Name

Professor

Course

Date

Critique Paper

**Introduction**

In the article, “The Order of Things”, Malcolm Gladwell advocates the true biases that ranking systems have, which is that a heterogeneous ranking system only represents a small portion of the overall picture, in a sense. Gladwell really emphasizes these biases through his example with *Car and Driver* magazine and *The U.S. News.* In *Car and Driver,* cars are ranked based on one system, regardless of class. *Car and Driver* ranks cars “based on four categories: vehicle (driver comfort, styling, fit and finish, etc.); power train (transmission, engine, and fuel economy); chassis (steering, brakes, ride, and handling); and ‘fun to drive’” (Gladwell 221-222). In this specific example, *Car and Driver* ranks a Porsche Cayman, Chevrolet Corvette, and a Lotus Evora. The Porsche came in first, the Corvette came in at second, and the Evora came in at third in the ranking system. Gladwell suggests that if specific factors in the overall ranking system carried more weight, then the Corvette would be in first, the Evora in second, and the Porsche in third. *Car and Driver* weighs such factors like affordability and durability so lowly because of their biases towards readers. *Car and Driver* advocates for car lovers rather than the average car driver.

By reading background information about author we can see that he is a good in psychology, sociology and methodology. One more thing is he doesn’t like ranking systems. I expecting article that contains many information and evidence against ranking, opinion from the author and society.

In his article, Gladwell tells us that all ranking systems are based off one more person’s opinion on how well is certain product stacks up against its competitors. He shows a great example by ranking sport cars in “Car and Driver” magazine (369-370). The main idea is that there is no way that someone can make a ranking system and not include their own opinions and biases in it. So people should not be quie believe in ranks.

I did not get stuck during reading this article. There were a lot of evidence and examples which are making the text understandable.

Another example of a heterogenous ranking system Gladwell mentions is the ranking of higher education institutions by *The U.S. News.* Gladwell believes that there really isn’t an impartial method of ranking institutions. The reasoning behind this is that a student’s knowledge and intellect is based on the student’s ability to become engaged to their new surroundings and new sources of knowledge. The criterion used by *The U.S. News* to rank institutions is a scale out of 100 and consists of: “1. Undergraduate academic reputation, 22.5 per cent; 2. Graduation and freshman retention rates, 20 per cent; 3. Faculty resources, 20 per cent; 4. Student selectivity, 15 per cent; 5. Financial resources, 10 per cent; 6. Graduation rate performance, 7.5 per cent; 7. Alumni giving, 5 per cent.” (Gladwell 223-224). Gladwell argues that it would be spurious for a student to not attend a certain institution just because it lacks the points that another institution has. The ranking of subjective things such as vehicles and higher education institutions cannot simply be ranked how they are being ranked by *Car and Driver* magazine and *The U.S. News.* Even when it comes to Gladwell’s extreme example of classifying a death as a suicide, homicide, or just an accident, there are many variables one must consider.

**Conclusion**

I agree that there are biases in heterogeneous ranking systems, a point that needs emphasizing since so many people still believe that these ranking systems are impartial. There are a lot of factors that must be considered when it comes to ranking things and in my opinion, a lot of people fail to see that. The issue lies in the fact that some factors may compliment one of the things being ranked more than other factors do. For example, a car may not be the fastest, but it has good luxury features. In a ranking system, the luxury factor of a car may be worth less points than the speed factor of a car, but that does not mean the fast car is better than the luxurious car. This also applies to students looking for a college to go to. Gladwell mentions how students make quick judgements on schools based on rankings. I believe students should not base their college decision on rankings they find from reputable websites. Instead, students should actually see and experience the college through their own eyes and not what some editor said on a newspaper.

Works Cited

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