) explained that the Ranking tools (QS, THE, ARWU, Leiden, Webometrics) and the global rankings of universities are of concern in the academic community around the world. Although appropriate standards and methodologies have been presented, some ranking tools have significant problems, especially the reliance of some on research performance only while others have focused on specific areas, such as science and technology - which has caused social and art workers to get denied the visibility of their outcomes. Moreover, (Chirikov, 2023) suggested that despite the impact that rankings have on higher education globally, the provision of advisory, analytical or advertising services by those in charge of them has made them vulnerable to conflicts of interest that led to distorting their rankings, which can be explained by the selfish bias of university classifiers (Huang, 2023).

In fact, universities seek prestige and try to promote their rankings in higher education, but it is undeniable that British, German, and American universities declined in global rankings, while universities around the world in recent decades have begun to display a different picture (Huang, 2023; Kanval et al., 2024; Rashid et al., 2023). Moreover (Hamann, 2023) suggested that the critical discourse surrounding university ranking, includes two patterns, one of which is concerned with the negative effects, and the other draws attention to the methodological shortcomings in university ranking, considering that the involvement of critics appears to be of greater importance to the success of university ranking. Concerning Jordanian universities, (Salameh, 2020) finds that Jordanian universities' application of international university ranking standards was average due to the inadequacy of the ranking standards to the environments of Jordanian universities and the failure of Jordanian universities to seek development and improvement to keep pace with those standards.

In the same vein, (Saadal-Din, 2020) stated that there are criteria that fit Arab universities and standards that do not fit the West. Accordingly, the condition of acquiring Nobel Prizes and focusing on published research in English has denied many Arab universities the access to and participation in world rankings. Finally, there are some achievements in Jordanian universities to mention, but they are still far from international competition and the succession of incompetent university administrations has contributed to this decline. (Al-Rifai, 2021) found that the main reasons are the lack of independence of universities and improvisation in some decisions of the Higher Education Council, which exceeds the powers of universities and boards of trustees, thus causing lack of stability in legislation, lack of transparency in the mechanism for selecting chairmen and members of boards of trustees, instability of university administrations, lack of job security, and distorted governance. Relying on this review of related literature, the study tries to analyse the position of Jordanian universities statistically, as shown in the following section.

RESEARCH METHOD

Study approach

According to the study problem and based to the ranking analysis proposed by (León, 2005), (Teodoro, 2018), (Estrada-Real, 2022), a descriptive study based on document analysis has been carried out.

Study population and sample

The study population consisted of all 32 universities operating in Jordan divided into 10 public universities, 19 private universities, one regional university, and two universities with a private law (Mohe, 2023) .

Procedure

We relied on the annual publications of the results of international academic rankings officially announced by international academic ranking agencies. These results were reviewed and analyzed to determine the rankings of Jordanian universities compared to their counterparts in Arab, regional, and international universities to determine the reasons and challenges of the global academic ranking of Jordanian.

universities and to provide practical solutions to the administrations of Jordanian universities towards improving their rankings and overcoming the challenges they encounter. To this end, the following section reviews the study results.

RESULTS

The international academic rankings of universities and their criteria:

The Ranking is defined as distinguishing things from one another. It is to divide things according to their similarity into groups, where each group contains units that share, at least, one characteristic. According to (Werron, 2017) , rankings are quantitative, zero-sum comparisons of performance, visualized via a hierarchical scale and frequently published by a third party. However, here is an overview of the rankings under discussion.

Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)

The Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) is recognized as the precursor of global university rankings. ARWU presents the world's top 1000 research universities annually based on transparent methodology and objective third-party data (ARWU) .

Table 1: The Criteria of (ARWU) ranking 2023

Criteria	Indicator	Code	Weight
Quality of Education	Alumni of an institution winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals	Alumni	10%
Quality of Faculty	Staff of an institution winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals	Award	20%
Research Output	Highly Cited Researchers	HiCi	20%
	Papers published in Nature and Science*	N&S	20%
	Papers indexed in Science Citation Index-Expanded and Social Science Citation Index	PUB	20%
Per Capita Performance	Per capita academic performance of an institution	PCP	10%

Source: (<https://www.shanghairanking.com/methodology/arwu/2022>)

Times Higher Education (THE)

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings are global performance tables that judge research-intensive universities across all their core missions: teaching, research, research influence, international outlook, and knowledge transfer. It uses 13 performance indicators to provide comprehensive and balanced comparisons at the level of students, academics, university leaders, industry, and governments. It also uses bibliometric of Elsevier's Scopus database from 2015–2016 onwards. The (THE) Rankings 2024 include 1906 universities from 108 countries and regions (THE).

Table 2: The criteria of (THE) ranking 2023

Criteria	Indicator
Teaching (the learning environment)	Reputation Survey – Teaching Academic Staff-to-Student Ratio
	Doctorates Awarded / Undergraduate Degrees Awarded
	Doctorates Awarded / Academic Staff
	Institutional Income / Academic Staff
	Reputation Survey – Teaching Academic Staff-to-Student Ratio
Research (volume, income, and reputation)	Doctorates Awarded / Undergraduate Degrees Awarded
	Doctorates Awarded / Academic Staff
	Reputation Survey – Research
Citations (research influence)	Research Income / Academic Staff
	Reputation Survey – Research
International outlook (staff, students, and research)	Field Weighted Citation Impact
	Proportion of International Students
	Proportion of International Academic Staff
Industry income (knowledge transfer)	Publications Total)
	Research income from industry & commerce / Academic Staff

Source (The times –world university ranking 2023) (THE) .

QS ranking

QS Ranking is a provider of services, analytics, and insight to the global higher education sector. The 20th edition of the QS World University Rankings features 1500 institutions across 104 locations; in 2024, it introduces three new metrics: Sustainability, Employment Outcomes, and International Research Network. The results draw on the analysis of 17.5m academic papers and the expert opinions of over 240,000 academic faculty and employers (QS).

Table 3: The Criteria of Qs Rankings 2024 And 2023

Criteria	2024	2023
Academic Reputation	30%	40%
Employer Reputation	15%	10%
Faculty Student Ratio	10%	20%
Citations per Faculty	20%	20%
International Faculty Ratio	5%	5%
International Student Ratio	5%	5%
International Research Network	5%	-
Employment Outcomes	5%	-
Sustainability	5%	-

Source (QS World University Ranking 2024: Anniversary Methodology) (QS)

The Jordanian Universities in the International Rankings

This section is divided into several subsections that show the position of Jordanian universities in the most important international ranking systems:

Jordanian universities in Shanghai Ranking

The results of the ARWU University Rankings for the year 2023 indicate that only one university out of (31) Jordanian universities since 2003, that is the University of Jordan, is included in the ranking with a position of (801-900), which means that the university of Jordan has been dropped about one hundred points based on the results of the year 2022, when it was ranked (701-800).

The analysis results indicate that the Jordanian universities participation is still eligible to meet the ARWU Ranking criteria as presented on table (1). However, these criteria, which focus on the Nobel Prize, innovation, scientific research and its impact, which reflects the most important functions (HEIs). Considering that the ARWU is one of the "Big Three" ranking institutions (Shahjahan, 2023), it is noteworthy that Jordan's universities have been competing to participate in this ranking at the level of university management, developing financial plans, and human resources quality for research projects implementation, a result that concurs with the findings of other studies like (Al-Rifai, 2021), (Al-Wahdna, 2021)).

Jordanian Universities in THE Ranking:

Table (4), shows the results of the (THE) university ranking institutes until 2024, where seven Jordanian universities appeared in the ranking list, all public.

Table 4: Jordanian Universities Participating in THE

University Name / Rank-	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
The Jordan University	801-1000	801-1000	801-1000	601-800	601-800
Jordan University of Science and Technology	351-400	401-500	401-500	501-600	801-1000
The Hashemite University	1001+	1001+	1201+	1201-1500	1201-1500
Yarmouk University	1001+	1001+	1201+	1001-1200	1201-1500
Al-Balqa Applied University	801-1000	601-800	801-1000	801-1000	1001-1200
German Jordanian University	-	-	-	-	1201-1500
Mutah University	-	-	-	-	1201-1500

Table (4): Indicates that clear absence of Jordanian universities from the top world 100 universities since 2016 and from the top 500 universities during the last two releases. Jordanian universities have witnessed a significant decline overall, noting that the University of Science and Technology has witnessed its ranking decline from the category (501-600) in 2023 to the category (801-1000) in the last edition 2024. This result confirmed that the Jordanian universities are facing many problems that affect their international academic ranking. Table (5) below indicates the percentage of each criterion achieved in 2024.

Table 5: The (THE) Ranking criteria for Jordanian Universities (2024)

Criteria Ratio	Teaching	Research Environment	Research Quality	Industry	International Outcome
	30%	15%	10%	20%	5%
The University of Jordan	27.8	13.4	62.7	30.8	67.1
Jordan University of Science and Technology	19.8	13.6	67.8	40.8	61.1
Al-Ba lqa Applied University	12.0	13.6	59.2	22.5	39.3
Yarmouk University	19.9	12.9	41.5	20.8	53.1
The Hashemite University	13.2	14.2	40.6	25.4	53.1
German Jordanian University	17.8	11.4	40.6	19.5	69.1
Mutah University	29.7	11.5	27.6	20.9	61.2

Table (5) shows that Jordanian universities participating in the THE ranking 2024 while revealing that Jordanian universities suffer many problems like their inability to meet the requirements of ranking standards as found in THE, which requires paying more attention to meet the standard of scientific research, linking research capacity with industry, creating a research environment and a set of education standards. This finding agrees with the findings of some previous studies like (Al-Rifai, 2021). Accordingly, Jordanian universities required to adopt a clear policy for building a creative thinking linked to internationalization-based strategies, improving academic quality, incorporating the international dimension policy to attract international students and faculty members, and enhancing research environment with international research cooperation projects (Rafique, 2023).

Jordanian Universities in QS Ranking 2024

Table (6) below indicates the results of the QS International Foundation for Jordanian University ranking 2024, considering that there are 9 out of 31 universities participated, seven of them are public universities and two private universities.

Table 6: Jordanian Universities in QS Ranking

University	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
The University of Jordan	601-650	601-650	601-650	591-600	498
Jordan University of Science and Technology	651-700	651-700	801-1000	801-1000	731-740
Al-Ahlyya Amman University					801-850
Princess Sumaya University	801-1000	801-1000	801-1000	801-1000	901-950
German Jordanian University	801-1000	801-1000	801-1000	801-1000	1001-1200

Yarmouk University		1001+	1201+	1201-1400	1001-1200
Mutah University			1001-1200	1001-1200	1001-1200
Hashemite University		1001+	1201+	1201-1400	1201-1400
Al-Balqa University			1201+	1201-1400	1401+

Table (6) indicates that only one of the public universities is listed in category of 500 worldwide while 3 universities are listed in the category of one thousand since 2012. The results clearly show that Jordanian universities are still able to meet the requirements of ranking standards, which means that there are some challenges that affect the movement of academic ranking criteria of QS, especially in the context of competition in the higher education market at the local, regional and global levels, and at the level of the emergence of alternative destinations for education in the region (Hou, 2022). Moreover, the improvement in the ranking of some universities and their acquisition of 5 stars can be attributed to the provision of analytical advice, according to several studies, including (Huang, 2023; Chirikov, 2023).

Table (7) below shows the axes that represent the obstacles encountered by Jordanian universities concerning the ranking criteria.

Table 7: QS Ranking criteria for Jordanian Universities (2024)

Criteria Ratio Universities	Academic Reputation	Employer Reputation	Faculty Student	Citation per Faculty	International Faculty	International Students	International Research	Employment outcomes	Sustainability
	30%	15%	10%	20%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
The University of Jordan	29.1	38.8	17.4	3.3	20.6	34.1	13.8	29.8	28.9
Jordan University of Science and Technology	18.5	24.5	16.4	4.7	13.9	31.6	9.9	9.8	22
Al-Ahlyya Amman University	6.8	5.9	9.3	2.3	72.9	100	1	10.4	1.6
Princess Sumaya University	8	19.5	10.7	4.5	42.1	39.9	1	11.7	1
German Jordanian University	7.1	13.4	18.8	4.8	44.1	14.4	1.1	10.6	1
Yarmouk University	11.9	14.5	2.8	2.5	7.8	13.9	3.9	28.4	1.1
Mutah University	7.6	8.9	10.1	1.7	10.1	43.6	1	8.7	1.7
Hashemite University	8	13	3.8	3.4	9	8	3	6.2	1.1
Al-Balqa University	5	6.7	4.3	2.4	3.8	1.8	2	7.6	1

Table (7) indicates that Jordanian universities encounter many weaknesses in QS rankings criteria, specifically in terms of academic reputation, employers' opinions, scientific publishing, citations and international students. This finding indicates that there are obstacles preventing Jordanian universities from progressing according to the ranking standards, which requires them to reconsider their academic vision and plans to provide an integrative educational environment, thus enabling themselves to attract international students and faculty members, providing an appropriate research environment and budget monitoring based on participatory and attractive international researchers, and enhancing academic reputation. Furthermore, universities must pay more attention to employers' opinions and improve the relationship with graduates to improve their positive image reputations.

The Arab Universities in Rankings

This section presents the general situation of Arab universities in international rankings, noting that there are 740 universities in the Arab countries.

The Arab Universities in Shanghai Ranking

The following table (8) shows the Arab universities that entered the Shanghai ranking in the latest edition for the year 2023.

Table 8: List of Arab universities of Shanghai ranking 2023

Country	No. universities	100 Top	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	Top 600	Top 700	Top 800	Top 900	Top1000
Saudi Arabia	12	-	2	2	1	2	1	-	-	3	1
Egypt	7	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	1	1	1
Lebanon	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Qatar	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Emirate	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1
Tunis	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Jordan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Total	25		2	2	2	2	2	3	2	6	4

Table 8 indicates that 7 Arab states participate in the ARWU ranking in the last edition 2024 and that since its inception in 2003 up-to 2024, a total of 25 universities only is included. Moreover, the Egyptian University of Cairo participated in the ranking in 2006, then King Saud University of Saudi Arabia followed in 2009. According to the results analysis which shows that the Arab state and universities are still in a weak achievement of Shanghai ranking standards, which indicates that Arab universities are not prepared for engaging with rankings and their standards due to the absence of a future vision for the importance of academic rankings for universities at the present time, especially in the recruitment process for graduates in the local, regional and international labor market.

The Arab universities in Times Higher Education (THE)

The following table (9) shows the Arab universities that entered the Times Higher Education (THE) ranking in the latest edition for the year 2024.

Table 9: List of the Arab universities in Times Higher Education (THE)

Country	No. universities	100 Top	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	Top 600	Top 700	Top 800	Top 900	Top1000
Algeria	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Egypt	28	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	9	-
Lebanon	5	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	1	-
Saudi Arabia	20			2		3	3	7		4	
Oman	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Iraq	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Morocco	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Emirate	6	-	-	2	2	-	1	-	1	-	-
Total	114			5	2	3	7	9	1	15	0

Table 9 indicates that 8 Arab states participated in the (THE) ranking in the last edition of 2024 with a total of 114 universities. According to the results analysis of the data published by the (THE) ranking institution since its launch in 2011, the number of Arab universities participating in the ranking reached 114 for the year 2024. Furthermore, it is obvious that Arab universities are still fluctuating, which indicates the depth of the problem of dealing with and meeting ranking requirements by Arab universities. From these indicators, we conclude that Arab universities and the way they deal with ranking standards are still below expectations, which indicates a real weakness in the quality of Arab university administrations and leadership positions in them. This makes the process of interaction with ranking standards below the required level, in addition to the absence of a future vision for rankings and their importance among decision-makers in Arab universities, along with the absence of qualified human resources in the academic and financial rankings to cover ranking expenses to meet the requirements of the standards for each ranking

The Arab universities in QS Ranking

Table 10 presents the number of Arab universities participating in the (QS) ranking in the last edition of 2024.

Table 10: The Arab universities in QS Ranking

Country	No. universities	100 Top	Top 200	Top 300	Top 400	Top 500	Top 600	Top 700	Top 800	Top 900	Top1000
Bahrain	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1
Egypt	15	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	-
Lebanon	8	-	-	1	-	-	1	4	1	-	1
Saudi Arabia	16	-	2	1	-	-	2	2	2	2	3
Iraq	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Kuwait	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-
Qatar	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Emirate	11	-	-	2	1	1	3	2	1	1	-
Palestine	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sudan	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tunisia	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	75	0	3	5	2	3	7	9	6	6	7

Table 10 indicates that 11 Arab states with 75 universities are participating in the (QS) Arab ranking. However, the Arab QS ranking followed the minimum standards requirement in comparison to international ranking of universities, which indicates that there are intractable problems in Arab universities, which emphasize their administrative and financial problems related to the academic

body in Arab universities. Noteworthy is that despite the ability of universities in the Gulf countries to overcome obstacles, they need to acquire specialized competencies in rankings from foreign universities with abundant financial resources while universities in other Arab countries, including Jordan, may need to encounter some other problems to meet the requirements of ranking standards.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed at revealing the reasons and challenges that prevent Jordanian universities from obtaining advanced positions in international academic rankings, pointing out the negative impact of such situation on the university's academic performance, reputation, and educational results. This agrees with the findings of previous research, such as (Kethüda, 2023), (Qureshi M. S., 2023), (Rafique, 2023), (Li, 2023), (Shahjahan, 2023), (Peris-Ortiz, 2023), (Nassa, 2021). Thus, the analysis results indicate that Jordanian universities attach great importance to participation in rankings, as shown in tables (4 and 6) despite the small number of participating universities compared to the total.

In addition, the results of the analysis of the criteria adopted by the three rankings show that the rankings are biased towards research performance, as already indicated by (Li, 2023) and (Rafique, 2023). Accordingly, one of the main weaknesses of Jordanian universities stems from the capacity of universities in terms of the number and impact of publications in cataloged journals, which makes this study consistent with the results of found by (Al-Wahdna, 2021), (Al-Rifai, 2021), (Salameh, 2020). Moreover, the study suggests that Jordanian universities focus on research productivity, strengthening basic research tools, and incentives for research, and developing incentive standards for participatory and industry-related research. Furthermore, another challenge that is as important as scientific research and requires intensive efforts by universities is their need to bring about developments in infrastructure and technology in the quality of higher education and to establish international cooperation and networking channels between global and regional universities to enhance their attractiveness as alternative destinations for international students. This finding is consistent with (Glass, 2023), (Hou, 2022), and (Porter, 2023).

Finally, Jordanian universities have a range of opportunities and factors that can be invested in forming a competitive advantage, depending on Jordan's geopolitical and tourist location, such as establishing research centres specializing in asylum, climate, and conflict issues, increasing international cooperation, and building partnerships and joint academic programs with Arab, regional, and international universities. This can be achieved in light of the fact that only one Jordanian university is included in ARWU and that that university, namely the University of Jordan failed to maintain its rank for a year. For the rank of Jordanian universities in the THE, it is noted that all Jordanian universities were ranked between 601-1500 where only the University of Jordan succeeded in maintaining its rank. For the QS ranking, only the University of Jordan secured a position in the top 500 universities. Thus, this study is designed to provide theoretical and practical recommendations that can assist Jordanian universities administrations, mainly those in charge of academic ranking departments, to follow up the fulfilment of ranking standards and criteria. The study provides a valuable contribution to help decision- makers in Jordanian universities to adopt policies related to governance, sustainability, international ranking to enhance their position, role, and status at the international level, thus contributing to the value of their graduates.

Study limitations and future research

The limitations of this study include the use of data published on the official websites of world ranking institutions, which gives the results of the overall indicators without revealing the accurate details that can give a more accurate analysis of strengths and weaknesses. The study is also limited to the methodology used to study problem that could be developed in the future. Moreover, the researchers provide several recommendations relying on changing management and operations

approaches used, and it proposes developing plans that are in line with global standards of education, which may differ from an institution to another. The call out for paying more attention to the provision of integrated infrastructure at universities in comparison to international universities, relies on universities' budgets, management thinking, scientific research quality, reshaping academic reputation, and other factors that differ from a university to another.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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