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**Abstract**

Since (higher) education is more important than ever in knowledge societies, high priority should be ascribed to quality management in higher education institutions and its effectiveness. However, there is still a lack of systematic evaluation of the latter, particularly analyses which are not restricted to ex-post gathered data and expert assessments. The articles in this special issue contribute to overcome these shortcomings in several ways: One article is reflecting on success factors and un-/intended effects of quality management, another one is analyzing more discursive ways of evidence-informed guidance of quality management policies which are complementary to rigorous impact studies. Five articles investigate quality management effectiveness by ex-post and simultaneous impact evaluation in European case studies, including assessments of students, teachers, quality managers and leadership. Finally, a SWOT analysis of impact evaluation of quality management in higher education institutions is carried out and suggested as a tool for bridging the notorious gap between methodology and implementation.(HRK / Abstract übernommen)