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**Title**

Comparing efficiency in a cross-country perspective: the case of Italian and Spanish state universities  
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**Abstract**

The growing internationalization of European Higher Education requires more emphasis on cross-country comparisons. In this paper, an efficiency analysis of Italian and Spanish universities is conducted; as well as from a comparative perspective. The efficiency scores are obtained using data envelopment analysis. The results demonstrate a good average efficiency in both countries relative to each ?country-specific? frontier; but when compared together, Italian universities seem relatively more efficient. Malmquist indexes show, in both cases, efficiency improvements in the period considered. In the Italian case, this improvement is due to major ?technological changes?; that is, the introduction of some structural reforms in the sector (e.g., Bachelor/Master curricula). In the Spanish case, there is an improvement in ?pure? efficiency, which is due to new funding models. Further stages of the study underline the role of ?regional effects?, probably due to different socio-economic conditions in Italy, and to the decentralization process in Spain. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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