

PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP ASPECTS OF LATVIAN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS' LEADERS

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***Abstract.** Leadership of vocational education institutions' leaders is one of the leading resources in order to provide access, quality, competitiveness and sustainability of vocational education. The goal of the research is to analyse leadership of vocational education institutions' leaders on the basis of the Charismatic, Emotional, Anticipatory, Professional, Participatory, Cultural, Formative and Administrative Dimensions (Gento & González, 2012) identified due to the analysis of scientific literature and normative documents in the context of the vocational education reform. The outcomes of the quantitative research testify that students assess the vocational education institution leaders' leadership more critically than staff, but from the respondents' point of view the leadership characterizing criteria such as professionalism, emotionality and charisma are assessed the highest in general.*

***Keywords:** vocational education, leadership, quality of education.*

Introduction

For vocational education and training (VET) providers, institutional leadership, which shows strategic direction and support collaborative environment for all staff, with career development opportunities, is a pivotal condition for their success (European Commission, 2012, 38). A VET provider's quality is built on two key factors, namely good leadership and management. Effective leadership creates a positive organizational culture that values trust, where people are motivated to ask questions, debate issues and contribute to each

other's ongoing learning and inquiry (EQAVET, n.d., 27). In Latvia, VET providers offer programmes in all study fields and levels (see Table 1).

The priorities set in the European education policy planning documents are the access to education (European Commission, 2010, p. 3) and an equal learning possibility, as well as provision of VET quality and relevance in youth training for participation in the economic and social life according to the labour market demand and economic needs (CEDEFOP, 2015; OECD, 2016a).

In order to make vocational education more attractive for the youth and adults, the vocational education reforms have been initiated and several initiatives for the goal achievement have been implemented with the social partners' involvement and support on different levels (national, municipal, personal) in the early 21st century in Latvia.

On the national level:

- In 2009 the strategy and guidelines were developed which envisaged broader social partners' involvement for its competitiveness provision (The Cabinet of Ministers, 2009; Cedefop, 2015; EQAVET, 2016);
- With the help of the EU funds, 14 sectoral qualification frameworks have been formed, a new structure of the vocational education programme and methodological recommendations for the modular system implementation in vocational education have been worked out, as well as the need to apply alternative types of learning outcomes assessment in the modular approach context has been emphasized (Saeima, 2014; CEDEFOP, 2015; Fernandezs, 2015).
- Amendments have been made in the Vocational Education Law with an intent to create the normative regulation in order to provide the compliance of vocational education's (VET) offer with the labour market's demand on the sectoral, institutional and curricular level (EQAVET, 2016);
- In the vocational education institutions and competence centres sectoral expert councils, collegial advisory bodies (convents) were founded for cooperation promotion with enterprises and scientific institutions, orientated towards innovations, in separate sectors (EQAVET, 2016; Latvian Investment and Development Agency, n.d.);
- Introduction of the dual vocational education model in vocational education institutions has been started (The Ministry of Education and Science, 2014, Fernandezs, 2015);
- Registration and accreditation of the education service provider, licensing and accreditation of the curriculum, education process monitoring, as well as assessment of the education establishment leaders' professional work according to the international (EQAVET)

criteria and OECD recommendations (CEDEFOP, 2015; EQAVET, 2016; The Cabinet of Ministers, 2016) are provided in the ministries responsible for the branch.

Table 1 VET pathways in Latvia

Stage	Level
Initial vocational education	Basic vocational education (at lower secondary level); Secondary vocational education (at upper secondary level); Professional higher education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First-level professional higher (college) education; • Second-level professional higher (university) education.
Continuing vocational education	At integrated primary and lower secondary education level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing vocational education (480 hours); • Continuing vocational education after (non-) completed basic education (480 hours or more); • Professional development after (non-) completed basic education; At upper secondary education level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing vocational education after completed secondary education (640 hours or more); • Professional development after completed secondary education. Non-formal vocational education.

One of the main factors in VET quality provision is leadership of vocational education establishments' leaders. In the modern awareness the leader of a vocational education institution has to comply with such a pedagogical leader as a facilitator, inspirator, broad-minded communicator, risk-taker; they have to comply with such pedagogical leadership characterizing qualities as insightfulness, integrity, enthusiasm, truthfulness and positive thinking (Butt, 2017). The recent studies (Fernandez Gonzalez & Senkane, 2015; Mårtensson & Roxå, 2016; Jäppinen & Ciussi, 2016; Çoğaltay & Karadağ, 2016; Smith, Kelly, & Allard, 2017) estimate that quality and effectiveness of education can be attributed to the educational leadership.

In the early 21st century in Latvia the new scientists, developing fundamental studies in the field of school leadership and education management, have given a significant contribution with a high added value to the vocational education's sustainable development.

The first dissertation on education management was worked out by Ozola (2002), called "The development of the structure and management of private schools." In this dissertation, the narrow meaning of education management as school administration is used. Among other issues, she discussed the theory of the management of a school and also the characteristics of the school principal. Ozola developed a theoretical discussion about the demands on the school principal and

compared the practices in various countries. Her conclusion was that the school principal is at the same time a pedagogical leader and an organizer of the work of the school (Bluma & Daiktere, 2016, 145-146).

The dissertation elaborated by Celma is called "The managers' responsibilities in the transition process of Latvia's primary and secondary schools" (2004). Her thesis is the first dissertation dealing with the activities of the school principal and his/her role when managing the school as an organization in the processes of change from the previous authoritarian Soviet education system to creating a democratic school. This dissertation is an interdisciplinary research work that seeks to address questions about how to manage schools as educational institutions in the change process and what management style is most successful in the change processes (Bluma & Daiktere, 2016, 146).

Another dissertation developed by Upenieks (2008) focused on young principals: "The training and adaptation of new principals of education institutions for work in education institutions." A. Upenieks paid more attention to formal criteria of becoming a school principal, especially stages of beginning the work and the characteristics of these stages. The basic activities described were those dealing with formal tasks such as school documentation, law, technical and material issues, suitability of the staff, their responsibilities, education, and contacts with municipalities (Bluma & Daiktere, 2016, 147).

School leadership was the main focus of Daiktere's (2012) PhD thesis, "The role of general education schools' heads in the school culture improvement process in Latvia." In her research, she explores the role and activities of Latvian general education school principals' daily work. The theoretical discussion of this research concentrates on exploring how leaders can influence the process of school culture formation and how to take part in it in a structured and purposeful way. On the one hand, school leaders can and even must take an active role in strategic planning of a school's future and its implementation. On the other hand, this approach has been criticized as manipulative and outdated as teamwork and participative leadership are claimed to be more modern and therefore more appropriate to school leadership. Principals affect students' learning indirectly by increasing teachers' motivation, creating a sense of support, improving working conditions, and working on school culture (Bluma & Daiktere, 2016, 150).

Kalvans (2012) in his PhD thesis "The role of school principal in education quality assurance in Latvia" has analyzed school leadership practice and its evaluation based on the OECD PISA 2006 main study to find solutions and provide recommendations for the assessment of quality of the principals' work of a general education institution. Kalvans is the first in Latvia who has analysed the role of the principal in education quality indicator groups and quality assurance. The findings demonstrated that the principal's role is seen in his ability to facilitate professional development of teachers, motivation of teachers, monitoring

students' achievement, and usage of new teaching/learning methods. The school principal had direct and significant impact on the formation of the learning environment and school microclimate (Bluma & Daiktere, 2016, 151-152).

As the above-mentioned studies do not cover all aspects of school leadership and education management (Bluma & Daiktere, 2016) and taking into account the importance of educational institution leaders' character and educational leadership profile for quality education, and the relevance of VET in the Latvian context, the authors decided to explore the characteristics of the pedagogical leadership of Latvian VET institutions' leaders. For analysing this aspect, the authors took a quantitative perspective, using a face-to-face assisted web-based questionnaire.

Literature review

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the understanding of pedagogical leadership presented by the research group "Pedagogical leadership and quality of education" (PLQE) at Spain's National University of Distance Education (UNED), coordinated by Samuel Gento Palacios. This theoretical framework (Gento, 2002) was considered by the authors as appropriate, because of its attention to a wide range of dimensions of educational leadership. Gento's model was designed to be applied in educational institutions and tested with professionals of the educational field. It has been improved continuously since its first version appeared in 1996, contrasting theoretical reflexion with the work of professionals and practitioners. In the proposed reference framework, a pedagogical leader is defined as the person (or group of persons) with the ability to enhance other persons' agency for attaining in a most effective and comfortable way their personal, social, and professional goals. According to this conception, educational leadership is characterized by the eight dimensions (Gento & González, 2012) as follows:

- *Charismatic dimension.* This dimension implies that the leader (be an individual or team) is attractive so as to facilitate that other people feel comfortable to be with him/her or they, and is able to provoke that people being around try confidently to be close.
- *Emotional dimension.* In his/her relationship with all the people (of the educational institution or related to it) the leader should treat everybody with the highest kindness, consideration and acknowledgement. At the same time, the leader must also enforce every person's dignity and show esteem and appreciation to all the people.
- *Anticipatory dimension.* Attributed to pedagogical leadership, it means having the capacity of being able of anticipatory vision of what would be the most suitable strategies and activities to solve future challenges

- or problems. It will also mean an anticipatory perception of consequences or effects derived from the solutions to be implemented.
- *Professional dimension.* According to it, pedagogical leaders must impel the institution towards the attainment of educational aims and objectives and must try to facilitate the institution and its members the availability of the required resources and the use of the necessary strategies in order to reach the highest quality of education.
 - *Participatory dimension.* It implies that “the best way of encouraging individuals and groups to an intelligent and collaborative work is stimulate them to offer their cooperative effort in projects they are committed with by their intervention in decisions made throughout every phase. Collected empirical data generally show that in schools of quality all members of the institution work together and that its quality is increased if the educational system acts coordinated with educational institutions.
 - *Cultural dimension.* It means that leaders must promote the consolidation of the institution’s particular culture or specific profile. Pedagogical leaders should, as a consequence, act with the required commitment in order to clarify, consolidate, defend and extend the institution’s cultural profile.
 - *Formative dimension.* As one of the essential features of authentic leaders, it requires that they should care of their own continuous training and formation and that they should try to promote continuous training of people working with them. Basic approach of this leadership dimension must, then, be the promotion of personal professional training and of the best qualification to implement the necessary tasks to advance in the quality of education and of the institution’s quality.
 - *Administrative dimension.* This dimension is the one referred to the administrative routines and to the accomplishment of activities of bureaucratic type. It seems necessary that, in order to reach authentic institutions of quality, bureaucratic activities be reduced or, at least, submitted to educational contents. Anyhow, as these activities could not be totally eliminated, it would be suitable to simplify them and to submit them to the basic orientation of achieving educational institutions of quality.
 - The criteria used for the evaluation of the leader of the educational institution in the Cabinet of Ministers regulation No 831 (The Cabinet of Ministers, 2016) are related to the goals and tasks, the fulfilment of duties related to the position, and to several competences such as creating and maintaining relationship, motivating and developing employees, team management, awareness of the values of the

organization, orientation towards the (institutional development and the achievement of results, the management of changes, the ability to take decisions and take responsibility, strategic vision and management of material and technical resources of the educational institution.

Table 2 The evaluation criteria defined in the Cabinet of Ministers regulation vs. PLQE framework

In the Cabinet of Ministers regulation	In the PLQE framework
Creating and maintaining relationship	Formative dimension, two indicators: Promotion of relationship with training agents; Facilitation of inter professional interchanges
Motivating and developing employees	Participative dimension, four indicators: Acceptance of collaborators' opinions; Awarding trust and responsibility to collaborators; Formative dimension, one indicator; Help for collaborators' training
Team management	Participative dimension, two indicators: Encouragement of participative techniques; Promotion of collaborators' team work
Awareness of the values of the organization	Cultural dimension, two indicators: Promotion of institution's cultural identity; Personally representing the ethos and culture of the institution
Orientation towards the institutional development	Formative dimension, two indicators: Commitment to his/her own training; Help for collaborators' training
Orientation towards the achievement of results	Anticipatory dimension Professional dimension
Management of changes	Anticipatory dimension, two indicators: Planning and management of the necessary changes; Providing the motor to overcome resistance to change
Ability to take decisions and taking responsibility	Charismatic dimension, one indicator: Coherence and personal commitment
Strategic vision	Anticipatory dimension
Management of material and technical resources	Administrative dimension, one indicator: Management of material resources
Education	Charismatic dimension, one indicator: Relevant professional profile
Professional experience	Charismatic dimension, one indicator: Accredited expertise
Professional knowledge and skills	Charismatic dimension, one indicator: Relevant professional profile
General knowledge and skills.	Charismatic dimension, one indicator: General and specific personal preparation

Another criteria of evaluation is the professional qualification of the leader of the institution, including his/her education, professional experience, professional knowledge and skills and general knowledge and skills. These criteria can be compared with the framework of the eight leadership dimensions and their indicators, used in this study (see Table 2).

As it can be seen, the framework used in this study offer a wider view of the pedagogical leader and includes all the aspects mentioned in the in the Cabinet of Ministers regulation No 831 (2016). Some of the aspect that are included in the PLQE framework and do not appear in the in the Cabinet of Ministers regulation No 831 (2016) are: fundraising, information to the society (marketing), research and innovation activities, ability of adapting to the socio-cultural context of students and the city, promotion of a positive institutional (school) climate, enhancing teachers' and students' initiative, personal involvement in the life of the school and in planning, methodology and evaluation of the teaching/learning processes, foresight of needs, and specially the emotional dimension of leadership and the personality aspects of the charismatic dimension of leadership (enthusiasm, humour).

Based on this theoretical background, the two research questions (a descriptive one and a comparative one) were as follows:

RQ1: What are the most salient pedagogical leadership dimensions of those institutions' leaders according to the importance given to and the evidence found of them?

RQ2: What are the differences between students' and staff's opinions about the leaders of those institutions regarding the importance given to and the evidence found of the different pedagogical leadership dimensions and indicators?

Methodology

Elaboration of the instrument. The questionnaire used in this study ("Questionnaire on educational leadership in educational institutions" – 176 items) was elaborated under the direction of Samuel Gento in 2002 (Gento, 2002) and updated in the Fall of 2012 by the research group "Pedagogical leadership and quality of education" at the UNED, which also translated into English and piloted the questionnaire for usage in international studies such as the present one. The questionnaire addresses the eight dimensions of educational leadership and contains 80 indicators (ten features or characteristics for each leadership dimension). The reliability and validity of this instrument was checked. To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, the index of Cronbach's alpha (' α ') was calculated: with this index it could be estimated the average correlation between items, which is considered as a proof of its reliability. It is generally

considered that an index of 0.60 or more shows that the reliability is acceptable. In the produced questionnaire, the value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.90: as a consequence, it could be deduced that the instrument is highly reliable.

For this study an online version of this questionnaire was set up using Google Forms to improve reliability, minimizing errors in data transcription. During the elaboration and validation of this online questionnaire, different versions were piloted and the best one was retained for the study. As mentioned in the introduction, the respondents were asked to evaluate each item of questionnaire on a nine-point Likert scale through different lenses: the 'importance given to' and the 'evidence found for' in the institution, in order to grasp better the difference between the respondents' expectations (importance) and the reality they perceived (evidence). For example, when evaluating the formative dimension, respondents evaluated first the overall "importance" given in the institution to this dimension and the "evidence" found for it, and then they evaluated in the same way the ten indicators of this dimension, such as commitment to own training, fostering collaborators' training, supply of training materials (books, documents, etc.), facilitation of inter professional interchanges, etc.

Data collection. For this study, only the respondents related to the VET institutions were retained. Data were collected in 3 high-quality VET institutions from different fields (tourism, sports and maritime education). The quantitative part of the study was based on answers to the standardized questionnaire "Pedagogical leadership and quality of education". 83 face-to-face assisted web-based questionnaires were collected in 2013: 45 questionnaires at the institution A, 10 at the institution B, and 28 at the institution C. 16 % of the respondents were members of staff (N=13), the rest were students (N=70; 84 %). 75 % of the respondents were females (N=62) and 25 % males (N=21).

Data processing and analysis. Quantitative data were processed and analysed by two researchers using SPSS software. A statistical analysis of quantitative data including both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (Ho, 2006) was conducted. The descriptive statistics aimed primarily at describing the data and its major concern was to present information in a convenient, usable, and understandable form. The descriptive statistics was used to describe a set of data in terms of its frequency of occurrence, its central tendency, and its dispersion. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used for determining the type of distribution of the obtained statistical data. The Mann-Whitney Test was used for determining the differences between the two respondents' groups (staff and students) that were not normally distributed.

Results

According to the results of descriptive statistics (see Table 3), the most important dimensions are charismatic (total mean=7.73), emotional (total mean=7.55) and professional (total mean=7.77), the most evident dimensions are emotional (total mean=7.14), professional (total mean=7.33) and administrative (total mean=7.12).

*Table 3 Importance and evidence of dimensions
(according to the results of Descriptive Statistics)*

Dimension	Importance by mean	Evidence by mean
Charismatic	7.73	7.10
Emotional	7.55	7.14
Anticipatory	7.45	7.04
Professional	7.77	7.33
Participative	7.37	7.00
Cultural	7.12	6.38
Formative	7.20	6.87
Administrative	7.46	7.12

The Emotional Dimension is based on the mutual respect and trust aspects, discovered through interaction.

The aspects of the Administrative Dimension are assessed higher by administrators themselves, whereas staff, who are affected by the regulative instrument application of the leadership's pedagogical activities, sometimes perceive it as a bureaucratic burden, but not so often as an auxiliary instrument of the process management.

Taking into account that without the professional competence and administrative capacity, the assessment and selection of the education leadership staff take places according to the conditions of the tender in a democratic way, at the same indices of the candidates' professional relevance assessment, the personality's charisma is quite often the determinant one.

The top3 indicators within the most important and the most evident dimensions are summarised in Table 4.

In the Charismatic Dimension enthusiasm dominates both in terms of importance and evidence, which is mostly assessed in the personality by the respondents according to the external manifestations and other people's corresponding reaction that from the respondents' point of view confirms ardency and enthusiasm. Simultaneously, the charismatic personality's abilities are directed towards other people's mobilization for a pro-active action. Every

respondent's reflection is rooted in a particular experience, which has been established during an interaction with a charismatic personality.

Table 4 Top3 indicators within the importance and evidence of leadership dimensions

Dimension	Top3 indicators within importance	Top3 indicators within evidence
Charismatic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Enthusiasm 2) Accredited expertise 3a) Hygiene and personal grooming 3b) Coherence and personal commitment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Enthusiasm 2) General and specific personal preparation 3) Accredited expertise
Emotional	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Acknowledgment and respect for the dignity of others 2) Respect to opinions of any person 3) Recognition of collaborators' professional merit 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Boosting collaborators' self-reliance 2) Personal consideration given to everybody 3) Acknowledgment and respect for the dignity of others
Professional	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Intervention in professional projects and plans 2) Fostering and environment of constant improvement 3) Promoting the of education to context 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Intervention in professional projects and plans 2) Fostering and environment of constant improvement 3) Intervention in studying the impact of the education
Administrative	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Supervision of documents 2a) Presidency of collegiate boards 2b) Providing the appointment of collaborators 3) Vigilance to ensure compliance with laws and regulations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Supervision of documents 2) Vigilance to ensure compliance with laws and regulations 3) Providing the appointment of collaborators

The relevance of importance and evidence of the acknowledgment and respect for the dignity of others, found in the Emotional Dimension, can be explained with the leader's positive perception in cases when the staff and all subordinates are motivated for a creative self-expression, which is primary in order to gain dignity and acknowledgement.

From the respondents' point of view, perception of professionalism is mostly related to the ability to collaborate in projects, initiate new projects, develop project implementation plans, which would be directed towards the development of future forecasting abilities, improvement of quality of life and the environment as a common life, social and culture space.

In the Administrative Dimension in terms of both the level of importance and evidence, Supervision of documents takes the first place, since the education

system on different levels functions in compliance with internal and external normative acts. However, it does not exclude the possibility to initiate the necessary reforms due to the dialogue of democratic governance and social partnership, which have to be strengthened in legislation. The differences between the indicative indices Providing the appointment of collaborators and Vigilance to ensure compliance with laws and regulations can be explained not only with in the respondents' awareness self-evident involvement in the implementation of the change process, but also with the procrastinating attitude and reliance to receive the new package of normative documents, delegating their rights to experts and administrators.

In general, according to the results of Mann-Whitney test (see Table 5), the students rated higher on importance and evidence of charismatic and emotional dimensions, but the staff rated higher on importance and evidence of all other dimensions. The authors analysed the statistical significance of these differences, and found that there were three statistically significant differences between students and staff's evaluation. The staff rated higher within the importance of professional, participative and cultural dimensions.

Table 5 The differences within the importance and evidence of dimensions (according to the results of Mann-Whitney test)

Dimension	Importance			Evidence		
	mean rank		p	mean rank		p
	students	staff		students	staff	
Charismatic	42.70	38.23	.513	42.66	38.42	.546
Emotional	42.72	38.12	.504	42.58	38.88	.597
Anticipatory	41.18	46.42	.451	41.39	45.27	.585
Professional	39.72	54.27	.036	41.05	47.12	.390
Participative	39.56	55.12	.026	40.98	47.50	.354
Cultural	38.84	55.62	.015	39.88	50.08	.144
Formative	40.02	52.65	.070	40.30	41.54	.857
Administrative	41.04	47.15	.371	39.96	53.00	.857

The differences between students and staff's opinions are affected by both the generation gap, which is important in mutual communication, in a different life and professional activity's area, in the depth of knowledge and understanding, and the new generation's ambitions that set high requirements to teachers and education process leaders, which sometimes are not balanced with the very student's self-initiative, self-education and involvement in the administration and culture development process.

The students' knowledge and developed practical skills in the new technology application can overtake the experienced teacher's skills. However,

sometimes the young people’s fragmentated competence does not make the professional identity, thus cooperation and mutually enriching dialogue are needed.

The authors looked for statistically significant differences between students’ and staff’s opinion regarding all the indicators of all the eight dimensions. The full analysis is presented in four tables (see Tables 6-13). The highest number of statistically significant differences between staff and students were found within the administrative dimension (14 times). Differences were also notable within professional (10 times) and cultural dimensions (9 times). The emotional dimension was the only one where no statistically significant differences were found, and only one difference was found in charismatic dimension. As a rule, the staff rated higher within the importance and evidence of all the indicators in which statistically significant differences were found, with only 2 exceptions.

There are no statistically significant differences between students’ and staff’s opinion regarding the importance and evidence of indicators within the charismatic dimension, excluding such indicator as *hygiene and personal grooming* ($p = .031$; $U = 284.500$). The staff rated higher within the importance of this indicator (see Table 6).

Table 6 Importance and evidence of indicators within charismatic dimension

	Indicators	Importance		Evidence	
		Mean	Mann-Whitney test	Mean	Mann-Whitney test
Charismatic dimension	Relevant professional profile	7.48	$p = .288$	7.24	$p = .152$
	Accredited expertise	7.63	$p = .273$	7.35	$p = .665$
	Representativity or acceptance (been elected or accepted)	7.12	$p = .756$	6.86	$p = .621$
	General and specific personal preparation	7.51	$p = .608$	7.37	$p = .628$
	Having passed a selection process	6.46	$p = .425$	6.31	$p = .610$
	Recognized legitimacy (by appointment or designation)	6.96	$p = .100$	6.87	$p = .518$
	Hygiene and personal grooming	7.60	$p = .031$	7.32	$p = .080$
	Enthusiasm	7.80	$p = .259$	7.47	$p = .346$
	Sense of humour	7.53	$p = .267$	7.19	$p = .496$
	Coherence and personal commitment	7.60	$p = .876$	7.10	$p = .892$

Both importance and evidence of the Charismatic Dimension confirm that Hygiene and personal grooming creates largely the first impression of the personality’s image, to which attention is paid by both teachers themselves and leading employees, and also appreciated by students. Sometimes an essential part

of the company or education style is the regulatory form and other attributes related to the style and appearance, which in the context of the youth's fashion tendencies from the young people's side sometimes causes resistance.

Not only observance of the personal hygiene terms is essential, whose respect does not cause any discomfort to peers, but there are also mandatory terms for the professional work environment, for instance, in the medical, food and service field. The administration's responsibility is a guaranteed infrastructure for personal hygiene's maintenance and appropriate technological and material provision, for instance, cloak-rooms, sanitary rooms and facilities for modern hygiene maintenance.

There are no statistically significant differences between students' and staff's opinion regarding the importance and evidence of indicators within the emotional dimension (see Table 7).

Table 7 Importance and evidence of indicators within emotional dimension

	Indicators	Importance		Evidence	
		Mean	Mann-Whitney test	Mean	Mann-Whitney test
Emotional dimension	Acknowledgment and respect for the dignity of others	7.72	$p = .548$	7.05	$p = .471$
	Recognition of collaborators' professional merit	7.37	$p = .865$	6.95	$p = .539$
	Personal consideration given to everybody	7.18	$p = .729$	7.06	$p = .474$
	Promotion of social recognition of collaborators	7.11	$p = .204$	6.59	$p = .283$
	Giving public credit to collaborators for their success	6.96	$p = .178$	6.77	$p = .427$
	Respect to opinions of any person	7.45	$p = .266$	6.99	$p = .475$
	Publicly expressed appreciation of collaborators	7.01	$p = .820$	6.75	$p = .244$
	Defending collaborators against unjustified criticism	6.95	$p = .388$	6.65	$p = .510$
	Attention to collaborators' needs	7.07	$p = .301$	6.77	$p = .964$
	Boosting collaborators' self-reliance	7.34	$p = .277$	7.26	$p = .300$

The indices of the Emotional Dimension from the staff and students' point of view are similar, for emotions and their manifestations can be best realized in mutual relationships, communication with each other, inclusion of experience into a social group testifies it. Even though conflict situations cannot be excluded in the study process, when the negative emotions emerge, still both teachers and students have a similar platform of values when their opinions clash. The

axiological aspect has to be taken into account, for democratization of the society, education institutions and media has changed essentially awareness on the role of the civil society, increase of the personality's self-esteem etc. during the last decades.

There are five statistically significant differences between students' and staff's opinion regarding the importance and evidence of indicators within the anticipatory dimension. The staff rated higher within the importance and evidence of the indicator providing impulse for the definition of the institution's mission and vision of how the institution should be structured as well as within the importance of the indicator personal contribution to initiatives (see Table 8).

Table 8 Importance and evidence of indicators within anticipatory dimensions

	Indicators	Importance		Evidence	
		Mean	Mann-Whitney test	Mean	Mann-Whitney test
Anticipatory dimension	Providing impulse for the definition of the institution's mission	7.18	<i>p = .011</i>	6.71	<i>p = .022</i>
	Foresight of needs	7.00	<i>p = .565</i>	6.61	<i>p = .544</i>
	Clear vision of ultimate goal	6.88	<i>p = .110</i>	6.46	<i>p = .115</i>
	Vision of how the institution should be structured	7.42	<i>p = .016</i>	6.73	<i>p = .016</i>
	Creative proposal solutions	7.45	<i>p = .080</i>	7.09	<i>p = .408</i>
	Proposals of demanding but attainable goals	7.14	<i>p = .146</i>	6.99	<i>p = .807</i>
	Personal contribution to initiatives	6.95	<i>p = .006</i>	6.28	<i>p = .051</i>
	Providing stimulus for collaborators' efforts	7.18	<i>p = .205</i>	6.96	<i>p = .667</i>
	Planning and management of the necessary changes	7.05	<i>p = .159</i>	6.99	<i>p = .145</i>
	Providing the motor to overcome resistance to change	6.83	<i>p = .220</i>	6.70	<i>p = .842</i>

Teachers, in comparison with students, are tended to assess the indices mentioned in the Anticipatory Dimension higher, as the staff can see development tendencies in interconnections in their educational establishment. In its turn, students can reflect on their growth from their individual experience, comparing their achievements with other students.

The ability to provide impulse for the definition of the institution's mission is more distinct to the staff both in terms of importance and evidence, which can be explained with the long-term experience, administrative capacity and purposeful information acquisition and processing in educational establishments' competitiveness increase. Similarly, it is related to the vision of how the

institution should be structured – teachers are involved on the mezzo and macro level, but students mostly work on the micro level in the institution – in their study environment and individual students on the mezzo level, taking part in their educational institution's self-governmental activities, develop the interinstitutional links between educational establishments much more seldom, for instance, organizing culture events or sports competitions, etc.

There are eight statistically significant differences between students' and staff's opinion regarding the importance of indicators within the professional dimension. There are two statistically significant differences between students' and staff's opinion regarding the evidence of indicators such as promotion of a good learning environment and encouraging innovation. The staff rated higher within importance and evidence of all the indicators excluding the evidence of fostering the knowledge about other educational institution (see Table 9).

Table 9 Importance and evidence of indicators within professional dimension

	Indicators	Importance		Evidence	
		Mean	Mann-Whitney test	Mean	Mann-Whitney test
Professional dimension	Intervention in professional projects and plans	7.52	<i>p</i> = .009	7.24	<i>p</i> = .108
	Intervention in designing methodology	7.04	<i>p</i> = .000	6.48	<i>p</i> = .055
	Intervention in evaluation	7.17	<i>p</i> = .025	6.92	<i>p</i> = .363
	Intervention in studying the impact of the education	7.25	<i>p</i> = .004	6.99	<i>p</i> = .159
	Intervention in designing structure and organisation	7.07	<i>p</i> = .014	6.85	<i>p</i> = .320
	Fostering the knowledge about other educational institutions	7.29	<i>p</i> = .144	6.94	<i>p</i> = .662
	Promotion of a good learning environment	7.10	<i>p</i> = .007	6.48	<i>p</i> = .037
	Promoting the of education to context	7.36	<i>p</i> = .805	6.96	<i>p</i> = .822
	Fostering and environment of constant improvement	7.40	<i>p</i> = .033	7.11	<i>p</i> = .349
	Encouraging innovation	7.29	<i>p</i> = .004	6.83	<i>p</i> = .034

Statistically significant differences between the students and staff's opinion about the learning environment's promoting factors and innovation encouragement can be interpreted with the life experience differences. Staff are able to assess improvement of the learning environment during several years of dynamics, even decades, whereas the students' time reference system complies with the study time spent in the particular education institution. Thus, staff feel

objectively and are able to compare the changes in the infrastructure development process, but trainees encounter the infrastructure and facilities in the study process, which during their education acquisition are often constant.

Innovations in the youth’s environment are perceived as an integral part of the education process, but staff see innovations as a special indicator of education quality. Students’ vision on intervention in designing structure and organization is mostly related to the extension of students’ service provision. However, the lecturers’ visions are more down-to-earth, being aware of the reality that is restricted by the capacity of infrastructure, economical and human resources.

There are five statistically significant differences between students’ and staff’s opinion regarding the importance of indicators within the participative dimension. There are no statistically significant differences between students’ and staff’s opinion regarding the evidence of all the indicators. The staff rated higher within importance and evidence of all the indicators excluding the evidence of clarification of collaborators’ functions (see Table 10).

Table 10 Importance and evidence of indicators within participative dimension

	Indicators	Importance		Evidence	
		Mean	Mann-Whitney test	Mean	Mann-Whitney test
Participative dimension	Fostering multidirectional communication	7.18	<i>p</i> = .026	6.69	<i>p</i> = .320
	Intelligent choice of collaborators	7.09	<i>p</i> = .042	6.51	<i>p</i> = .233
	Acceptance of collaborators’ opinions	7.16	<i>p</i> = .095	6.78	<i>p</i> = .666
	Awarding trust and responsibility to collaborators	7.40	<i>p</i> = .030	7.07	<i>p</i> = .189
	Attention to collaborators’ proposals	7.28	<i>p</i> = .129	6.80	<i>p</i> = .730
	Facilitation of debates	7.21	<i>p</i> = .209	6.99	<i>p</i> = .708
	Encouragement of participative techniques	7.02	<i>p</i> = .437	6.84	<i>p</i> = .278
	Promotion of collaborators’ team work	7.10	<i>p</i> = .002	6.64	<i>p</i> = .203
	Clarification of collaborators’ functions	7.39	<i>p</i> = .354	7.16	<i>p</i> = .882
	Balance between delegation and control of activities	7.29	<i>p</i> = .002	6.82	<i>p</i> = .334

Assessment of participation indices is not unequivocal from the point of view of different respondents’ groups: teamwork from the staff’s side is sometimes interpreted as collaboration with the trainees’ activists, whereas students in general do not feel the need for participation to achieve common long-term goals.

In an educational establishment the selection of a collaborator is sometimes determined by the need to achieve the nearest goals, which from the trainees' side is orientated towards the result in the subject acquisition, whereas the staff pay more attention to the collaboration aspect for the sake of the monitoring of the study process assessment.

Taking responsibility is impossible without mutual trust, leading to self-control, which is considered as the condition for self-development by students. However, from the staff's side interference with the possible corrective activities do not have to be declarative, but rather creativity encouraging, development and improvement marking.

There are six statistically significant differences between students' and staff's opinion regarding the importance of indicators within the cultural dimension. There are three statistically significant differences between students' and staff's opinion regarding the evidence of indicators such as promotion of institution's own organizational profile, promotion of an atmosphere of order and security and personally representing the ethos and culture of the institution. The staff rated higher within importance and evidence of all the indicators (see Table 11).

Table 11 Importance and evidence of indicators within cultural dimension

	Indicators	Importance		Evidence	
		Mean	Mann-Whitney test	Mean	Mann-Whitney test
Cultural dimension	Promotion of institution's cultural identity	6.96	$p = .030$	6.38	$p = .088$
	Tailoring the education provided to the cultural context of the institution	6.78	$p = .065$	6.51	$p = .107$
	Tailoring the education provided to student's cultural context	7.17	$p = .204$	6.81	$p = .700$
	Promotion of institution's own organizational profile	6.81	$p = .000$	6.44	$p = .004$
	Exploration of collaborators' interests	7.06	$p = .021$	6.67	$p = .424$
	Harmonization collaborators' ideologies	6.86	$p = .030$	6.49	$p = .522$
	Enhancement of positive interactive atmosphere	7.24	$p = .050$	6.96	$p = .974$
	Promotion of an atmosphere of order and security	6.71	$p = .001$	6.12	$p = .001$
	Promotion of institution's autonomy	6.93	$p = .121$	6.38	$p = .140$
	Personally representing the ethos and culture of the institution	6.99	$p = .005$	6.77	$p = .019$

Staff's opinion on promotion of institution's own organizational profile can be related to the sense of identity of their educational institution, which is manifested in interaction with other group members included in the socialization process in direct contacts and virtual environment. For example, on social networks the reference to the adherence to one's educational establishment is a typical profile feature. In its turn, students are more flexible, they take more active part in various mobilities, identifying themselves with the environment where they are located.

Students relate acquisition of certain education with a particular order and respect of regulations, which is mostly approved by staff. Awareness of security and securability is related to functioning of environmental security, work environment and social protection system. Also, security is characterized as reliance on the compliance of the acquired qualification with the labour market's demand, so that the acquired knowledge and skills would be applicable and in comparison with the education provided by other educational establishments – competitive. It is also the question of the educational establishment's prestige.

Personalities, making the educational establishment recognized on a professional competence level, are highly appreciated, and, which is not trivial, as personalities, who after graduation have obtained recognition not only in the professional sphere, but also stand out with social activities. It can be realized during graduates' reunions/meetings on the educational establishments' anniversaries or in other important events. Moreover, the culture dimension is reflected on the educational establishments' websites.

In the educational establishments' mission, Code of Ethics, internal rules the values are defined which are binding to all sides involved in the education process. The values are not only achievements and traditions, but they are also related to the goal that has to be achieved. Nevertheless, differences between the teachers and students' opinion can emerge due to the so-called generation gap, as in globalization conditions the youth get acquainted and adapt the tendencies of new culture in a more active way, not like the representatives of the older generation who respect more traditions.

There are five statistically significant differences between students' and staff's opinion regarding the importance of indicators within the formative dimension. There are two statistically significant differences between students' and staff's opinion regarding the evidence of indicators such as facilitation of inter professional interchanges and supporting innovation. The staff rated higher within importance and evidence of all the indicators (see Table 12).

Table 12 Importance and evidence of indicators within formative dimension

	Indicators	Importance		Evidence	
		Mean	Mann-Whitney test	Mean	Mann-Whitney test
Formative dimension	Commitment to his/her own training	7.35	$p = .023$	7.23	$p = .857$
	Help for collaborators' training	7.02	$p = .167$	6.76	$p = .196$
	Supply of training materials (books, documents, etc.)	6.83	$p = .007$	6.33	$p = .067$
	Promotion of relationship with training agents	6.32	$p = .051$	6.09	$p = .076$
	Facilitation of inter professional interchanges	6.80	$p = .119$	6.21	$p = .049$
	Providing a motor for research	6.65	$p = .033$	6.25	$p = .115$
	Being proactive to obtain grants for research	7.16	$p = .305$	6.68	$p = .791$
	Encouraging continuous study of professional themes	7.25	$p = .170$	6.83	$p = .284$
	Promotion of debates on professional topics	7.13	$p = .003$	6.82	$p = .408$
	Supporting innovation	7.12	$p = .003$	6.85	$p = .011$

The statistically significant differences in several indicators of the Formative Dimension, testify the students' critical attitude to lots of issues, for example, sometimes students do not see the relation to their individual training in interconnections with the logical succession of the learning process, assessing it only from the positions here and now, but lecturers are aware of the study cycle in general.

The dual education for professionalism's promotion was introduced in Latvia rather recently with an attempt to balance the theory and practice, offering the trainees of vocational education institutions opportunities to practice in their profession.

Support of innovations coincide both in terms of importance and evidence. It confirms the students' expectations and their possible fulfilment, which would be directed towards competitiveness and professional growth.

There are eight statistically significant differences between students' and staff's opinion regarding the importance of indicators within the administrative dimension. There are six statistically significant differences between students' and staff's opinion regarding the evidence of indicators. The staff rated higher within importance and evidence of all the indicators (see Table 13).

Table 13 Importance and evidence of indicators within administrative dimension

	Indicators	Importance		Evidence	
		Mean	Mann-Whitney test	Mean	Mann-Whitney test
Administrative dimension	Presidency of collegiate boards	7.17	$p = .037$	6.90	$p = .138$
	Supervision of documents	7.44	$p = .188$	7.38	$p = .403$
	Management of material resources	6.87	$p = .204$	6.63	$p = .047$
	Vigilance to ensure compliance with laws and regulations	7.10	$p = .029$	6.95	$p = .054$
	Intervention in the appointment of personnel	6.49	$p = .000$	6.29	$p = .000$
	Encouraging the acquisition of resources	6.57	$p = .028$	6.16	$p = .011$
	Authorization of expenditure	6.47	$p = .032$	5.96	$p = .006$
	Providing the appointment of collaborators	7.17	$p = .028$	6.94	$p = .042$
	Informing the community about the life of the institution	7.01	$p = .026$	6.67	$p = .008$
	Guaranteeing the staff's right of assembly	6.96	$p = .003$	6.70	$p = .153$

The statistically significant differences between students and staff's opinion, realized in the Administrative Dimension, can be justified with the functioning of the education institution, which from the students' point of view is as a self-regulative and self-evident process. However, staff, especially the staff related to administration, understand management as a purposefully directed process.

The Presidency of Collegiate Boards is acknowledged as important, whereas proofs do not confirm it, which testifies the cases when management on the administrative level is provided with an insufficient participation of all involved people.

Authorization of Expenditure is related to comprehension of the economic fundamental law; rational consumption of means is crucial when funds are limited. Staff sometimes prefer the pay rise, but students see more the need for management of material resources. However, implementation of desires, when funding is insufficient, is restricted and closely related to law and regulations obedience.

From the staff's point of view, the budget places awarded by the government play a significant role, but provision of the possible project attraction, which is mostly directed towards the development of the infrastructure and learning environment, causes not so stable sense of stability, which is approved by students.

Selection of collaborators is an essential component for the study quality assurance, which is acknowledged by both staff and students. The link with the employment perspective is the most important from collaborators. It is important for entrepreneurs or other employers that the new specialists are well prepared and competitive in the labour market. It is both the graduates' desire and the matter of the education institution's prestige.

Intervention in the appointment of personnel, personnel's competence and pedagogical skills affect essentially the quality and achievements of studies. In vocational education the teachers' payment still differs in lots of cases from the payment level in the manufacturing sphere, which causes problems for a faster staff's renewal, attracting high class specialists for the pedagogical work.

It has been discovered that the aspect of guaranteeing the staff's right of assembly is important, but there are not evidences. It testifies that the possibilities of the employees' assembly are not restricted. However, self-initiative is not so often related to initiation of a pro-active study quality provision and manifestations of creativity, but it is more often related to the necessary supervision of the documents binding to the education institution, for example, the curriculum or accreditation of education institutions, compliance of the professional quality to be obtained with the standards, etc.

Informing the community on the life of the institution is considered as important, but convincing evidence for that has not been received. Probably the best guarantee for the institution's prestige is the graduates themselves. However, students after graduation are more preoccupied with their own career than the former educational establishment's advertising. Here the need evolves to create a closer link between the educational establishment and graduates who would become a sort of medium to inform the community.

Conclusion and discussion

1. In the research confidence has been obtained that among respondents the quality assessment of vocational education is closely related to the implementation of the educational establishment's strategical goals, which are set not only by the standards of vocational education, but also by the leader's leadership and provision of management processes. In a vocational education institution, the base of the success for leader's leadership and management processes is awareness and implementation of staff and students' democratic management.
2. Both staff, students and employers are interested in the quality of vocational education and the highest standard performance of the qualification obtained by students. However, understanding of the desired result achievement types differs among staff and students in separated criteria indicators.

3. Both from staff and students' point of view, the leader's charisma, ability to attract motivated personnel and provide an optimal material and technical base, appropriate for modern requirements, have got an essential importance in the management process for vocational education quality provision. The results of the study justify a necessity to focus on the aspects of charismatic, professional and emotional dimensions in work quality assessment of VET institutions' leaders.
4. Efficient management creates a positive organizational culture, where trust, motivation to self-educate, communication culture, a positive image of own institution and recognition are highly appreciated. The prestige of the vocational education establishment is mostly determined by the graduates' level of professional training from the employers' point of view, which can be diagnosed during the students' practice, on what the students reflect themselves.
5. Staff in comparison with students assess the growth of their educational establishment during a wider time dimension and from the point of sustainability, whereas students perceive more sharply the lack of social and physical environment during their real study time.

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