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Abstract

Using an economic model of academic behaviour, Jorgensenn and Hanssen (Higher Education, 76, 1029-1049, 2018) find that a research incentive based on pages of output would not compromise research quality. Given that quantity is more easily observable, they suggest that such an incentive may have merit as an actual policy. This finding of the economic modelling exercise is shown to rest on an inadequate representation of the policy problem: once the policymaker's resource trade-off is accounted for, the result fails to hold. A number of other findings and assumptions are critically examined, along with the problematic conflation of findings and assumptions. These concerns raise the broader matter of the merit of using formal economic models to inform higher education policy. A number of reasons are provided to substantiate the view that such models are likely to be inappropriate for this purpose and any policy proposals derived in this fashion ought to be treated with considerable caution. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)