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The EFQM Excellence Model : higher education's latest management fad?

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Abstract

Robert Birnbaum argues that higher education tends to adopt management fads ? newly conceived techniques enjoying brief popularity but which fail to live up to their promoters' claims ? at the point when the corporate sector and government are discarding them. Although fads may have failed in these sectors because of various reasons, their failure usually to engage with the complexity of higher education's structures and processes makes their failure here virtually inevitable. The European Foundation for Quality Management Excellence Model, it is argued here, is a classical fad in Birnbaum's sense, showing conceptual weaknesses and being unlikely to engage with the particular characteristics of higher education. The introduction of the Excellence Model into UK higher education is shown to have followed closely the path that Birnbaum has identified; there are also preliminary signs suggesting that it will decline along the predicted trajectory. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)