

Shifting Population Affects Taiwanese Universities

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With a shrinking youth population in Taiwan, universities there now have to identify strategies to preserve their academic environment. For decades, Taiwan has led a successful cultural campaign that emphasized the value of higher education, thereby resulting in a boom in the number of universities in Taiwan. Indeed, there are 126 universities, 19 colleges, and 13 junior colleges. Yet the typical Taiwan University is facing a shrinking youth population. Lower birthrates have become a problem, with only [1.065 births occurring per woman](#). Most demographers believe that a birth rate of 2.1 births per woman is necessary to sustain Taiwan's population's size. So, what should a Taiwanese University do? In addition to developing strategies that promote collaboration, universities have also taken to data analytics to bolster their research performance and international prestige.

Taiwanese Universities Face a Demographic Crisis

The Ministry of Education in Taiwan only recently invested NT\$50 billion (US\$1.6 billion) over five years to promote research facilities. Despite this major public investment and widespread goodwill towards academia, there have been questions of the value of this spending. A recent [decline in the international prestige](#) of the National Taiwan University and an inability to attract 200 academics to Taiwanese universities has resulted in questions whether Taiwanese universities have a strategy to maintain the rigorous

academic environment that is competitive internationally.

In addition to this decline in prestige, the sheer loss in the number of students will critically damage the stability of many of these universities. By 2019, new student enrollment will have [dropped by 30,000 students](#). Meanwhile, by 2023, the total number of students enrolled in higher education will have [dropped by a third](#).

In this environment, universities and governmental policies are aligning to promote a leaner and more efficient higher education system. Schools will be incentivized to merge using a quota system and subsidies. Under this system, it is expected that 12 of the 51 public universities, 20 to 40 of the 101 private universities will be closed or have merged by 2023. Furthermore, in an effort to mitigate the increase in the unemployment rate among recent college graduates in Taiwan, universities will seek to [align higher education with the needs of employers](#).

SciVal and Scopus Help Universities Compete

In order to be competitive, universities will need to expand their research enterprise. Some private universities have already taken steps to form a consortium, “U9 League,” that allows universities to pool resources, share faculty, and possibly collaborate on curricula.

To further garner prestige and recruit students, universities are using SciVal and Scopus to “facilitate international collaboration, provide faculty incentives for increased research publication and identify the university’s strengths and areas for improvement.” Under this system, Taiwanese Universities will be able to develop research strategies using publication data analytics to identify strengths and weaknesses in research. In doing so, they can improve their standing in the rankings to become more competitive

As Universities in Taiwan struggle to maintain a competitive academic environment in the face of population decline, the ability to merge departments and utilize publication data analytics through SciVal and Scopus will be a great asset to bolstering the prestige of top Taiwanese universities. In doing so, they will be able to maintain a culture of higher education while boasting a research enterprise that meaningfully contributes to human society.

Cite this article

Enago Academy, Shifting Population Affects Taiwanese Universities. Enago Academy. 2017/05/09. <https://www.enago.com/academy/shifting-population-affects-taiwanese-universities/>