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**Abstract**

School education in Germany is under the responsibility of the federal states and as a consequence average grades differ widely across regions. Since school leavers apply nationwide for admission to university, regional provenance may thus matter a lot for the success probability in the admission process. Using a comprehensive dataset of the German central clearing house for university admissions in 2006/2007, we show that success rates indeed differ dramatically between federal states, provided that grades are not made comparable across state boundaries. Most of the variation in success can be explained by state-level differences in grading. By defining quotas for federal states and restricting competition among applicants to the state-level, the link between state-level grading and success rates in the university admission process can be broken. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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