ASCRIBING MEANINGS TO QUALITY CULTURES IN THE PORTUGUESE CONTEXT

Veiga, Amélia, Cardoso, Sónia, Rosa, Maria João and Amaral, Alberto

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to discuss Portuguese academics' views on quality assessment and the elements that are important for a better understanding of what ascribes meaning to “quality cultures” in Portuguese higher education. The discussion was based on the results of a survey run in 2010 among Portuguese academics on quality assessment objectives and purposes. Descriptive statistics was used to investigate academics’ support to what quality assessment was supposed to guarantee (its purposes) and which should be its objectives. Furthermore, a factorial analysis using Promax rotation (oblique) was performed to investigate if the different purposes could be grouped according to the different areas they address in terms of quality assessment, helping to uncover a rationale that could explain the answers obtained. Theoretically, the results have been analysed in the light of the “quality culture” concept. Perceptions of Portuguese academics that support internal processes of quality assurance correspond either to the responsive quality culture or the regenerative quality culture. The viable form of ideal cultures is analytically limited, and the perceptions gathered encourage “quality cultures” biased by stronger group control.