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Abstract

The chapter 1 “Benefits of VET” provides details of current research articles which concentrate on the benefits of VET. In relation to VET, the authors evaluate (1) cost-efficiency and performance indicators, (2) employment and continuation of studies, (3) adult education, (4) prevention of social exclusion, and (5) on-the-job-learning. A general aim of the articles is to point out how VET can be reformed in order to improve cooperation between educational institutions and the world of work. The contribution of VET to prevention of social exclusion is also addressed.

Results indicate that the introduction of performance indicators has not specifically increased the cost-efficiency of VET institutions although education providers have generally considered the indicators to be beneficial in terms of developing the quality of education.

Employment or study prospects after basic education seem to be better among students whose parents have an academic background or who have done well at school. The same also applies for the risk of dropping-out from IVET. In addition, the risks are greater if people experience problems managing their normal life. It becomes clear that teachers’ education level contributes to students’ employment prospects and students also stress the importance of having a skilled teacher.

Though adult education and on-the-job-learning are anticipated to become more popular, employers still show minimal interest in them. Many employees see their continuing education as being their own responsibility. Students doing on-the-job-learning are generally satisfied, particularly if theory and practical work are closely combined, since workplace learning is likely to improve their employment prospects.

The chapter 2 “Social mobility, equity and inclusive education” mainly discusses research into special needs and inclusive education. Social mobility has not been the focus of research in Finland and questions related to equity have also attracted relatively little interest among researchers. Research into equity concentrates on educational opportunities, organisation of education and equity in terms of transfer to the labour market. Research into special needs education and inclusion covers topics related to the curriculum, the work of special needs teachers and school strategies.

Results from the studies described in this chapter indicate that the ways in which the concepts of special needs education and inclusive education are interpreted vary considerably among education providers. A challenge linked to equity and equal opportunities would, however, be that the concepts of education, services and inclusion are the same irrespective of the education provider.

The results further point to the fact that students’ individual capabilities should be in focus when developing and targeting funding for teacher training and when organising practical teaching work. Other findings are that required activities are carried out in schools to support

students with special needs but that there are problems following these up. Although individual study plans (IEPs), for example, are widely used and staff have the expertise to recognise students' learning *difficulties and needs, there are shortcomings regarding follow-up of the IEPs as well as multiprofessional* cooperation within the institutions. Employment of students with special needs should also be promoted through counselling, guidance and on-the-job learning.

Finally, the findings indicate that organisation of education in Finland does support equity and equal opportunities. Students with special difficulties in learning and training are thus supported by educational services tailored to meet their specific needs. However, if the perspective focuses on the equality of educational outputs, such as placement in the labour market, the researchers suggest that there are significant deficiencies in this respect, in particular among students with disabilities and those of immigrant origin.

Leadership (chapter 3) has been a topic of educational discussions in Finland over the last few years. The realisation is that leadership plays a central role in the quality of education and training. One of the biggest challenges is that a lot of school leaders will retire over the next few years due to the age structure and demographics. Their knowledge and skills should be transferred to future leaders. Another challenge is that, as is the case in many other countries, leaders in education do not have enough opportunities for pre-service or in-service training.

Leadership research in Finland tends to focus on general education. Leadership issues are, however, generic and global. The challenges for leaders are similar from one sector of education to another. Consequently, the research discussed in this chapter is related both to vocational education and training and general education.

A number of key concerns arise from the research. These are the attractiveness of leadership positions in education, resourcing in education and training, pre- and in-service training for school leaders and their professionalisation.

The attractiveness of leadership positions is related to a number of issues, such as the growing pressure stemming from accountability and demand for effectiveness. Other issues are the increase in the administrative burden at the expense of pedagogical leadership, the increase in human resource management and the growing size of institutions.

In education and training, there is a conflict between expectations and available resources. Shortcomings in resourcing mean that there is less time for quality management and networking. The findings point to the fact that educational institutions still operate as isolated units within an area.

Attracting good leaders would require more attention to pre- and in-service training for leaders in Finland. In addition to "traditional" training, mentoring should be developed. The research also suggests that study modules on leadership should be available during teacher training.

The professionalisation of educational leadership is the concern of several researchers. Leadership is often understood as being a semi-profession, as the job profile often also comprises other duties. Professionalisation would mean that the job profile of principals could be clarified. Due to the unclear job definition, the principals and leaders are overburdened and their well-being at work is reduced. In addition, without a professional profile, there can often be a conflict between the idealised image of leadership and leadership in reality.

Research into immigration and especially into employment-related mobility (chapter 4) has not been of particular interest in Finland, though mobility has increased a lot since 2000. Statistical studies have been the main sources of information on mobility. Immigration is frequently studied as a whole and with immigrants as one group. Employment-related mobility is, of course, included in research topics, but there is no specific focus on it. Research directly into VET and employment-related mobility and migration does not exist in Finland but, of course, education and training is a background variable in all migration studies.

The chapter discusses employment for immigrants and, conversely, migrating Finns. The main focus is on employment for immigrants. A clear conclusion which can be drawn from the research results is that immigrants find it much more difficult than the native population. It is also obvious that education and language skills are the most essential factors contributing to employment. The need for various social networks is important in terms of employment of immigrants. The research results show that in order to create such networks, better interaction is needed between immigrants and Finns.

In the near future, Finland will already need additional supply of potential workforce and employment-related immigration is key for the Finnish economy in this situation. According to research results, employment in Finland is easiest for highly-educated people and/or immigrants from Western Europe.

Even if recent research into mobility has raised interest, there is still a lack of research information on employment-related migration and vocational education and training. The trends in immigration and emigration are monitored with help of statistics but there is practically no research into the effects. The effects of vocational and other education on immigrants' social and labour market status are also not studied.

Theme I: Benefits of VET

1. Introduction

1.1 Benefits of VET – general overview

The challenges of globalisation and international competitiveness to national economies have forced governments to pay increasing attention to their educational policies. In Finland, the importance of education has traditionally been high since the country cannot rely on its natural resources and must therefore ensure the competitiveness of its highly export-dependent economy by training well-educated people.

The focus of educational policy has long been on tertiary education, particularly on universities which have been seen as being the main suppliers of professionals and providers of R&D. In recent years, policy-makers have begun to realise that there is an imminent shortage of skilled workforce with vocational qualifications as the proportion of those retiring increases (Ollikainen 2007a: 1).

Consequently, the importance of vocational education and training (ISCED 3-4) has been stressed in recent reports on educational policy. In order to leverage the benefits of VET, many reforms and programmes have been initiated over recent years, such as the revision of the curricula in initial vocational education and training (IVET) by 2009 and the introduction of skills demonstrations to all vocational qualifications in 2006. General aims have been to improve the quality, cost-efficiency and productivity of VET. Better and closer cooperation between education providers, educational administration and the world of work has also been emphasised.

One of the essential aims of educational policy has been to ensure the flexible transition between levels of education, especially from basic education to secondary education, that is, from compulsory comprehensive schools either to general upper secondary education or vocational upper secondary education. This is crucial because future education and employment prospects are strongly influenced by choices made at this stage (Jahnukainen 2005a: 38). Various studies show that minimising the number of students not continuing to secondary level is an effective way of preventing social exclusion and unemployment. IVET plays an important role in this respect, since some 40% of pupils complete their compulsory schooling and continue to VET institutions. This proportion is increasing as the attractiveness of general upper secondary education diminishes.

One programme aimed at facilitating the transition to secondary education is the Preparatory instruction and guidance for VET (*Ammattistartti*) programme, scheduled for 2006–2010. It has been especially designed for young people who are still uncertain of their study prospects

after basic education, or who are at risk of dropping out at the beginning of their studies. In December 2007, the decision was taken to make the programme permanent.

Vocational education and training for adults is also undergoing major changes. A general reform of vocational adult education (AKKU 2009) is aimed at improving the administration, financing and labour market cooperation of adult education and training in particular. Essential concepts of the reform include learning at work, lifelong learning and performance-based funding for education providers.

The new Education and Research 2007–2012 Development Plan (Ministry of Education 2007), issued by the Ministry of Education, also emphasises the equality of education. This concerns gender equality as well as social, economic and geographical equality (between municipal education providers). Policies aimed at promoting equality tend to have a major impact on prevention of social exclusion. According to the Development Plan, safeguarding the availability of skilled labour requires a high level of education, knowledge and skills among the decreasing younger age groups. Similarly, measures geared to maintaining and developing the knowledge, skills and educational level of the adult population are seen as being of vital importance. Measures will be taken to ensure that the provider network in initial and further vocational education and training guarantees a high-quality and diverse supply of both youth and adult training that meet the needs of both the world of work and of individuals.

1.2. Current research

The need for wide-ranging research into vocational education and training has only recently been highlighted. Cost-efficiency and performance-based funding at all educational institutions in particular are now, with the economic crisis raging, very topical development issues. The need to evaluate the effects and benefits of VET has also resulted in some analysis in terms of employment prospects or further studies after IVET, but more research into this is definitely needed. Research into social exclusion and dropping out from school or the world of work is readily available in Finland. Recent Government policies also focus on employment and study prospects for young people after basic education. The emphasis on lifelong learning over recent years has led to some studies into the benefits and attractiveness of VET for adults. There are, however, some restrictions in terms of assessment methods used in the study. Productivity in the study is understood as being a factor of actual costs and the number of degrees awarded. This approach means that the effectiveness of training is not taken into account.

2. Results

The following current research topics and their results are evaluated in this section:

- cost-efficiency and performance indicators; analysed by Hanna Virtanen (2006) and Virve Ollikainen (2007a & 2007b)
- employment and continuing studies; analysed by Mika Maliranta et al. (2007)

- adult education; analysed by Jyrki Jokinen (2006) and Julkunen & Wallin (2008)
- prevention of social exclusion; analysed by Jahnukainen & Helander (2007), Jahnukainen et al. (2005b) and the Finnish Innovation Fund, Sitra (2007).
- on-the-job-learning; analysed by Tynjälä (2005) and Stenström & Laine (2006)

2.1 Cost-efficiency and performance indicators

2.1.1. Cost-efficiency

In analysing the cost-efficiency of education providers in 2001–2003, Ollikainen (2007a & 2007b) uses Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) to determine the efficiencies of each education provider and field of study. Teaching and administration costs provide the input. The output is measured by the number of credits and qualifications completed. The study is essentially quantitative although a qualitative approach is being used in analysing the nexus of employment and further studies after IVET.

The study does not take into account the diversity of education providers with respect to their conditions or the composition of students. It is pointed out that only 45 per cent of the differences in efficiencies among education providers can be explained with these models. Therefore, as Ollikainen suggests, the background of students could, to a considerable extent, explain the level of efficiencies.

The results indicate that a larger proportion of adult students and students with special needs leads to a decrease in efficiency. Better leaving certificates among those having completed basic education and a larger proportion of female students lead to an increase in efficiency. The aggregate number of students has a slightly positive effect on efficiency when it rises to 1,300 students, but the effect is negative after that. A larger number of competence-based qualifications results in improved efficiency. High unemployment rates in municipalities result in reduced efficiency.

The field of study shows some effect on efficiencies. Increasing efficiency is present in the following fields: business and commerce; administration; social services, health and sport; and culture. In contrast, the following fields of study are suffering from decreasing efficiency: natural resources and the environment; technology, communications and transport; and tourism, catering and domestic services.

Performance-based funding at VET institutions produces no significant effect on efficiency. Similarly, the winners of quality awards (*laatupalkinto*) do not stand out as being particularly efficient education providers when compared with those who didn't win. With respect to the current popularity of performance-based funding, these results hint that there appears to be some room for improvement (Ollikainen in Kangasharju 2007).

The reliability of the study was hindered by various shortcomings in the data. The reforms of VET organisations and changes in classification during 2001–2003 also resulted in challenges to the study.

2.1.2. Performance indicators

In her book, Virtanen (2006) analyses the steering and funding of IVET and how the quality of education could be improved by the introduction of performance indicators at vocational institutions. The effects and benefits of performance-based funding were compiled as part of a survey conducted among education providers.

The results show that education providers have clearly taken an interest in performance indicators. Over 80 per cent feel that they have paid a lot or at least some attention to the quality of education and some 70 per cent comment that they have changed their objectives (Virtanen 2006: 45). Various concrete actions have been undertaken, such as closer cooperation with the world of work, better guidance of students during and after studies, revision of curricula, more voluntary courses and more flexibility in studies.

As a consequence of performance indicators, some education providers have introduced entrance examinations or tightened up their intake requirements. Teachers have also been encouraged to obtain formal teaching competence by allocating funds to education. In general, there has been interest in in-service training and more efficient staffing (Virtanen 2006: 46).

Some education providers reply that performance indicators have been used for steering and they have helped the entire staff to participate in improving the quality of education. Staff have been entrusted with a bigger role in planning operations and more feedback has been given. Overall, 93 per cent of education providers conclude that there have been at least some benefits following the introduction of performance indicators.

2.2. Employment and continuation of studies

In their study, Maliranta et al. (2007) concentrate on the relationship between IVET and the labour market or further studies. The target group of the study is those students who applied for VET in 1997. Four outcomes of IVET are distinguished: 1) employment, 2) further studies, 3) non-employment and 4) drop-out.

The explanatory factors for these outcomes can be divided into three main groups:

- educational organisation and institutions as well as actual expenditure
- the characteristics and background of students
- local economic conditions

2.2.1. Educational organisation, institutions and actual expenditure

In the first group, results indicate that increasing teaching expenditure per student does not have a positive effect on employment or further studies. Increases in the number of teaching hours per student also don't significantly improve the likelihood of positive results. Teachers' education level, however, seems to make a difference. In cases where teachers have a tertiary degree, this has a positive impact on students' employment prospects. A rather startling finding is that formal competence for teaching does not seem to increase the likelihood of finding employment although it does have a positive impact on the likelihood of further studies. The size of an educational institution produces insignificant effects on results.

An awkward finding for educational policy-makers is that the role of performance-based funding or quality awards is not as important as expected. Results indicate that those education providers who have received awards do not produce better results than those who have not. The winners of quality awards, however, are more efficient in encouraging students to continue studying than those that haven't received such awards, but they show lower employment levels.

2.2.2. The characteristics and background of students

For the second group of results, the characteristics of students seem to have relatively clear effects on results. Better performance at compulsory comprehensive school and a better leaving certificate produce a positive effect on both employment and further studies.

"The peer effect", that is, the way that classmates influence the continuation of studies after comprehensive school, has a positive effect on further studies, but a negative one on further employment. Students changing their main field of study are more likely to continue their studies, but are less likely to find employment.

In terms of gender, there are a few differences between boys and girls. Boys have slightly better chances of finding employment than girls whereas girls are more likely to continue their studies. The drop-out rate is similar for both genders. If an education provider receives a quality award, the chances that girls will continue studying are improved, but that is not true of boys. It also increases the probability of boys avoiding unemployment (but not for girls). Teachers' education level and/or formal competence generally have a more negative impact on boys than girls.

The education level of students' parents has a clear impact on the choices made by students. The likelihood of further studies increases if parents have an academic background. This, however, has a negative influence on employment. The study points out that it is actually the social norms rather than high income levels among parents that urge young people with academic parents to continue their studies. The same information filters through strongly from various other studies. (see Vanttaja & Järvinen 2006: 20; and Jahnukainen 2005a: 38, for example).

Changes in the likelihood of employment or further studies between fields of study are diverse. Differences between the extremes are as high as 30 per cent in places, which

indicates that anticipation of needs and reallocation of resources could substantially increase cost-efficiency.

2.2.3. Local economic conditions

With respect to the third group of results, local business conditions exert considerable influence but more so for boys. Girls seem to find employment despite economic changes. The likelihood of further studies is unaffected.

2.3. Adult education

2.3.1. Motivation for adult education among employees and employers

Julkunen & Wallin (2008) examine what motivates adults to seek additional vocational education and training while at work. The emphasis of the study is on self-motivated, qualification-oriented education, not necessarily sponsored or encouraged by the employer. The study was carried out with help from a survey among secretarial students (n=8) who themselves had chosen to seek further qualifications and started studying while at work. Thematic interviews were also conducted within various private sector companies in order to reveal employers' attitudes towards VET for adults.

Surprisingly, the results show that the majority of students are entirely self-motivated and do not expect an instant monetary reward for their education. Their aims are more likely to be related to the desire to enhance their own skills and know-how in order to become more competitive in the labour market. Most participants feel that the skills learnt in continuing education conveniently match skills needs required at the workplace and students can thus not only exploit the new skills themselves, but also pass on their know-how to colleagues.

Employers' attitudes towards self-motivated vocational education and training among their employees are unfortunately fairly indifferent. There is little interest in the benefits that additional VET could bring to the company. The authors believe that lack of knowledge concerning competence-based qualifications as well as adult education in general can explain the low interest among employers.

The study supports views according to which employees are taking an "entrepreneurial stance" to work nowadays. In other words, employees increasingly feel that they have to take responsibility for keeping their skills and competences up-to-date in order to survive in the labour market.

Lack of time or money is seen as being a major impediment to education. There are, however, various funding possibilities, especially relating to the statutory government transfer system. For example, in-service training can be arranged so that the employer only pays half the total costs, and in self-motivated education the student is obliged to pay no more than 10 per cent (the rest is paid by the statutory government transfer). The authors point out that education providers and institutions could become more active in advertising various funding alternatives to employers.

By way of summary, both employers and employees should be informed of the concrete benefits that the latter's further qualifications and improved skills could provide. While the employer's company is likely to find a more efficient employee after continuing education, the employee is able to maintain his or her labour market value in the form of dynamic know-how and lifelong learning.

2.3.2. Adult education and labour market needs

The role of adult education providers in fulfilling labour market needs is evaluated in Jokinen (2006). He starts by giving an extensive description of recent educational reforms concerning adult education and then goes on to evaluate how adult education providers can produce labour market services that employers really need by matching labour market needs with teaching competences.

The study concludes that adult education providers will gradually increase and diversify their labour market services. Further and specialist vocational qualifications remain the basis of adult education although there is also some indication that qualification-oriented studies may diminish in the future since the dynamic labour market requires flexibility which could be offered by adjusted study modules (Jokinen 2006:109).

More and more adult education providers are willing to take part in organising labour market services and quality assurance will be given more emphasis. Companies as well as municipalities will enthusiastically cultivate cooperation with educational organisations. All parties agree that funding should mainly be state-sponsored in the future as well and companies continue to show strong reluctance to increase their own share of the funding. Companies' interest in further educating their staff appears to be somewhat low.

2.4. Prevention of social exclusion

2.4.1. Project for activating IVET students at risk of dropping out

Jahnukainen & Helander (2007) describe the main outcomes of an ESF-funded project known as the Activity school of Eastern Finland. The project, carried out during 2001–2003, aimed to encourage young students (n=156) to continue studying after dropping out of IVET. By utilising alternative pedagogical models and improving the practicality of vocational education and training, the project attempted to improve the life situations of those at great risk of social exclusion. These included students who had experienced earlier learning difficulties, had various problems in life management and finally dropped out of IVET (Jahnukainen & Helander 2007: 474). When compared with normal vocational education, the Activity school focused more on the individual and invested in personal guidance, learning at work and experiential education (Jahnukainen et al. 2005b: 15). A strong emphasis was placed on working life since some 80 per cent of all learning occurred on an on-the-job basis (Jahnukainen & Helander 2007).

The outcomes and benefits of the project are evaluated according to the students' own perceptions. The variables under analysis include the following: student satisfaction with the

operating model of the Activity School/vocational school, satisfaction with theoretical teaching and on-the-job learning, satisfaction with teaching staff and workplace supervisors, satisfaction with one's own assessment and contribution to one's own life situation (Jahnukainen & Helander 2007: 475-476).

A general result of the students' perceptions is satisfaction with the Activity school model when compared with normal vocational schooling. The results clearly indicate that students favoured on-the-job-learning over theoretical classroom teaching. Similarly, work supervisors are more highly esteemed than teachers giving lessons on theoretical skills. This is not meant to downplay the importance of teachers as their effect on student satisfaction appears to be very significant. An empathic and skilled teacher who is able to take students' needs into account and knows what and how to teach them is considered to be the best guarantee for motivating students. Teachers' offhand attitudes towards students are seen as being a serious hindrance to satisfaction and learning. It is pointed out that students with learning difficulties and in uncertain life situations need an adult they can trust and a skilful and empathic teacher plays an essential role here.

2.4.2. Risk of social exclusion at the transition phase

In 2007, the Finnish Innovation Fund, Sitra, published a study on social exclusion, dropping-out from school and the risk factors for these among students and pupils. Firstly, the study focuses on young people's problems as they move from basic education to secondary education, and, secondly, it examines school-related factors in explaining the risk of social exclusion. Although the study does not specifically and solely concern IVET, the importance of IVET in the transition to secondary education is so considerable that the results should therefore easily apply to IVET.

According to the study, 12 per cent of pupils completing their basic education experience problems during the transition phase, but due to additional basic education (10th grade) and the additional application period for IVET, less than 4 per cent remained excluded from secondary education in the autumn of 2004. One reason for not continuing studies after basic education seems to be applicants' unrealistic options for further studies. This can be greatly improved by providing better personal guidance. Students with special needs as well as those with foreign mother tongue are at a considerably higher risk of exclusion than their Finnish-speaking, mainstream education counterparts. In particular, the results emphasise the need to increase special needs education in IVET and promote admission possibilities for such students (Sitra 2007: 137-139).

School-related factors seem to be somewhat irrelevant with respect to the risk of dropping out although it cannot be ruled out that low-performing schools might discourage young students at the beginning of their studies. It is pointed out that further research into the links between secondary schools and prevention of social exclusion is needed. In contrast to school-related factors, students' background and their parents' education level have a strong impact on the risk of dropping out and exclusion. The mother's education level in particular produces a significant effect (Sitra 2007: 159-160).

2.4.3 The Government policy programme for prevention of social exclusion

In December 2007, the Ministry of Education published The Finnish Government's Child and Youth Policy programme 2007–2011 (Ministry of Education 2008). In the programme, various aims and concrete measures for preventing social exclusion among young people were presented. For example:

- each young person completes at least an upper secondary education qualification
- expert counselling to support studies and career decisions is available to everyone
- on-the-job-learning is encouraged and increased
- youth workshop activities are extended to cover the whole country
- the bases of young people's fixed term employment are rendered transparent and their knowledge of the world of work is improved
- internal and external entrepreneurship is consolidated for all young people

(Ministry of Education 2008: 57-65).

2.5. On-the-job-learning

“Skilled Central Finland” (SCF, Taitava Keski-Suomi) is a comprehensive development scheme comprising a number of projects aiming at improved quality and status for vocational education as well as better connections with industry. This study (Tynjälä et al. 2005) analyses the outcomes of such development activities at the outset with respect to the implemented system of students' work-based learning. Data was collected by means of questionnaires and interviews. A total of 1,072 students (59% of all final year students involved in the sample), 330 teachers (42% of all teachers) and 420 workplace instructors (53%) filled in the questionnaires. In addition 28 people were interviewed, including teachers, workplace trainers, development managers in particular fields, as well as leading developers and other people involved in SCF activities.

Based on the findings, work-based learning is mainly of good quality and a high standard and there are no major differences between different parts of Central Finland in terms of learning arrangements, student counselling or learning outcomes. However, clear differences were found between vocational fields, both in terms of implementation of work-based learning and learning outcomes. The connective model, which is ideal for work-based learning as proposed in research literature as it combines theory and practical work, was only realised in the field of social and health care. A general trend in all fields, however, was to abandon the traditional model of work-based learning, where school learning and learning at the workplace are considered to be separate. In the traditional model, there is little interaction between education and working life. Students recognised more traces of the traditional model than teachers and workplace instructors. As a result of development efforts, some features of more advanced models for work-based learning could be seen in all fields as well as efforts to implement the connective model.

Workplace learning was associated with positive effects on students' employment prospects and recruitment of new labour. It was also found that it had advanced the learning processes of work communities and employees. There were some negative views as well, but they were rare.

The learning outcomes, as assessed by the students, teachers, and workplace instructors, were good both in terms of vocational skills and general working life skills. Quite a few students reported, however, that they had not learned anything during their on-the-job learning periods in terms of using a foreign language at work, ICT or trade union activities. In comparison with the Helsinki region, no significant differences were detected in guidance and results. In Central Finland, students were slightly more satisfied with the guidance received and they also assessed their achievements slightly higher than their peers in the Helsinki region, who had more of these periods abroad and had more positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship.

The development needs for learning at work can be summarised as implementing the connective model, in association with holistic consideration of workplace learning in curricula and in all education, closer co-operation between schools and workplaces to create better learning environments as well as better integration of theory and practical work. Based on these findings, we can recommend increasing co-operation between different vocational sectors in order to disseminate good practices and investing in improving teachers' knowledge of working life in the field.

The aim of another report of the Institute for Educational Research (Stenström & Laine 2006) was to introduce elements of good practices of practice-oriented assessment within the Leonardo da Vinci project 'Quality Assurance and Practice-Oriented Assessment in Vocational Education and Training' (QUAL-PRAXIS) funded by the European Commission. The focus of the QUAL-PRAXIS project was to identify current innovations and future developments in practices and approaches to the assessment of work-based learning in European countries. The findings in this report are based on case studies from each partner country: Austria, Estonia, Finland, Germany and Ireland. The elements of good practices of practice-oriented assessment can be divided into two categories: learning and quality assurance. The elements concerning learning are as follows: assessment as part of learning, reflection, self-assessment and feedback. The elements of quality assurance include authentic context, training for assessors, transparent assessment, joint assessment and multiplicity of methods.

The list of elements is only indicative. However, some common elements were found, despite the fact that the models of learning at work evaluated in the partner countries varied between educational levels, ranging from secondary to higher education. The common elements established in the project were similar to the elements of authentic assessment. Hence, practice-oriented assessment can be considered to be part of the fifth generation of the assessment paradigm, since context and authenticity are also central elements.

3 Conclusions: challenges and research gaps

The Education and Research 2007–2012 Development Plan presents five core development areas: 1) the equality of educational opportunities, 2) the quality of education, 3) ensured supply of skilled labour, 4) development of tertiary education, and 5) teachers' importance. Perhaps the most challenging of these goals for VET is how to ensure the supply of skilled labour in the future. Long-term changes in working life, such as increasing know-how expectations, the fluctuation of occupational functions, the importance of innovativeness and more rapid changes of profession, have pressured policy-makers to pay increasing attention to the quality of VET. Better quality also means better cost-efficiency and better outcomes for society and individuals in terms of employment, know-how and lifelong learning (Ministry of Education 2007: 10-11, 22-23).

In order to improve cost-efficiency in VET, performance-based funding has recently been introduced for education providers. According to Virtanen (2006), education providers felt that performance indicators had a broadly positive impact. Analyses carried out by Ollikainen (2007a) and Maliranta et al. (2007) indicated, however, that the indicators' effect on cost-efficiency was fairly insignificant. The studies were done at a very early stage of performance-based funding and conclusions were drawn on a not fully developed system. Therefore, there is an obvious need for further research into the productivity and effectiveness of the funding system.

The benefits of VET in terms of employment and further studies were analysed by Maliranta et al. (2007). It was concluded that the best guarantee for success during and after IVET is the background of students and their parents. Teaching expenditure or the number of lessons taught in IVET institutions mattered very little. In Sitra (2007), it was also suggested that school-related factors played a fairly minor role in prevention of exclusion from education. However, Jahnukainen & Helander (2007) stressed that teachers played a crucial role in motivating students to continue their studies and preventing drop-out. A challenge is how to promote the study and career prospects both of talented students and of students at risk of dropping out simultaneously. Should more resources be allocated to students with special needs or to students with special talents?

Lifelong learning and constant updating of one's competence is an essential prerequisite in today's labour market. Julkunen & Wallin (2008) pointed out that employed adults are likely to seek further qualifications on a self-motivated basis. Many feel that they themselves have responsibility for keeping their skills up-to-date although employers showed less interest in education of their employees. One reason might be the lack of knowledge of different funding alternatives even though statutory support in Finland is extensive. More incentives and information on adult education should be given both to employers and employees in order to maximise the benefits of lifelong learning.

Various recent publications (Jokinen 2006; AKKU 2009) have noted that the importance of adult education is increasing. General reform concerning vocational adult education (AKKU 2009) will aim to strengthen cooperation between employers and education providers so that

the needs of employers are properly met. Although qualification-oriented education is important, it should not be an end in itself. Qualifications, their content and number, should match labour market needs first and foremost. Flexibility of study modules and personalisation of competence-based qualifications (client-oriented approach to recognition of prior learning) should also be taken into account.

In Finland, research into initial vocational education and training is still fairly scarce. This has been acknowledged in recent years and several pioneering studies have thus emerged, for instance on cost-efficiency and the nexus of employment and further studies after IVET. However, more analysis is still needed on how labour market needs can more closely match the allocation of education resources.

Research into social exclusion and dropping out is more widely available, but specific focus on VET is still rare and studies tend to evaluate student-related factors, instead of school-related ones. Comparative analysis of VET institutions and their relationship to prevention of social exclusion would be challenging, but welcome.

Lifelong learning and emphasis on adult education is now very acute as the labour market requires dynamic know-how and new competences from employees. More studies should be done into the reasons why employers are reluctant to encourage their staff to acquire further competence. It would also be interesting to find out to what extent VET for adults promotes career prospects, enhances social well-being or improves business performance.

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Theme II: Social mobility, equity and inclusive education

1 Introduction

The studies described in this chapter mainly deal with education and training for students with special needs. This is the best covered area within research into social issues in education and training and equal opportunities for students. One of the reasons for this may be that research within education science tends to be practically oriented. Many researchers have a background in education administration or teaching and their interests thus lie in topics which can immediately benefit the practice within education and training.

1.1 Background

Finland was Sweden's border province with Russia until 1809 and, subsequently, was a Russian Grand Duchy through until 1917. This history of being part of a larger state had a bearing on the way in which the class structure in Finnish society evolved. Finland never became a class society in the same way as old European monarchies although industrialisation in the 19th century also created a working class in Finland.

Independence in 1917 signalled the onset of actual development of the Finnish school system. Compulsory schooling was enacted in Finland quite late in the day compared with the rest of Europe: compulsory schooling was not enforced until 1921. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that provision of education for the entire nation just a few years after the 1918 Civil War was a manifestation of a policy striving for equity. The working class, who were the losing side in the Civil War, were also provided with an opportunity to obtain basic education at the same schools maintained by public authorities.

Concentration of the administration of vocational education and training (VET) under the auspices of a single central agency in the late 1960's resulted in more comprehensive development of the VET sector. The following decade witnessed overall reform of legislation governing vocational education and training. The education sector expanded to meet the demands created by the new upper-secondary paths beyond basic education and by wider access to university-level studies. This round of reforms built upon the same social and economic dynamics as earlier comprehensive school reform including the belief that development of human capital was an important and worthy goal (Aho, Pitkänen & Sahlberg, 2006).

A multi-level and bottom-up planning process was set up to implement secondary education reform. Planning thus took place at all levels, from the educational institutions to the national administration. The proposed reforms included:

- educational structure
- intake and selection into general and vocational education
- cooperation between educational institutions

- apprenticeship training
- content and arrangement of education and training (e.g. learning materials)
- remedial teaching, special needs education and on-the-job training
- guidance and counselling
- pupil welfare services
- the needs of teachers and other staff
- research, experimental programmes and other development activities
- facility needs (e.g. equipment and furniture)
- economic impact

(Aho, Pitkänen, Sahlberg, 2006).

The right to equal opportunities to access education regardless of social background, domicile, gender, ethnic background and health has been clearly stated in various documents ever since the upper-secondary school reform of the 1970's. Subsequent reforms of legislation and National Core Curricula have aimed to consolidate this principle. In the VET sector, education for students with special educational needs (SEN) has generally been provided by vocational special education institutions, but it has recently become increasingly common to integrate special needs education into mainstream education.

The Government has created a so-called guarantee for education. This means that every pupil completing compulsory basic education must be guaranteed a study place in upper secondary education and training. The aim of the last few years to achieve 96% of those completing compulsory basic education continuing their studies has nearly been reached. Consequently, the intake into vocational education and training has been increased. However, this leads to growing pressure to support students with special needs to ensure best utilisation of the individual student's abilities and attention to their particular needs.

1.2 Current state of research

At present, it is relatively rare for social mobility and equity to occur as independent research topics in their own right due to the historical developments presented in section 1.1 above. However, gender and social background are included as variables in the majority of research. For this reason, this report concentrates on research into inclusive education and special needs education.

In Finland, the tradition of research into general education is stronger when compared with VET research. This is also the case in terms of research focusing on special needs education. However, this type of research has been on the increase during the early years of the 21st century. In particular, people who themselves work as teachers or principals have written

doctoral theses about themes relating to their own work. At the same time, however, VET research continues to play a minor role in research programmes within university departments of special needs education. Even in these cases, research into special needs VET depends on the interests of individual researchers.

2 Studies on inclusion and special needs education

The research summarised and discussed in the following subsections covers the following topics:

- local curricula in vocational special needs education
- development of special needs education from a local perspective
- changes in the work of special needs teachers¹
- guidance and counselling in special needs education
- the realisation of equal educational rights of students with disabilities, school drop-outs and young people of immigrant origin

Each subsection describes the approach and aims of the research as well as the main findings. The key concerns and challenges arising from these studies are discussed in Chapter 3.

2.1 Curricula and special needs education in vocational upper secondary education

The aim of Miettinen's research *Opetussuunnitelmat ja erityisopetus ammatillisessa perustutkintokoulutuksessa: Asiakirja- ja kyselytutkimus opetussuunnitelman perusteiden mukaisesta ammatillisesta erityisopetuksesta*² was to examine how regulations concerning special needs vocational education and training are visible in the curricula³ of education providers. Another aim of the research was to examine the way that vocational education and training providers have handled special needs vocational education in their curricula and what kind of content they have. An inquiry designed for special needs teachers provided additional information on the views of education personnel on how the curriculum of special needs

¹ The term *Special needs teacher* in Finland refers to teaching staff who provide curricular support for young people with special educational needs.

² *Curricula and special needs education in vocational education and training leading to upper secondary vocational qualifications: A literature and interview study of vocational special needs education and training based on the National Core Curricula.*

³ In Finland, curricula are drawn up at several levels. At a national level, the core curricula define the learning outcomes that should be reached in each subject or subject area. At a local level, the schools draw up their own curricula that specify how nationally set learning objectives should be reached. In between these two levels, there can also be a municipal or provider-level curriculum that steers institutional curricula.

education has functioned in practical education, how the curriculum steers activities as well as the governing mechanisms of special needs vocational training and education.

Education providers were asked to make available to researchers the essential parts of the curriculum for special needs education that include the common part of the syllabus, student evaluation, on-the-job-learning, guidance counselling and those parts dealing with special needs education. A total of 139 (79%) of education providers made the requested material available. The curricula were analysed with a content analysis method by using the national core curriculum, the development plans of education and the central issues concerning education by the state administration as the analysis framework.

The questionnaire sent to providers of special needs education included multiple choice questions that were analysed by statistical methods as well as open questions that were analysed by using the contents analysis method. Replies were received from 186 people (43% of recipients).

As a result, it was discovered that the curricula of education providers seem to have been drawn up comprehensively and according to the principles of the core curriculum. The results were clear when looking at education providers who were joint municipal authorities with a high number of students and special needs students. Very small and very large education providers, however, deviated from the average results.

Half of the education providers had drawn up extensive curricula. These included both plans for organising special needs education individually and the division of responsibilities within special needs education. Only 14 per cent of education providers had curricula with a versatile approach that included resources to be used for education and training, for example.

According to the research, the curricula and activities of special needs education and mainstream vocational institutions vary a great deal. The strengths of special vocational institutions include process management and emphasis on a student's individuality. Teachers at special education institutions have difficulties analysing the contents of special needs education. The strengths of mainstream vocational institutions include internal cooperation within institutions, interaction between teachers and students as well as the internalisation of the principle of educating the entire generation. Generally speaking, special needs teachers thought that the principle of educating the entire generation was being realised more efficiently than what one might think on the basis of curricula.

Issues connected to individual educational plans (IEP) were comprehensively dealt with in the curricula, whereas resources for special needs education were mentioned less frequently. Special needs education is presented as being a function that takes place between the educational institution and teachers while the role of students with special needs is not described. Special needs education is very pedagogic in nature in vocational education and training. In vocational special needs education, the emphasis is thus on learning through working and on the expectations of working life. The aim is to educate and train students to become good workers who are thorough and who have a positive attitude towards their work.

Gaining a vocational upper secondary qualification is generally seen as being the primary objective and the transfer to special needs education is often experienced as a negative solution. Therefore, one of the strengths of educating the entire age group in mainstream upper secondary education is in strengthening the social capacity of a student.

The research indicates that the concepts of special needs education are unclear. The concept of integration was interpreted in various ways and there was diversity in interpretations of concepts related to support and special services, expert services and collaborators as well as teaching methods, teaching arrangements and the objectives of special needs education. As a result, the impression was that the national core curriculum and its classifications do not provide a tool that education providers can directly apply when organising their instruction.

Based on research results, it seems that the most important method of special needs education is concise and persistent interaction between the student and the teacher, which requires small teaching groups or several people to be involved in teaching situations as well as a sufficient amount of contact teaching. Vocational special needs education provided according to the basics of the curriculum seems to be best realised at the institutions of those organisers of education where support for a special needs student has generally been dealt with in the common part of the curriculum and, in addition, it has been specified and firmed up in the plan for special needs education.

2.2. From vocational training to open learning environments. The work of the vocational special needs teacher at times of change.

The research of Hirvonen (*Ammattikouluista avoimiin oppimisympäristöihin: Ammatillisen erityisopettajan työ muutoksessa*)⁴ investigated the work of vocational special needs teachers in a municipal federation for vocational training. The research was a qualitative case study. The aims of the research were to study what special needs education has involved and what it involves now at five educational institutions within a municipal federation⁵, how vocational special needs teachers depict their work and how their work has changed.

The research approached these questions in two stages. The first stage comprised a description of the different phases that special needs education underwent from 1910 to 2003 at educational institutions. The purpose of this analysis was to provide background information for descriptions of the work of vocational special needs teachers.

The second stage was made up of interviews with special needs teachers, which were carried out as themed interviews. The results of these were used to establish special needs teachers' conceptions of their work. The themes of the interviews covered areas such as workload,

⁴ From vocational training to open learning environments: The work of the vocational special needs teacher during times of change.

⁵ Municipal federations are consortia of several municipalities (local administrative entities). The aim is to strengthen operations through synergies in terms of provision of education and training.

activities and pedagogical approaches used by teachers. Thus, changes in the work of a vocational special needs teacher were analysed and an outline was created explaining the current challenges in special needs education within the municipal federation in question.

The research showed that the work of a vocational special needs teacher is bound to the educational structure prevailing at the time and to objectives set for education. Special needs education expanded to conventional vocational institutions from the 1970's onwards. At that time, the work of a vocational special needs teacher consisted of work in work-based small groups. A special needs teacher worked autonomously and carried responsibility, but was separate from general education. Legislative and structural changes in education in the 1990's also changed how special needs education was implemented. Vocational schools with a simpler structure became comprehensive service schools, in which flexibility and construction of individual learning paths were emphasised. This brought new types of challenges for special needs education and the work of special needs teachers.

In the study, a clear change could be seen from the clearly defined work of an autonomous, responsible teacher of special groups in the 1970's through to the work of a vocational teacher in mainstream education in the 1990's. In 2003, of the fifteen special needs teachers, three worked in class-based special needs education, two in so-called alternative models and one was involved in project work. Nine special needs teachers worked as vocational teachers in mainstream education, in which development of professional identity and expertise was hindered by a lack of clarity of position, overlapping working roles and a lack of cooperation with colleagues.

Fully utilising the expertise of special needs teachers requires a special needs education service strategy that forms the basis for the division of responsibilities in special needs. From the point of view of special needs teachers, cooperation with colleagues, work development and further education are required to support professional identity and development at work.

2.3 Guidance and special needs education. Document and interview research into curriculum-based guidance counselling in special needs education in vocational upper secondary education and training

The starting point for Honkanen's research (*Opinto-ohjaus ja erityisopetus; Asiakirja- ja haastattelututkimus opetussuunnitelman perusteiden mukaisesta opinto-ohjauksesta ammatillisessa erityisopetuksessa*⁶) was the concern for the shortcomings and lack of attention that the researcher had experienced in the guidance counselling of students with special needs. In addition, education providers in Finland have been obliged to write a local curriculum reflecting the "political will" of local policy-makers and the authorities since 2000. One part of these local curricula is also the description of how guidance counselling as

⁶ Guidance counselling and special needs education. A literature and interview study of guidance counselling based on the National Core Curriculum in vocational special needs education and training.

well as special needs education is to be organised. These serve as administrative and didactical tools.

The aim of the research was to find out how guidance counselling is carried out and how it is reflected in local curricula. In addition, the research aimed to explore how local practitioners, such as guidance counsellors, special needs teachers and students with special needs experienced the implementation. The research was carried out through document analysis and themed interviews.

Results show that the required descriptions of organisation of guidance counselling and special needs education were deficiently recorded in local curricula. In addition, there were big differences between educational institutions. It would seem that big institutions with more than 500 students had better documentation and descriptions than smaller institutions. Guidance counsellors, special needs teachers and students with special needs at the big institutions were also more satisfied with guidance than those at smaller institutions. The biggest gaps were related to the description of how students should be guided, how guidance should be organised in terms of practical measures and activities, particularly in terms of how students are supported and guided to make choices as well as guidance related to on-the-job learning. In many cases, guidance plans were written for all students, not specifying the needs of those students with SEN.

The interviews showed that the transition period from compulsory basic education to upper secondary vocational education and training was sufficiently supported. However, there were educational institutions that did not support students enough. There were also shortcomings in terms of integration of guidance counselling and learning activities (learning by doing). Multi-professional collaboration between guidance counsellors, special needs teachers and other professionals involved was also not sufficient and needed more attention.

Support for students with SEN during their studies showed big variations between institutions. Something that did function well at all schools was recognition of learning difficulties and students' needs. However, utilisation of individual study plans (IEP) drawn up for students varied. The IEPs were seen as being useful tools at those schools which had a systematic approach to supporting students with SEN: the individual study plan was described as being a process containing concrete activities, providing a tool both for teachers and students. There were also big differences in how plans were followed up.

The special needs teachers and guidance counsellors interviewed were particularly concerned about those students who were integrated into mainstream education. It seems that these students did not receive sufficient special needs guidance. Honkanen concludes that this points to the fact that integration is often technical rather than genuine integration.

While support in the transition from compulsory education was found to be sufficient, support during on-the-job learning periods and in the students' transition to working life was often lacking. Thus, students generally received no guidance and counselling during their on-the-

job learning periods within enterprises. There were also deficiencies in career counselling and in preparing students for working life.

2.4 Education, polarisation and equality: The process of becoming advantaged or disadvantaged in basic and upper secondary education

The study by Järvinen and Jahnukainen (*Koulutus, polarisaatio ja tasa-arvo: Hyvä- ja huono-osaistuminen perus- ja keskiasteen koulutuksessa*)⁷ examined the relationship between student selection processes and polarisation. The analysis focused on three special groups: young people with disabilities, school drop-outs and young people of immigrant origin. The study presented three views on equality. First of all, one of the key objectives of Finnish education policy is equality of educational opportunities. Everyone must be guaranteed an opportunity to educate themselves regardless of any social, regional or economic factors. Secondly, the equality of educational arrangements is based on the assumption that differences between students are not necessarily differences in how gifted they are, but that they may also result from differences relating to students' cultural backgrounds or growth environments. Finally, views focusing on the equality of educational outputs, in turn, place emphasis on the idea that it should be possible to promote and support empowerment of socially vulnerable groups by means of education and training.

The study assessed Finnish education policy during the 21st century. The researchers identified two different trends: on the one hand, educational selection takes place at an earlier stage than before and, to some extent, also within individual levels of education, whereas, on the other, certain educational dead ends have been completely eliminated.

In terms of drop-outs, the researchers conclude that concerns about exclusion of young people from education, training and employment are, to some extent, overstated. Follow-up studies on school drop-outs have established that a number of those who have either dropped out of school after basic education or during upper secondary studies have continued their studies later in life and have found good placements in the world of work.

When achievement of educational equality is analysed from the perspective of equal opportunities within education and training, it is fair to say that opportunities are fairly equal from young people's perspective. In addition, considerable efforts have been made over the years to achieve equality of educational arrangements. Students with special difficulties in learning and schooling are supported by means of educational services tailored to meet their specific needs. However, if the perspective of interpretation focuses on the equality of educational outputs, the researchers suggest that there are significant deficiencies in this respect, in particular among students with disabilities and those of immigrant origin.

⁷ Education, polarisation and equality: The process of becoming advantaged or disadvantaged in basic and upper secondary education.

3 Conclusions: challenges and research gaps

The research results indicate that there are variations in the ways in which the concepts of special needs education and inclusive education are interpreted. The finding is of concern, as it is important for students with special educational needs that the concepts of education, services and inclusion are the same irrespective of the education provider. A similar understanding of the key concepts is also important for multi-disciplinary cooperation, in particular between social welfare and educational services. This cooperation plays an essential role in all types of special needs education and forms one of the cornerstones of Finnish special needs education.

Another key consideration in vocational special needs education is consideration for the students' individual capabilities. This is where focus should be placed in terms of funding, teacher training as well as organisation of practical teaching work and workplace training alike. The research points to the fact that the required activities are carried out. For example, individual study plans (IEPs) are drawn up at all institutions. The educational institutions and their staff also seem to have the expertise to recognise students' learning difficulties and needs. However, there are shortcomings regarding the follow-up of IEPs as well as the multi-professional cooperation within institutions. These can be a consequence of a lack of resources as well as pre-service and in-service staff training.

A challenge for education providers is the transition of students from special needs education to the world of work, particularly in the current economic situation. Employment of these students can be promoted through counselling, guidance and on-the-job learning, but such measures require significant attention to each student's individual capabilities.

Based on the analysis of this chapter and its conclusions, it would seem that research into questions related to equity and inclusion have, in recent years, mainly taken a pragmatic and practical approach. Against the realities and developments in VET, there would, however, be a pressing need for research with a wider social perspective. Thus, for example, research is needed into integration of students with special needs, the role of special needs teachers in VET and what consequences the growing attractiveness of VET in Finland has had in terms of the intake of students with special educational needs (Miettinen 2009).

Integration has and will be the prevailing trend in special needs education. There is statistical evidence that integration is taking place in practical terms. There has not been any research into how integration works at an institutional level and from the perspective of students, teachers and other staff. For example, what effect has integration had on students' learning, the professional development needs of staff and the pressures that integration has placed on educational systems, either locally or nationally?

In addition, the role of special needs teachers in VET is an unexplored area. Particularly, the "double" identity of these teachers as both specialists in VET and in special needs education and the balance between these. Research is also needed into the activities and competences required of special needs teachers in VET. This is especially true in terms of the specific

challenges that the context of VET and interaction with the world of work bring to the profession.

VET has become an attractive option for school leavers in Finland. In the spring of 2009, more than 50 per cent of school leavers applied for VET. The VET institutions are free to select students and a concern has therefore arisen among experts that students with SEN could be suffering. Thus, with more and more students to choose from, the institutions might accept less of these students and their opportunities to gain entrance into post-compulsory training could be endangered as a result.

Finally, there is need for research to compare implementation, practices, policies and structures internationally. Such comparative research would facilitate policy-makers and practitioners as they develop strategies and action plans to improve special needs education.

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Theme III: Leadership research

1 Introduction

1.1 Theme of national educational policy and debate

Leadership is an issue of topical interest. The Development Plan for Education and Research 2007-2012, which is the main document steering development of education in Finland, does not specifically mention leadership as being a priority. However, the Ministry of Education commissioned a study on local education leadership in 2008. This study was published in May 2009. In addition, the Minister of Education has recently stressed the importance of educational leadership. The minister emphasised the important role of leadership for the quality of education and training.

Interest in the topic is also reflected in the fact that Finland took part in the OECD project on school leadership in 2006-2008. Even if there are a lot of positive aspects relating to school leadership in Finland, such as trust in education professionals, local decision-making powers, distributed leadership and the high level of education of teaching staff, the OECD reports on challenges for educational leadership in Finland. In the coming years, Finland should pay closer attention to recruitment of new leaders as principals are an aging group of professionals. Thus, there is a challenge to transfer the leadership knowledge and skills to future generations. OECD also sees that there is room for development of pre-service and in-service training for educational leaders.

Researchers have also predicted that there will be “qualitative” pressures on educational leadership. As education and training systems are becoming more transparent, comparable and accountable, the pressures on leadership have also increased and changed, particularly in terms of quality management.

2 Research into educational leadership

VET leaders have not been the subject of research in many studies over the past few years. Most research in the last five years has been about leadership in general education. The last academic research concentrating on VET leaders was published in 1998. In 2008, Ahonen’s dissertation encompassed principals and leaders from both general and vocational education and training. However, leadership issues are generic and global and most activities and challenges for leaders are similar from one sector of education to another. This is also reflected in some publications on educational leadership, where no distinction is made between levels of education and leadership discussed as a universal issue (e.g. Helakorpi 2001). Consequently, research with a focus on general education leaders has also been included in this report.

3 Summary of main findings of research into leadership in Finland

The most common topics of research into leaders have been the content of their work. A lot of the research seems to have been motivated by concern for the well-being and attractiveness of

the profession. Anne Karikoski investigated how good school leaders manage and act in their roles and what kind of difficulties school leaders encounter in their daily working life. Karikoski observed five principals in general education and their daily behaviour.

Pekka Kanervio and Mika Risku described the educational leadership of general education in Finnish municipalities in 2008 and the changes that will be taking place in provision of general education before 2015. Thus, the scope differed in targeting the local heads of education departments instead of the most commonly investigated target group of principals or head teachers.

Aarne Mäkelä's research aimed at clarifying what the tasks are for general education principals and identifying the main domains of activity and how these have changed since the 1990's. The research was carried out mainly through observation and desk-based research.

Teija Vuohijoki investigated how principals coped with their work and what differences there were between how male and female principals coped. The research material comprised results from a questionnaire sent to principals and from empathy-based stories. The latter meant that teachers and principals were given a framework of a story that they had to complete based on their own experiences. The aim was to capture logical patterns of behaviour.

Helena Ahonen (2008) studied how leadership is constructed in the context of educational institutions and how principals and leaders experience their own identity. The study material comprised narratives written by the leaders as well as interviews.

In the following subsections, the three key findings of the research listed above have been "clustered" under key messages expressed by headings.

3.1 Decentralisation and local autonomy have a strong influence on leaders' work and responsibilities

Kanervio and Risku found that the strong status of municipalities could be seen in the answers given by the heads of local education departments, even if the views of central government were taken into consideration. The municipalities tried both to adapt their functions to the changing environment and to target their operations towards the future. The aim was to secure services and ensure a sustainable economy. Central government was considered to support strategic development in municipalities especially through control procedures other than legislation. Of these state subsidies, education, core curricula and projects were regarded as being important.

Vuohijoki detected that the tasks and responsibilities of school principals have clearly changed over the last few years. As a result of increased autonomy and decision-making power, the work has become more demanding and versatile. More than 80 per cent of principals taking part in the research reported being overburdened either continuously or occasionally.

Principals also seem to have an increasing role in networking and collaborating with stakeholders. Mäkelä's research results showed that changes in society have affected principals' work. One of the most notable changes has been that networking has become an increasingly important part of their work as society is becoming networked.

Ahonen (2008) found that socially constructed leadership is not static but instead something that changes according to situations and interpersonal circumstances (transformational leadership). The principals reported that they change their leadership styles when trying to engage teachers in activities or when trying to mediate their esteem for teachers' professionalism, for example.

3.2 Administration dominates leaders' activities and working time

Karikoski's results gathered from the shadowing material showed that the actions of principals focused on bureaucratic work. The principals spent most of their time in their office (more than 50 per cent). Most time in their office was spent in front of the computer. They also spent a significant amount of time in the office meeting teachers and occasional visitors. The time spent building networks was relatively short, although the principals considered it to be an important domain of leadership in their interviews.

Consequently, creating a culture of motivation, collaboration and collegiality was seen as being important, but one of those tasks that got too little time. The same is true of their ability to recruit teachers who were suitable for the school and who fitted into the school and its ideology. However, the leaders reported that, due to increased administrative duties, there was not enough time for developing the school culture. Nor was there enough time for pedagogical leadership, that is, development towards higher quality school operations.

Vuohijoki also found that administration took up the majority of the working time of principals. At the same time, teachers and staff expected more contribution in terms of HR development. As a result, the leaders had too little time to listen to staff and students. Vuohijoki discovered differences between genders in relation to leaders' attitudes to the human aspects of their work. Female leaders spoke more often than their male colleagues about human relationships, student welfare and the students themselves. The research results also point to the fact that the leaders carried out tasks that could easily have been done by someone else, such as routine administrative tasks. Vuohijoki concludes that scarce resources hinder both managerial and strategic leadership in education. As working time was spent on administrative work, only a small number of principals investigated by Vuohijoki felt that they were doing a meaningful job.

Vuohijoki further concluded that limited resources had led to a situation where there are no clear boundaries of definitions of the leader's work. This is an issue that burdens leaders and affects their well-being at work.

One cause of stress also detected by Kanervio and Risku concerned limited resources. The heads of local education departments considered their work to be important but felt that work requirements caused them a lot of stress. The lack of staff resources may cause even more

problems in the future because the job descriptions of both heads of education departments and principals were expected to expand. In the largest municipalities, the fragmentation of provision of education may also distract educational leadership. The heads of education departments saw that the solution could be that qualifications and the training for educational leaders should be more targeted and specified.

3.3 Leadership and learning results are inter-related

According to Karikoski, previous studies indicate that both successful leadership and good learning results are characteristics of a good school. Thus, improving leadership might improve learning results as well. Creating a school culture is closely connected to leadership development. Accordingly, the connection between school culture and learning results is significant in determining the characteristics of a good school. That is why the role of the school leader as the creator of this culture is important.

4 Conclusions: Challenges and research gaps

One of the key concerns arising from the research and the previously mentioned OECD report is the attractiveness of leadership positions in education. There will be pressure to delegate routine administrative duties to allow time for pedagogical leadership and networking. Administration takes up most of the leaders' time and administrative duties can be expected to increase. In Finland, the trend is to merge institutions into bigger entities. In addition, teacher salaries are becoming more personalised, meaning that principals have to participate in appraisals and determine teachers' workload and performance.

In addition, well-being and balancing the increased demands, activities and responsibilities at a local level must be dealt with to ensure that there are also applicants for leadership positions in the future. The increased demands include upholding and improving the standard of education and efficiency requirements, for example (Kanervio & Risku 2009). Today, it already seems that leadership positions at big institutions in particular do not attract many applicants in Finland.

A further challenge is resourcing in education and training. There is a clear conflict between future expectations and current resources. Future-oriented leadership means that principals should have more time for evaluating the present state of their school and future targets together with all staff. This would require continuous dialogue and analysis between teachers and principals concerning strengths and weaknesses and assessment of the need for change. Networking and sharing expertise outside the school is also becoming more important and requires time and attention. However, it seems that schools still operate as isolated units within an area (e.g. Karikoski 2009).

In addition to resourcing, pre- and in-service training for school leaders deserves more attention in Finland. Training is needed if we want to attract good leaders in the future as well. In addition to programmes organised by universities, for example, mentoring should be developed. Mentoring was mentioned by principals as being useful in terms of their well-

being (Karikoski 2009). Principals involved in Vuohijoki's research (2006) also reported that they got plenty of support from their peers.

Karijoki's interviews point to the fact that most principals today just end up in their positions, generally without any prior training or preparation. Consequently, they mostly learn their job through experience. More opportunities for leadership studies should be made available, so that during their teacher training, students could select and integrate study modules on leadership into their qualifications, for example. Mäkelä talks about the professionalisation of educational leadership. The demands and pressures increase as society becomes more multi-dimensional. Therefore, principals are in a key position in terms of administration, human resources management and pedagogical leadership.

According to Vuohijoki the professionalism of the leaders' work should be emphasised. Today it is often understood as being a semi-profession, as the job profile often also comprises teaching duties. Professionalisation means that there should be proper and specific training as well as ethical norms.

Professionalisation is closely related to the definition of principals' job profiles. Karikoski's recommendations are that:

- routine administrative work should be centralised to local administration; more resources for secretarial work should be made available at schools
- there should be more support from local education authorities
- leaders' roles and duties should be clarified
- leaders should be free from teaching duties
- more resources for distributing leadership effectively
- regional networking should be encouraged
- more info for schools on their performance to support pedagogical leadership and strategic planning

The job profile of principals should also be clarified according to Vuohijoki. The majority of principals worked "at the end of their tether". Due to unclear job descriptions, principals and leaders are overburdened and their well-being at work is reduced. One factor in this reduced well-being was the blurring of working time and free time.

Ahonen (2008) stresses in her study the specific issues that separate educational leadership from other types of leadership. As most principals have worked as teachers before their leadership careers, they also carry with them the identity of a teacher. As a consequence, their identities move between an identity as a leader and as a teacher. Teacher identity anchors principals to the prevailing valuations of education. Ahonen also discovered a conflict

between the idealised image of leadership where the principals are heroes whose visions and strategic actions improve the quality and efficiency of their institutions and the leadership she actually found in the narratives and interviews. The principals themselves saw their roles as being to listen, defend and enable others to achieve things.

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, none of the available research into leadership specifically targeted vocational education and training. There is therefore a pressing need to explore issues related to leaders within VET. Although the problems and challenges are largely similar to those of leaders in general education, there is extra pressure from the demand to cooperate and take into account the world of work and anticipation of future trends in the labour market in provision and development of education and training (see Volmari, Helakorpi & Frimodt 2009, for example).

A further aspect that seems to be missing from the research done in the 2000's, is the deeper side of the leaders' work that involves exploration of the much debated issue of pedagogical leadership, for example. Research in Finland has been focusing on management of educational institutions. In some research, the concept of pedagogical leadership was "opened up" in terms of activities involved. The problem with research carried out so far is that the concept has been defined in many ways. At its narrowest, pedagogical leadership has been interpreted only to encompass work around the curriculum and, at its widest, as developing the school for the benefit of all those working and functioning within it. (Vuohijoki 2006). In addition, research into leadership in Finland has not encompassed the perspective of what pedagogical leadership requires from leaders, both in terms of personal competences and in terms of what a pedagogical approach means for human resources management and leading the organisation. Ahonen (2008) sees that there is a critical need for research into educational leadership that would explore its specific issues and approach it, not from the perspective of business leadership, but from the perspective of teachers or as an interactive process.

Human skills such as communication, cooperation and interaction skills were highlighted as being crucial competences in recent studies. Consequently, research is needed concerning these competences as well as what emotional intelligence means from the perspective of school leadership. The leaders interviewed in Karikoski's research assessed their own emotional intelligence skills as being good. However, this would need more exploration. It would be particularly useful to define what the most important areas are within emotional intelligence. In addition, a 180 degrees assessment with feedback from peers and subordinates and comparison with the self-conception of leaders of their capabilities in this area would shed much light on this issue.

Finally, regional differences and their effects on educational leadership have not been studied enough. However, it can be assumed that local and regional factors such as the socio-economic background of the population affect the quality and perspective of leaders' work (Karikoski 2009).

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Theme IV: VET and employment-related mobility and migration

1. Introduction

1.1 General overview

Research into employment-related mobility, immigration and emigration has long been associated with different phases of migration. The great phases of migration in particular have been studied. Two such important phases occurred in Finland at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries with emigration to the United States and Canada and to Sweden in the 1960's as a result of structural change in society. During both periods of emigration, 5 to 10 per cent of the total population moved to these countries.

In contrast, immigration to Finland remained minor until the 1990's. In the aftermath of the Second World War, over 400,000 Finns were forced to emigrate from eastern parts of Finland, annexed by the Soviet Union. The population requiring somewhere to live and work exceeded 10 per cent of the aggregate Finnish population at the time. The number of refugees started to increase from the 1970's onwards, the first groups coming from Vietnam and Chile. Employment-related mobility to Finland only began growing considerably after the 1990's when immigration from neighbouring Russia and Estonia started to rise.

In Finland, the role of vocational education and training has not been of particular interest in debates concerning mobility. At points, however, it has become important. As the Norwegian health care system was suffering from labour shortages in the 1990's, some education institutions were providing language training aiming to facilitate employment and increase the wage levels of foreigners with healthcare qualifications. In the present century, some vocational institutions have in turn been targeting student recruitment to Russia.

Although the global economic crisis has resulted in increased unemployment, layoffs and shortened working weeks in the past year, national policy-makers pay more and more attention to labour shortages that are impending in the decade ahead. One resource would then be immigration. The current Government prefers employment-related mobility in particular. Therefore, it is expected that research into immigration is likely to grow over the coming years. Emigration is not as essential a political issue as employment-related mobility. Net immigration has risen fivefold since 2000.

1.2 Current research

Since 2000, immigration to Finland has increased considerably, but research into immigration and especially into employment-related mobility has still been rather scarce. Information on mobility has been obtained in the form of statistical studies by administration organisations, such as the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO), the Ministry of Employment and the Economy and Statistics Finland. The most relevant institution conducting immigration-related research is the Institute of Migration. In addition, several Bachelor's or Master's theses have

been done at universities. In particular, many studies concerning immigrants have been carried out at the Department of Geography at the University of Turku.

The role of vocational education and training concerning employment-related mobility has not been of particular interest in Finland. In research into mobility, education is commonly used as a background variable. Immigration is frequently studied as a whole and with immigrants as one group. Employment-related mobility is, of course, included in research topics, but not with any specific focus.

2 Research into mobility

2.1 Internationalisation of people and labour now and in the future

The study *Internationalisation of people and labour now and in the future* (Migration studies A 30, Institution of Migration, 2008) was carried out as a part of the ESF-funded research project International mobility, labour needs and the effects of immigration on education supply in Finland. It was funded jointly by the ESF, the Ministry of Education and the Institute of Migration. The main topic of the ESF project was international mobility. It aimed to predict the long-term need for labour-related immigration to Finland and estimate its influence on Finnish labour supply. For this purpose, a sketch of the regional population development and of the present labour force structure was drawn and the situation of immigrants on the Finnish labour market from the 1990's to the present day was analysed. Using case studies, the willingness and intentions of highly educated people to move abroad for work was studied and correspondingly the interest of foreign university graduates to work in Finland. Another aim was to find out if expatriate Finns are interested in returning to Finland and if they will thus contribute to the labour force.

Immigrants

The study focused on development of internationalisation of people and labour in Finland. The future trend was examined from the present day through to 2015 and the analysis included regions as well as the whole country. Immigration was used as a special indicator. The employability of immigrants in the Finnish labour market and future labour market needs were analysed.

The number of foreign citizens in Finland was 122,000 in 2006, which comprises 2.3 per cent of the total population. The biggest ethnic groups in that year were Russian, Estonian, Swedish and Somali. The immigrants comprised 1.6 per cent of the total labour force in 2000. Employment-related immigration is still relatively minor in Finland; the Ministry of Employment and the Economy estimates that only 5 to 10 per cent of all immigration to Finland in the 1990's and 2000's was employment-related. Therefore, one purpose of the Government programme on immigration policies in 2006 was to promote employment-related immigration. Of all immigrants to Finland, including women and children, the share of the labour force was 36 per cent. The share of foreigners in Finland, aged 20-44, is bigger than that of Finns of the same age group.

There is considerable variation in the regions that immigrants have moved to both during the depression years of the early 1990's and the economic boom of the early 2000's. Almost half of immigrants who have moved to Finland during these years arrived in the Uusimaa region on the southern coast near the capital city. No remarkable changes have happened in the immigrants' mobility behaviour during the past ten years. Regional variation is mostly characteristic of refugees since they are located around the country. Foreign citizens usually inhabit cities: 85 per cent of them lived in cities or towns in 2006.

The proportion of employed people rose slightly among immigrants who had lived for one year in Finland: of those having moved to Finland in 2002, a third had obtained a job at the end of that year and already 44 per cent were employed in 2003. The regional variation in employment is of course related to municipal economic conditions.

Those immigrants born in western countries have better employment prospects than those from other countries. The nationalities enjoying the best employability in Finland include those from the United Kingdom, Sweden, Germany and Estonia. The most recent statistics from 2004 show that Indian immigrants are also well employed. After India come China, Turkey, the United States and Vietnam. The lowest employment rates are among those born in the former Yugoslavia, Iran, Somalia and Iraq.

Completion of a tertiary degree is the best guarantee for employment among immigrants. Variation in immigrants' employability can be discerned according to the field of education one year after their arrival (2003). Business and commerce offered the best employment prospects. Other important fields include finance and insurance, estate agency services, business services, teaching and education, and research. Those having found employment in the latter two areas have been able to benefit from their mother tongue.

Education is one of the most important factors affecting an individual's labour market value. Where, when and what immigrants have studied are evaluated when their labour market value is being assessed. It is commonly acknowledged that international comparison between different kinds of education and qualifications is difficult and it is therefore always an advantage if education is obtained in the current country of residence. Furthermore, this is recommended since the benefits of a qualification might not be fully realised without proper language skills. In addition to the education acquired in the country of residence, language skills are constantly being improved. When immigrants complete a qualification in their new country of residence, their human capital needed in a local context will increase and this will thus improve their socio-economic conditions. Employment for immigrants in their own profession field often requires supplementing their vocational competence which is required in the Finnish labour market.

A bigger share of women decreases the education level of immigrants since female refugees in particular are on average less educated than male refugees. A pilot study conducted at the Government Institute for Economic Research (Kangasharju, Korpinen & Parkkinen 2003) states that the education level of foreign nationals in Finland is generally good. The proportion of those only having completed basic education is bigger among immigrants than

Finns. But it must be taken into account that a larger number of immigrants are studying in comparison with Finns. This result may be caused by immigrants' age structure: they are much younger than Finns. In addition, Kyhä (2007) points out that immigrants are fairly educated, as almost 20 per cent of all immigrants in Finland held a tertiary degree in 2001.

Immigration affects education supply and there is extensive regional variation in this respect. Immigrants have been placed unevenly in different municipalities, resulting in pressure on education targeted at immigrants in municipalities with a high proportion of immigrants. A constant increase in the number of immigrants and increased multiculturalism raises questions regarding intercultural interaction and its improvement. According to Javanainen (2000), education institutions must not forget their crucial role in shaping the attitudes both of pupils and their parents. Positive experiences among children from immigrant backgrounds contribute to their subsequent willingness to seek vocational education, for example, and thus promote their own employability.

Finns' willingness to work abroad

According to a survey, graduates from the University of Oulu express interest in working abroad in the future. Roughly two thirds of participants answered that they would be willing to work abroad. Men were more interested than women: as many as 76 per cent of men were willing to work abroad whereas only just over 50 per cent of women showed similar interest. Graduate engineers in particular were keen to work outside Finland (75 per cent). Those interested reported that working in a foreign country provides experiences, promotes career prospects and creates vocational growth. Some said that they believe that working abroad would also raise their income. A particularly low income level and high taxation in Finland motivate people to leave. Some 60 per cent of those who gave the green light to working abroad said that they would like to spend several years abroad, and 18 per cent less than one year. One tenth replied that they would be willing to work alternately abroad and back at home. Only three per cent of those interested in working abroad would like to work and live permanently away from their homeland.

The survey indicated that a common reason for foreigners coming to Finland was a relationship with a Finn and willingness to move to his or her homeland. Frequently, a foreigner first finds a job in Finland and then later on his or her partner follows them, having also found a job, for instance.

2.2 Integration of immigrants into the labour market in Turku: the viewpoint of the employed

This research (Kaisa Keski-Nisula, 2007) describes immigrants' integration into the labour market in Turku. The topic is addressed from the point of view of employed immigrants. Contributing and impeding factors for labour market integration as well as immigrants' status in Turku labour market are both discussed. Closer attention is paid to immigrants' educational background and how it affects their success in the labour market. The connection between ethnic origin and labour market integration in Turku also receives some focus.

It takes time and resources for an immigrant to be able to start working in Finland. On average, it takes 1 to 5 years for an immigrant to join the payroll. Contributing factors for labour market integration among immigrants can be distinguished as follows: personality-related factors, readiness to learn and external support. In other words, integration is facilitated by an active and flexible personality, proper Finnish language skills, the ability to work in line with Finnish working culture, prior education that would be recognised in Finland and good social networks. Immigrants' diverse education backgrounds affect their labour market value very differently. Those from academic backgrounds experience difficulties in getting a job that matches their education. Employment relationships among immigrants are also insecure. For non-academic immigrants, it is easier to enjoy more secure employment and to get a job that matches their education than for those from academic backgrounds since less is expected from the former in terms of education and language skills.

2.3 "Without work I don't feel like a human being." Impediments to employment integration in the Kemi-Tornio region

This study (Aino Lääkkölä 2008) focuses on employment of immigrants and impediments to their employment in the Kemi-Tornio region of northern Finland. Immigrants, employers as well as regional employment administration are taken into account. Immigrants coming to Finland have mainly moved to southern Finland, especially to the region near the capital city, but more immigrants are also coming to northern Finland due to increasing immigration flows and impending labour shortages. Employment is an essential prerequisite for immigrants' social integration, but their employment levels are still much worse than for Finns.

Education and language skills are seen as being the most essential factors contributing to employment, but various social networks are also considered to be important. In order to create such networks, better interaction between immigrants and Finns is needed. Enhanced interaction and open cooperation is important for immigrants, employment administration as well as employers overall.

2.4. Essays on Migration

In his Essay *Assimilation to a Welfare State: Labor market Performance and Use of Social Benefits by Immigrants to Finland* (in *Essays on Migration*, VATT publications 51, 2009), Matti Sarvimäki examines the assimilation of immigrants to the Finnish labour market and welfare system. For example, earnings among immigrants are analysed.

While long-term immigrants experience rapid earnings growth, only men from OECD countries earn in line with what Finns earn. Earnings predominantly grow due to improving employment rates rather than wage growth. Earnings profiles for temporary immigrants are flat. Furthermore, direct study of the use of social benefits suggests that immigrants learn to use the welfare system gradually. In particular, non-OECD households substantially increase their use of social assistance during the first five years in the country despite simultaneously doubling their earnings.

In the essay *Moving Immigrants from Welfare to Work: The Impact of an Integration Programme*, the researcher studies the impact of an integration programme for immigrants using a fuzzy regression-discontinuity approach. The programme consists of an individualised sequence of active labour market policy measures combined with sanctions in cases of non-compliance. The programme was introduced in 1999 in Finland, but only those who had entered the population register after May 1997 had an obligation to participate. Exploiting this date rule, we find that the programme substantially increased immigrants' medium-term employment prospects and earnings and decreased their dependency on social benefits.

3 Conclusions; challenges and research gaps

In the long term, changes in the population age structure will have a major impact on the supply of potential workforce. In Finland, as in many EU countries, less people are entering the labour market than are leaving it. Therefore, one future challenge lies in efforts to increase employment-related immigration. For the time being, the main results concerning research into immigration and mobility indicate that immigrants' employability is much weaker than that of Finns.

The immigrants' country of origin also plays an essential role in their labour market status. Finding employment in Finland is easiest for immigrants from Western Europe and countries nearby. In fact, immigration from these countries is often employment-related. For those having attained refugee status or asylum in Finland, employability is much more difficult.

According to various studies, employment-related mobility among the highly-educated appears to be much easier than among those without a tertiary degree. One conclusion throughout studies has been the importance of education in promoting the social integration of immigrants. It seems that education obtained in Finland provides a better guarantee of employment than education received in the country of origin.

By taking active measures to support immigrants' employment, their conditions have improved considerably. For example, language training plays an essential role. In the Finnish labour market, Finnish language skills are one condition for employment.

Only recently, research into mobility has raised interest. As a consequence of demographic development, national policy has begun more clearly to encourage employment-related mobility. Despite the current increase in unemployment in Finland, labour shortage is imminent in many fields in the years ahead. In accordance with the Government line, efforts are now being made to prolong the careers of the employed by various retirement arrangements and to improve conditions at the workplace. But at the same time, employment-related immigration must be supported. Research into employment-related immigration or emigration is, however, rather scarce.

To facilitate the social integration and advancement of employment and education of immigrants, several measures have been undertaken. They are monitored with the help of statistics although there are very few studies of their effects. The effects of vocational and other education on immigrants' social and labour market status have also not been properly

studied. Competences and formal education acquired from the country of origin as well as the need for basic and continuing education in Finland also need to be fully explored.

Compared with many western European countries, immigration to Finland is still insignificant. Similarly, the number of immigrants has remained moderate, meaning that Finland has possibly managed to integrate immigrants more easily than countries with a large immigration flow. There is, however, a lack of comparative international research into immigration policies.

Research analysing VET and employment-related mobility and, specifically, migration is almost non-existent. Therefore, groundbreaking research into the role of vocational education and training in employment-related mobility is required in order to see the bigger picture and benefit from prior know-how when analysing the character and quantity of education needs.

In Finland, research into mobility and migration has often focused on a specific geographical location. Studies examining the largest immigration area and immigration-related issues in southern Finland, near the capital city, have been relatively scarce.

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