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Findings from European Benchmarking Exercises on E-Learning: Value and Impact

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ABSTRACT
Benchmarking is becoming a more and more commonly used method for quality assurance and enhancement in higher education today. The aim of this study was to explore the impact and value of benchmarking e-learning in universities. Two European benchmarking initiatives, E-xcellence+ through the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities [EADTU] and an e-learning benchmarking exercise through the European Centre for Strategic Management of Universities [ESMU], were studied using an exploratory multiple case study method and cross-case analysis of the findings. The findings indicated the value and impact of a variety of aspects of benchmarking e-learning on different levels, and stressed the need for a holistic and contextual approach as both benchmarking and e-learning are complex and comprehensive phenomena. This study also shows that benchmarking, in line with national and international quality boards/agencies, is a powerful tool for making improvements to teaching and learning in higher education.

KEYWORDS

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