

BENCHMARKING HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

Policy Event, Chair: Cláudia Sarrico
4 September 2017, 17:15-18:15 h

Invited panel participant: Theodor Leiber
evalag, Mannheim, Germany

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'Under pressure? Higher education institutions coping with multiple challenges'
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Panel discussion issues

- The concerns regarding the **performance of higher education systems**;
- The **methodological approach** to measuring and comparing the **performance of higher education systems**;
- The design, implementation and **evaluation of higher education policies** to enhance performance of higher education systems.

Possible performance dimensions for benchmarking (setting of focusing issues is unavoidable)

- **Quality of learning and teaching**
- **Connection/integration of basic research, application research and technological application** (and market products)
- **Varied types of research institutions**, e.g. universities and extra-university research institutions
- **Internationalisation**: very varied attractiveness for international students; rather varied (& limited) student mobility

Possible performance dimensions for benchmarking

(continued)

- **Digitalisation:** Campus Management Systems, but very rudimentary **Learning Analytics** widespread
- **Varied funding models and strategies:** proportion of public, third-party, private funding
- Varied strategies of **vertically** (Anglo-American) **vs. horizontally** (Germany, Austria, Scandinavia) **differentiated HE systems**

Methodological issues/problems of measuring/comparing performance

- **Comprehensive Core Data/PI set not available** on national level
- **Varied definitions of Core Data and PIs** (comparability/operational interpretation usually controversial on all levels: within HEIs, between HEIs, on state level, on federal state (country) level, on regional level, on global level); also: **relation of (directly accessible) Core Data and (constructed) PIs**
- **Performance measurement/PIs quite costly** for many HEIs, particularly UASs and smaller public HEIs

Methodological issues/problems of measuring/comparing performance (continued)

- How can you **benchmark HE systems** which apply **different QA models** and therefore follow different strategies and (probably) collect different PI data? (e.g. audits vs. program accreditation vs. institutional accreditation)
- Relatively **low number of Core Data/Pis for learning processes and learning outcomes**

Design, implementation, evaluation of HE policies to enhance performance

- *Benchmarking Higher Education System Performance*
comprehensive and very ambitious approach, but probably unavoidable for international benchmarking of HE systems
- **Benchmarking data are highly aggregated:** realistic benchmarking options/improvement actions only for smaller HE systems
- **Complexity of education politics and policies in federal nation states** (Germany, Spain, USA, ...)

Design, implementation, evaluation of HE policies to enhance performance (continued)

- **Varied models of political steering in HE systems and types of “accepted” negotiation between HE stakeholders**
- **Varied capacities of HEIs for behaving as autonomous agents** (e.g. financial resources and financial autonomy)

(Selected) Issues raised in discussion and comments of audience

- **Currently, specific topics of exemplary HE systems** (mostly selected topics by HE system countries) **are benchmarked, not “complete” HE systems**
- **Values and value systems** underlying benchmarked HE systems **should be included in benchmarking process** (e.g. mission statements of HEIs; structure and development plans; HE laws)
- **Autonomy characteristics** of investigated HE systems are adopted from EUA project

References

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