

Different strategies for the use of quality labels among engineering higher education institutions in France

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Abstract

Quality assurance (QA) mechanisms and policies in higher education (HE) have received increasing attention worldwide over the last decades. An increasingly popular QA strategy is the implementation of certification or accreditation processes leading to quality labels or “seals”. The use of labels is a multidimensional phenomenon; it can be used to respond to regulation or policy incentives or as a positional and competitive tool. It can also involve ethical and other intrinsic motivations. The objective of this paper is to characterize higher education institution (HEI) behaviour regarding the use of quality labels. Public information from 163 engineering HEIs in France has been analysed through qualitative content analysis and principal components analysis (PCA). This work, essentially exploratory, has identified four distinct institutional strategies. Furthermore, it has enabled to formulate hypothesis regarding institutional factors that could have an impact on the implementation of these strategies as well as possible motivations.

Keywords: *quality labels; engineering higher education; France*

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