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Skipping the quality abracadabra : academic resistance to quality management in Finnish higher education institutions and quality managers' strategies to handle it / Jasmin Overberg

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Abstract

A crucial factor for the success of quality management is support from academic staff. However, previous research indicates academic resistance to quality management. This article analyses the present state of academic resistance in Finnish universities, the reasons behind it and quality managers' strategies to handle it. The data come from responses to an open question asked in the context of a quantitative survey (n = 110) and from semi-structured interviews with persons in both the academic and quality management fields (n = 12). The findings suggest that different kinds of resistance exist, which arise for practical, systemic, cultural and administrative reasons. Subtle forms of resistance, like avoidance, are especially common. While they display understanding for resistance and use it as a feedback instrument, quality managers have two main strategies to handle it: first, by constantly demonstrating the benefits of quality management and second, through linguistic adaption, namely the avoidance of terms associated with quality. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)