

Comparative Empirical Research on VET Governance: What is behind “good governance”?

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Responsiveness of Vocational Education?

In the early 1990s the OECD undertook a series of country reviews on VET and one of the major findings was “the emphasis put by most countries on the need for more responsiveness of VET systems to changing needs for education and training.”

(Durand-Drouhin & Bertrand, 1995, p. 39)

In 2018, VET stakeholders in Europe rated in a survey the item ‘Enhancing responsiveness to the labour market needs’ among the top three trends for the future besides the on-going trend towards increasing work-based elements and growth of VET at higher levels.

(Cedefop, 2020, p. 17)

Key concepts	Plural governance; Governance Equalizer (PG)	Feedback mechanism (FM)	Employment-Education Link (EEL)	Thematic Country Reviews (TCR) of apprenticeships	Benchmarking-EFQEA; Quality and Effective Apprenticeships
Authors	Rauner et al. 2009	Cedefop 2013	Renold et al. 2016	Cedefop 2019	EC 2018
Time	2008 - 2015	2012 – 2013	2015 - 2018	2014 - 2019	2018 - ongoing
Countries	AT, CH, DE, DK (2009); ES, IT, LV, PT, SE (2016)	12 EU Member States	18 OECD countries	LT, MT (2015); GR, IT, SI (2017); HR, CY, BE, SE (2019)	not clear yet; volunteering EU Member States
Object of analysis	Apprenticeship systems	VET-Subsystems	Most relevant VET programme	Apprenticeship schemes	Apprenticeship schemes
Main Methods	Quantitative ratings by experts; Lickert scale 1-10, (agree/disagree)	Qualitative, Case studies	Statistical indicators & weighted ratings by experts	Qualitative ratings by stakeholders and external experts	Qualitative ratings by stakeholders
Number of Criteria	30 structured in 6 main criteria	11 leading questions structured in three principles	25 structured in curriculum design, application and feedback phase	45 structured in 10 areas	14 structured into Learning & working and framework conditions;

Selected criteria related to social partners

Surveys ask employers whether graduates of the VET programme perform well in the workplace.

Employers are legally required to have specific trainers/instructors responsible for workplace training

Employers are involved in defining qualification standards.

Social partners, vocational colleges and researchers participate in a VET dialogue.

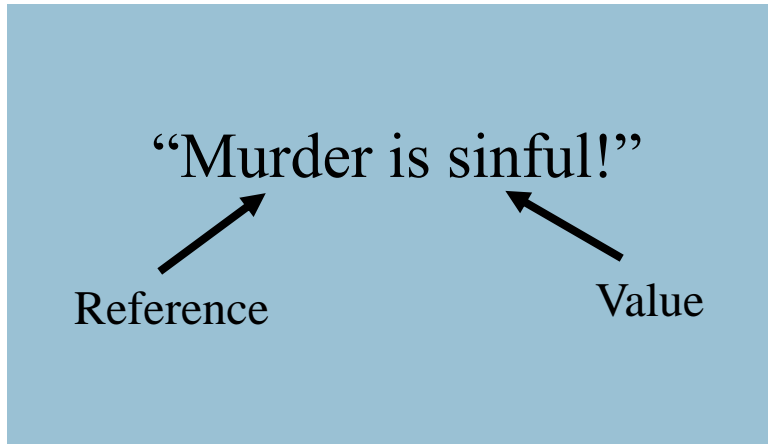
Employer organisations play a key role in engaging and supporting companies.

Employers provide equipment for VET classroom education.

Employers are involved in defining the examination form.

Employer organisations and trade unions are actively engaged at all levels.

The methodology explained



10 dimensions for the reference level:

1. Legal Framework;
2. Qualification & Curriculum;
3. Teachers & Trainers;
4. Learning Venues (issues of workplace learning and duality);
5. Working Conditions;
6. Financial issues;
7. Access & Assessment;
8. Role & Cooperation of Actors;
9. Guidance & Counselling;
10. Monitoring, Quality Assurance & System Development.

24 value concepts by merging the 20 public value concepts by Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) and 15 values of good governance by the European Commission (2017) to finally 24 value concepts.

Example for Coding:

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Reference level</i>	<i>Value level</i>
“Are trainers/instructors legally required to receive specific training?”	teachers & trainers	legality
“The assessment and evaluation of vocational competence is a topic of innovation programmes?”	assessment & access	innovation

Findings: frequency of values mentioned

1. Legality	41
2. Transparency	33
3. Inclusiveness	24
4. Effectiveness	24
5. Public interest	17
6. Impartiality	14
7. Responsiveness	14
8. Competitiveness	7
9. User orientation	5
10. Efficiency	5
11. Regime dignity	4
12. Innovation	4
13. Accountability	4
14. Connectivity	4
15. Self-development of employees	3
16. Equity	2
17. Reflection	2

These six are also part of the seven global values of good governance identified by Jørgensen & Sørensen (2012)

Not mentioned once:

18. Altruism
19. Sustainability
20. Majority rule
21. User democracy
22. Protection of minorities
23. Political loyalty
24. Robustness

Findings per reference level

Table 3: Values most frequently assigned to areas

	Legal Framework	Qualification & Curriculum	Teachers & Trainers	Learning Venues	Funding	Access & Assessment	Role & Cooperation of Actors	Monitoring, QA & System Development
Legality	●	○	●●●	○	●	○	●	○
Transparency	●	●	○			●●	●●	●
Inclusiveness		●●				●	●●	●
Effectiveness		●		●	○	●	○	●●
Public interest		○		○	●●●		○	○
Impartiality		○		○	●	○	●	○
Responsiveness		●	○		○		○	●

Legend: Entries ○=1-2; ●=3-6; ●●=7-10; ●●●=above 11

Source: Authors

Findings per study

Table 4: Values most frequently mentioned according to studies

	Plural governance (PG)	Feedback mechanism (FM)	Employment-Education Link (EEL)	Thematic Country Reviews – Cedefop (TCR)	Benchlearning-EFQEA
Legality	●●	○	●●	●●●	●
Transparency	●	●●	●	●●●	●
Inclusiveness	●	○	●●	●	●
Effectiveness	●●	○	●●	●	●
Public interest	●	○	●	●●	○
Impartiality	●	○	○	●	○
Responsiveness	○	●	○	●●	○

Legend: Entries ○=1-2; ●=3-6; ●●=7-10; ●●●=above 11

Source: Authors

Summary and Outlook

- The core values of good governance of VET are almost identical with **global core values of good governance**
- Responsiveness itself is not rated as important as expected
- Important values related to responsiveness (such as robustness or sustainability) are ignored

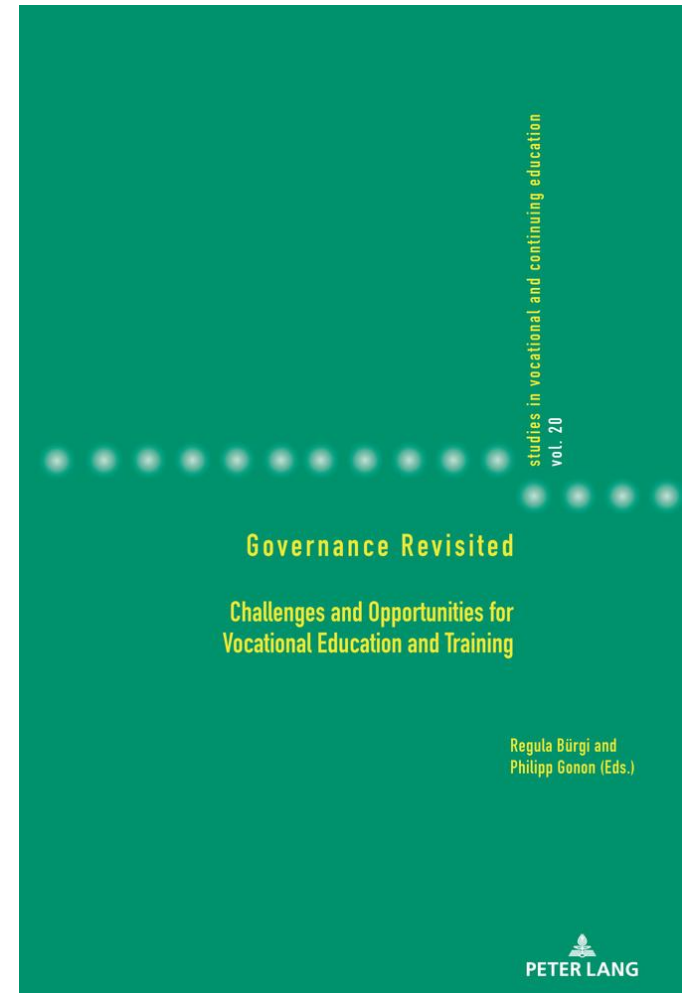
- The identified **ten areas** and **core values** can be used as minimum requirements for future studies
- The values and principles on which VET governance assessment frameworks are based should always be made transparent

Further Reading

Markowitsch Jörg and Ralph Chan (2021) “Elucidating Responsiveness. Reviewing Empirical Methods for Comparative Studies of Governance in Vocational Education and Training” In: Regula Bürgi, Philipp Gonon (Eds.). *Governance Revisited. Challenges and Opportunities for VET*. Series: Studies in Vocational and Continuing Education. Bern: Peter Lang. p. 379-415

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