

Quality agreements in intermediate vocational education: shift towards public value management?

Bachelor Thesis

Pim Zijlstra

First supervisor: Ben Jongbloed and Frans Kaiser

Second supervisor: Giedo Jansen

April 13, 2018

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Abbreviations

AOC: Agrarische Opleidingencentrum - agrarian education centre

BBL: Beroepsbegeleidende Leerweg - learning pathway with over 60% in practise

BOL: Beroepsopleidende Leerweg - learning pathway with between 20% and 60% in practise

FoV: Focus op vakmanschap

MBO: Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs - secondary vocational education

NPM: New Public Management

PVM: Public Value Management

QA's: Quality agreements

ROC: Regionaal Opleidingencentrum - regional education centre

TPA: Traditional Public Administration

VAVO: Voortgezet Algemeen Volwassenenonderwijs - secondary adult education

WEB: Wet Educatie en Beroepsonderwijs - Dutch law on education and vocational education

Summary

Our rapidly changing labour market demands MBO graduates of a higher quality who are more flexible (Ministerie van Onderwijs Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2017). A government plan called 'Focus op vakmanschap' implemented between 2011 and 2015 made programs shorter, better and more intense and was meant to increase the output of vocational education in the Netherlands. Output is generally defined as what is produced by an organization and is usually expressed in statistics. In vocational education this concerns statistics such as dropout rate, study success, amount of students that graduate in a particular year etc. From 2015 quality agreements between MBO colleges and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science were introduced as a new steering device meant to shift the attention to outcome: this is generally defined as the consequences and result of the output of an organization which in vocational education concerns the quality of MBO graduates and society in general. In 2015, the MBO colleges were given the opportunity to draw up a quality plan in which they were to integrate quality improvements.

Based on their quality plan, the MBO colleges received a budget from the ministry. In this thesis, three governance paradigms are used to analyze the impact of quality plans on the management of MBO colleges. Central to this thesis is the paradigm of public value management: 'public value' is a core concept in this paradigm and can be described as 'what citizens want'. The aim of this thesis is to answer the following research question: "To what extent can we observe a shift in management approach towards public value management at the ROC van Twente following the introduction of the quality agreements in vocational education in The Netherlands." Through desk research and face-to-face interviews with staff members of the "ROC van Twente", we analyzed the management and governance of the ROC van Twente before and after the introduction of the quality agreements.

The interviewees thought that, regarding the characteristics *goals* and *stakeholders*, elements of public value management are increasingly visible. This is supported by an interesting finding from the annual reports which regards the increasing role of the central student council.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Netherlands has 66 colleges providing intermediate vocational education (MBO), with currently around 492.700 students (MBO Raad, 2017). Around 22 percent of the young people in the Netherlands graduate from an MBO college and therefore these students contribute very much to the labour force in the Dutch economy (Rijksoverheid, 2015). The labour market is changing rapidly, demanding more creative, skilled and flexible workers. The Inspection of education published an education report on the year 2012-2013, stating that the quality of the MBO colleges has stayed at the same level for the past 10 years (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2013). With a changing labour market, quality of vocational education will require re-assessment. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science stated that improvement of MBO colleges is necessary. This needs to be combined with the fact that students state that they think that the supervision and guidance they receive from their institution is not sufficient to be fully prepared for the labour market and a third of the Dutch MBO students considers their course as not challenging enough (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2013). Furthermore, many courses barely meet the norms that are stated by the Inspection of Education. From 2011 to 2015, a plan from the Ministry called “Focus op vakmanschap” announced several policy initiatives towards MBO colleges (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2013). The Ministry invited MBO colleges to draw up an individual quality plan in which quality improvements were to be integrated. A quality agreement framework was introduced by the Ministry consisting of six themes that are meant to contribute to the quality of the MBO graduates. These six themes are the following:

- Intensifying Dutch language skills and numeracy (intensivering van

het taal en rekenonderwijs)

- Vocational training (beroepspraktijkvorming)
- Excellence (excellentie)
- Professional development of staff (professionalisering van de staf)
- Reducing dropout (verminderen van voortijdig schoolverlaters)
- Improvement of study success (vergroten van de studiewaarde)

Besides these themes, MBO colleges were allowed to integrate their own ambitions into their individual quality plan. In case the Ministry approves the quality plan, the MBO college receives money as an incentive to realize its plan. The idea is that providing students with a higher education quality, MBO colleges will contribute more to society and therefore will create more public value. This thesis aims to explore whether the introduction of the quality agreements are indeed followed by a shift in management approach of the ROC van Twente towards public value management.

In order to study a potential shift in the management of the ROC van Twente, three management paradigms have been considered: traditional public administration (TPA), new public management (NPM) and public value management (PVM) and they are elaborated in section three below. The PVM paradigm has been studied by various authors such as Moore (2012), Stoker (2006) and (Hartley, Alford, Knies, & Douglas, 2017). But as Hartley et al. (2017) state, there is quite some literature on the public value concepts and theories, but there is very little empirical research on the topic (Hartley, Alford, Knies Douglas, 2016). Besides, there do not seem to be inquiries that apply these paradigms to MBO colleges. This thesis could make a small contribution to filling that gap.

The objective of this thesis is to answer the following research question:

“To what extent can we observe a shift in management approach towards public value management at the ROC van Twente following the introduction of the quality agreements in vocational education in The Netherlands?”

The research question is broken down into the following four sub questions:

1. What does the vocational education (MBO) sector look like in terms of goals, history and governance?
2. What do the governance paradigms of TPA, NPM and PVM say about the governance and management of public organizations and where do they differ?
3. How can we interpret the recent developments in the national policies regarding MBO?
4. To what extent does the management and governance of the ROC van Twente institution contain elements of the TPA, NPM and PVM paradigms and how does that compare to the situation before the introduction of the quality agreements?

The main research question is an empirical one, because it can only be answered by means of doing empirical research observations. Furthermore, it is an exploratory question that does not test a hypothesis but can rather yield hypotheses constituting the basis for further explanatory research on the topic (van der Kolk, 2016). This chapter is followed by chapter 2 that describes the MBO sector, providing necessary information for this research. In chapter 3, literature study was conducted to explain the paradigms TPA, NPM and PVM and to identify three characteristics that distinguish the paradigms. In chapter 4, the methodology is discussed including the way of collecting data, operationalization and pros and cons of conducting a case study. In chapter 5, 'Focus op vakmanschap' and the quality agreements are elaborated and analyzed through the lens of TPA, NPM and PVM to identify a potential shift towards PVM. This leads to chapter 6 that analyzes whether this shift towards PVM can also be observed in the management and governance of the ROC van Twente. The conclusion connects the different chapters to highlight the relevance of this study. Furthermore, the conclusion also discusses the weak points of this study and makes suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2

The MBO sector

In this chapter the following sub-question will be answered: "What does the MBO sector look like in terms of goals, history and governance?" This question functions to give general information on the MBO sector in the Netherlands and to understand the context in which the quality agreements are introduced.

2.1 Qualifications and goals

In 1995, the Dutch government introduced legislation called the WEB (Wet educatie en beroepsonderwijs), in which is laid down that vocational education will be organized as follows: intermediate vocational education prepares students for either subsequent education or for professional practice. Vocational education is provided by three types of institutions (1) ROC: a regional education centre, (2) AOC: an agrarian education centre and (3) vocational school (vakschool): vocational education on a smaller scale. In figure 1, Dutch vocational education is put into context and highlighted in blue. Secondary schools gives access to vocational education which in turn gives access to higher vocational education and the labour market.

There are four levels of vocational education and the duration of a student's course is dependent on the course's level. Level 1 educates students to become assistant taking between half a year and a full year; Level 2 takes two to three years and provides basic vocational education; level 3 takes two to four years and provides middle vocational education and level 4 takes four years and gives access to higher vocational education (level 5) and an additional level 4 specialized training. The four levels in vocational education and their characteristics are depicted in figure 2. Furthermore, students

from every level can choose one of two possible learning tracks in vocational education. Pupils who choose 'Beroepsbegeleidende Leerweg.' (BBL) spend at least 60 per cent of their time as apprentices working for an employer. Those who choose the other option: Beroeps Opleidende Leerweg (BOL) spend relatively more time in the classroom (Nuffic, 2014).

The WEB formulated that vocational education offers three types of qualifications. The first qualification focuses on vocational skills and the second on the possibility to promote to higher vocational education. The third focuses on citizenship: improving pupils' skills to collect, assess and analyze information collected from social media, newspaper, tv etc. to enable them to form a critical opinion of their own. The first qualification is clearly visible: after the introduction of the WEB, the influence of businesses has increased. Students are more active in practice, businesses are more involved in schools by providing schools with guest lecturers from the professional field and both are combined in projects where students and businesses work together.

The various institutions can choose individually to put more emphasis on a particular qualification rather than on another, for example more emphasis on the promotion to higher vocational education and less on citizenship. The MBO council has stated to be satisfied with these three qualifications and the fact that ROC's put an emphasis on different qualifications makes them able to respond better to demands from the various stakeholders in their region.

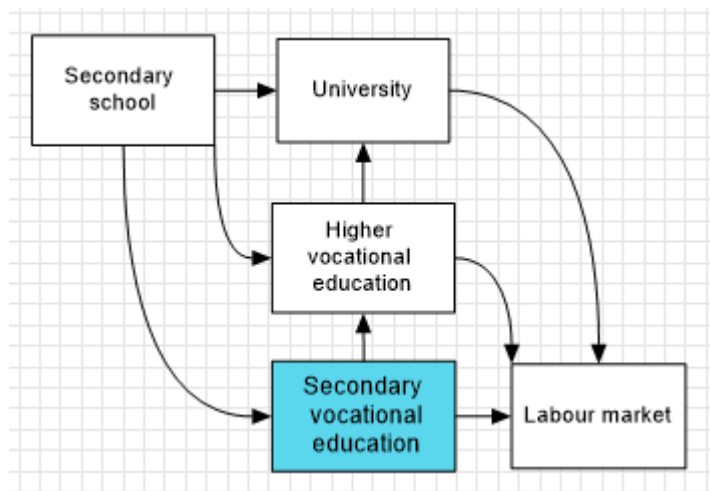


Figure 1: Dutch vocational education in context, highlighted in blue

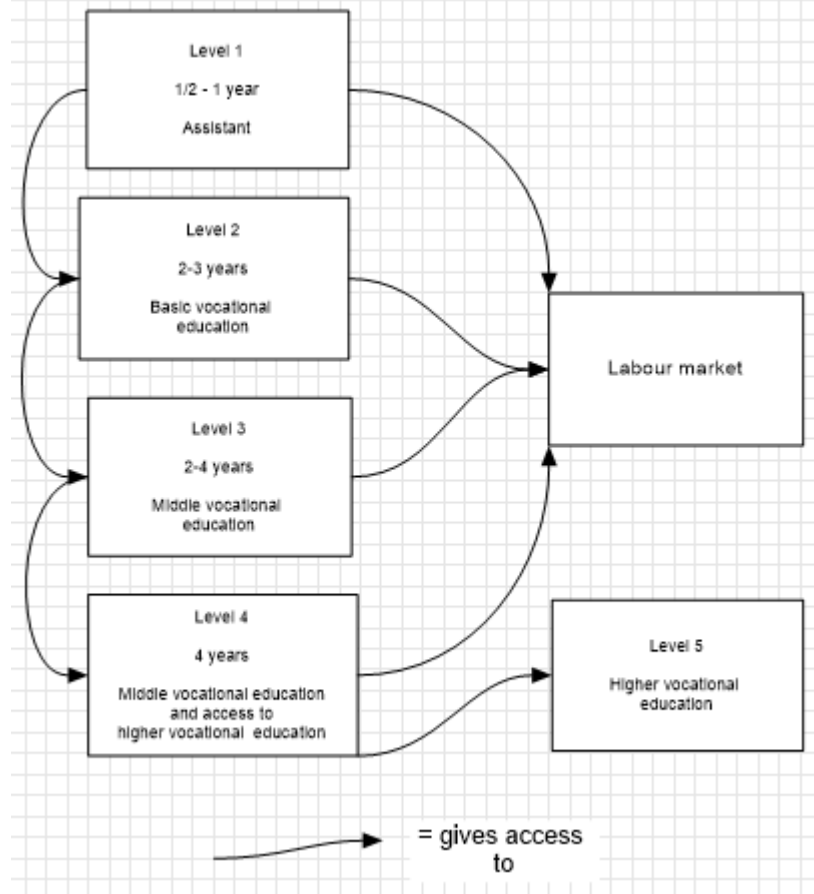


Figure 2: Four levels in Dutch vocational educational education

2.2 History

ROC and AOC institutions were formed in the 1990s as a consequence of obligatory merges between multiple vocational education schools that existed at that time. About 500 schools existed at that time providing vocational education merging in about 50 ROC's. The increased scale in organizing vocational education made it possible for the government to secure a nationwide qualification structure leading to more transparency. In addition, every individual younger than eighteen became obliged to finish at least a 2 year program in vocational education before entering the labour market. ROC's established the dual system enabling students to combine studying and working, which is referred to as the 'Beroepsbegeleinde leerweg' in vocational education. However, ROC's have to maintain a strong relationship to their region and cooperate with the world of work (employers) to respond to their demands. At the same time ROC's and their students benefit as well since the work field provides a huge amount of internships to teach students vocational skills in practice. The nationwide qualification structure increased transparency in vocational education which made businesses more willing to invest in it. Initially the idea of the ROC was that there would be one ROC established in every regional administration, making that ROC's could respond adequately to the demands of each individual region with its unique characteristics. However, in practise it appears that the work field of the same region provides internships for more than one ROC. In 2015 there were about 471.800 students in vocational education in 168 different programs, the institutions had an average of 7.350 students and there were 43 ROC's, 11 AOC's and 2 vocational schools(Rijksoverheid, 2015).

2.3 Governance

Vocational education in The Netherlands is predominantly funded by the state. In addition there are some vocational schools privately funded that offer specific skills that are not taught in ROC's or AOC's. Those schools provide qualifications that are also registered nationally and have the same status as the qualifications that pupils can obtain in ROC's and AOC's. Publicly funded vocational education is financed on a formula basis. This holds that institutions receive a yearly budget from the state based on the number of pupils and on the number of students that graduate. In addition, in 2015 ROC's got the opportunity to create a so-called quality plan in which they integrate quality agreements. After approval of their quality plan, ROC's receive an extra budget.

The most important legislative authority in vocational education is the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science with the current Minister Ingrid van Engelshoven. The Inspection of Education (Onderwijsinspectie) is part of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and functions as a supervisory body, monitoring the quality of education institutions by inspecting the institutions and publishing their findings in online reports. The MBO council (MBO Raad) acts as a branch organization looking after the general interests of all publicly funded vocational education in The Netherlands. Furthermore, the most important body of an ROC is the Executive Board. An ROC consists of an Executive Board, the MBO colleges and bodies to assist the general functioning of the institution. In addition, the Supervisory Board is independently monitoring the policy strategy and the financial status quo of the ROC. The Student Council and the Employees Council support the general functioning of an ROC and also have an influence on the decision making of an ROC (ROC van Twente, 2017). The Supervisory Board consists of between five and seven members and monitors the policy of the Executive Board, the implementation of the policy and the realization of the goals the policies intend to achieve. In addition, the Supervisory Board provides the Executive Board with advise on their policies during the whole process. The central Student Council represents all students of an ROC and has the right of consent, initiative, information and advise. It consists of at least one student from every college and looks after the interests of the students towards the Executive Board. In chapter 4, figure 4 an organizational chart can be found which gives an overview of all the internal bodies in the ROC van Twente.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science provides guidelines to steer vocational education into the direction of national interest. From 2011 until 2015 a strategy called 'focus op vakmanschap' was introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in order to increase the basic quality of vocational education in The Netherlands. As a result of 'focus op vakmanschap', quality agreements were introduced in order to shift the attention from output to outcome. In the case of vocational education, the input can be seen as the money that is invested in vocational education and output has to do with the number of graduates, dropout rate, study success etc. Outcome is focused more on the interest of the student and society in general. As can be seen in figure 3, output is the direct influence of the input, whereas the outcome is the indirect influence of the input. Where 'Focus op vakmanschap' tries to increase the output of vocational education institutions, the quality agreements are introduced after 'Focus op vakmanschap' to increase employability of vocational education students and to teach them skills that are 'future proof' and prepares them for a changing society. ROC's were given the opportunity to make their own quality plan in which the quality agreements are integrated, and these elements would shift the attention towards the quality of education rather than the quantitative output.



Figure 3

This chapter aimed to provide information about the MBO sector in order to roughly understand the context in which this study is conducted. The following sub-question has been answered: "What does the MBO sector look like in terms of goals, history and governance?" This chapter is followed by chapter 3 that elaborates the three paradigms of TPA, NPM and PVM, forming the theoretical framework for this thesis. Subsequently, in chapter 3 the three paradigms will be distinguished by three key characteristics.

Chapter 3

The paradigms TPA, NPM and PVM

The theoretical framework that is used in this thesis is centered around three management paradigms that are frequently discussed in academic literature, these are traditional public administration (TPA) new public management (NPM) and public value management (PVM). In this thesis, the individual quality plan drawn up by the ROC van Twente in 2015, the yearly reports of the ROC van Twente will be closely examined and interviews with several stakeholders will be conducted. Since the ministry of education, culture and science wants to focus more on the quality of education rather than meeting targets, there can be elements of public value management expected in the quality agreements. Hence, the research will focus on whether there are more characteristics of PVM visible in the situation after the introduction of the quality agreements compared to the situation before the introduction of the quality agreements. In this chapter the following sub question will be answered: "What do the TPA, NPM and PVM paradigms say about the governance and management of public organizations and where do they differ?"

3.1 TPA

The TPA paradigm is a bureaucracy-oriented governance approach, which strongly draws from the Weberian perception of the world (Stoker, 2006). It is based on the principles of bureaucratic hierarchy, planning, centralization, direct control and self-sufficiency (Rahman, Liberman, Giedraitis, & Akhter, 2013). Three institutions are seen as essential in providing public

services: political parties who can provide political leaders, political leaders as representatives of the people and bureaucracy which carries out the political instructions and checks whether everything is done according to procedures. TPA gives an answer to dealing with the increasing demands of mass society on the state on topics such as education by standardizing administrative responses (Stoker, 2006). In TPA, politicians are key players and maintaining rules and procedures is their main priority. As a reaction on TPA, the NPM paradigm emerged that expressed criticism towards TPA.

3.2 NPM

The NPM paradigm is a market-oriented governance approach that oversees the provision of public services by several public service providers as opposed to the monopolistic form of TPA. The presence of more than one public service provider brings about competition in the public sector and this is expected to raise efficiency (O'Flynn, 2007). NPM is critical towards TPA arguing that TPA is unresponsive to direct public demands, inefficient because there is no form of competition and that it leads to a bureaucracy that is too powerful and self-interested (O'Flynn, 2007). Public managers are in NPM key players that have to define and meet targets set by public authorities. Politicians are there to set targets and supervise, but they let the managers fully free to determine the ways in which they want to achieve the targets (Stoker, 2006). Accountability is achieved through the targets that are set by elected officials. Managers of the public service providers are held accountable by the elected officials to deliver these targets. The key critique on NPM is the idea that the citizen is reduced to being a consumer. Related to that notion, the main interest of the public service providers is not to chase political goals and to best meet the needs of individuals, but to simply meet their targets. Furthermore, the distance between elected officials and the public becomes larger because there are organizations in between that operate on a contract basis making the political control weaker. This is the case because the state is not directly providing the public services, but rather supervising organizations that deliver the services. These organizations are however for some part allowed to decide for themselves how to deliver the services (Stoker, 2006).

3.3 PVM

The paradigm of PVM sees the generation of public value as a central concept - as something that can only be defined and evaluated through a dialogue between the relevant stakeholders involved in the provision and consumption of the public service in question (Stoker, 2006). This dialogue allows the public service provider to get a better feeling for ‘what citizens want’. Public value management tries to create a compromise between what citizens want and what public service providers can provide within the set objectives and possibilities (Karré & van Montfort, 2011). The PVM paradigm represents a shift away from a focus on results and efficiency and towards broader social and governmental goals (O’Flynn, 2007). In PVM the influence of managers is lower than in NPM, but they still play an important role because they steer and ensure an effective dialogue between all stakeholders that are relevant. Politics keeps the oversight but goals are set together with relevant stakeholders on both the side of the service provider and the side of the citizens, assuring that players can hold each other accountable. PVM has some problematic features. The fact that managers that are not elected are deciding to some extent on what public services to deliver and how, may produce some legitimacy problems. There is a risk that the key stakeholders, such as managers, politicians, business partners and representatives of citizens (such as neighborhood leaders, patient organizations, community representatives) will form a small, closed group that decides what will be produced instead of the elected officials who actually have the legitimate authority to do so (Stoker, 2006). Furthermore, critics of the PVM paradigm feel that it might not be result-oriented enough, and that it overemphasises dialogue and interaction. Stoker (2006) explains that the PVM paradigm is not clear on how to ensure accountability, since decisions are not made by politicians who can be held to account, but rather by other stakeholders such as managers, business partners and neighborhood leaders. Table 1 gives an overview of the three paradigms and the three key characteristics that were discussed in this section.

3.4 Differences on key characteristics

	TPA	NPM	PVM
Goals	Inputs provided by politics and public services monitored by bureaucracy	Achieving targets set by politicians, assuring responsiveness and efficiency	Delivering public value
Key stakeholders and communication	Civil servants checking rules procedures and legitimacy	Vertical relationship between political leaders to set targets and managers as key players to achieve targets	Horizontal relationship between managers, politicians, business partners and citizen representatives learning from each other
Reward/evaluation	Competition between elected officials makes that the public service provider is held accountable for their actions	Targets and incentives defined in contracts drive managers to increase efficiency and contracts are subject to evaluation	Through peer review and self-evaluation

Table 1: The three paradigms and their characteristics

This chapter has explained the theoretical framework that is used in order to conduct this research. The following sub question has been answered: "What do the TPA, NPM and PVM paradigms say about the governance and management of public organizations and where do they differ?" This chapter will be followed by the methodology which explains how this study is conducted, why it is conducted in this way and how the relevant concepts are operationalized.

Chapter 4

Methodology

The methodology will explain what methods are used to conduct this study and why those methods are chosen. The sub-questions that were answered in this thesis will be discussed as well as the data that was used in order to do so. Furthermore, the case study as research method will be discussed, the respondents of the interviews will be mentioned and the operationalization will be explained.

4.1 Data collection

Chapter 2 and 3 provided necessary information for this thesis and pointed out the relevance of this study. Chapter 2 described the goals and qualifications, history and governance where government websites and articles by research institutions were used. Chapter 3 described the theoretical framework for this thesis, which was derived from scientific literature. Furthermore, essentially two developments are studied in this thesis, described in chapter 5 and 6: the recent development of national policies in Dutch vocational education and the development of the management approach and governance of the ROC van Twente.

The recent development of national policies have been studied by analyzing two policy documents. The first policy document is 'Focus op vakmanschap' and the second document contains the quality agreements. The development of the management approach and governance of the ROC van Twente has been studied using input from various data. The quality plan drawn up by the ROC van Twente has been analyzed and interviews have been conducted with several directors in the ROC van Twente as well as

several policy makers of the ROC van Twente and a member of the Student Council of the ROC van Twente. The interviewees were sent a list of questions that were to be asked during the interview. These are questions that give an indication of the focus of the management of the ROC van Twente, the stakeholders involved, the communication between those stakeholders and the way of evaluating results in the ROC van Twente. The interview questions can be found in the appendix. The interviewees were all promised that their names will not be mentioned here, but they are informed that their function or position in the ROC van Twente will be mentioned. The aim was to collect information that will make it possible to say something about a possible shift in management approach in the ROC van Twente. The quality agreements were introduced in 2015 and are being implemented until 2018. Therefore, annual reports from before 2015 have been compared to annual reports from after 2015 and interviews have provided additional retrospective insights about what has changed after the introduction of the quality agreements.

4.2 Case study

ROC van Twente was chosen as case because it is one of the ROC institutions that drew up a quality plan, but obviously also for convenience: it is very nearby to where I study myself. MBO colleges in The Netherlands are the population and a case study of the ROC van Twente has been conducted. The advantage of doing a case study is that it gives more in depth information, but the downside is that it is not possible to make inferences on the population. To put it in methodological terms: the external validity is low. Doing this type of research would also be interesting using more institutions, but this is beyond the scope and feasibility of this bachelor thesis. Doing the research this way delivers a lot of information in the limited time that is available, from a variety of sources. This thesis may serve as a pilot study that can yield hypotheses for explanatory research in the future.

4.3 Respondents

The highest governing body of the ROC van Twente is the Executive Board consisting of two members. After contacting these members, they have responded and pointed out that they were too busy to be able to schedule

an interview in this short period of time. Furthermore, the institution is divided in 11 MBO colleges all providing different types of courses (such as colleges for health, infrastructure, engineering etc.). These MBO colleges all have their own director working on the basis of a mandate from the Executive Board. The directors of the MBO colleges have been contacted and several of them were able to schedule an interview for this thesis. The Student Council is a body which represents all students of the ROC van Twente, and consists of at least one student of every MBO college. One student from the Student Council has been interviewed. From the 11 directors of the MBO colleges, 4 directors have responded and were willing to do an interview which is a good representation of the management of the ROC van Twente. In total, 3 policy makers were interviewed because of their involvement with the quality plan and the general strategy of the ROC van Twente. Together with the member of the Student Council this makes a total of 8 interviews conducted with a variety of players. The ROC van Twente has locations in Enschede, Hengelo, Almelo, Rijssen, Holten and Vroomshoop and interviews have been conducted in Enschede, Hengelo and Almelo. Employers of MBO graduates were not interviewed due to a limited time, but their views have been covered indirectly through the interviews with the other stakeholders.

4.4 Operationalization

The operationalization of TPA, NPM and PVM is based on their key characteristics that have been identified in the previous section: first column of table 1. These characteristics have been largely based on Stoker's and O'Flynn's conceptualizations of TPA, NPM and PVM, and Moore's conceptualization of public value. Table 1 discusses these characteristics very theoretical without referring to a specific sector. Here, the table will be discussed again, but now more specifically for the MBO sector.

In TPA, the Dutch second chamber would provide input for the strategy of the Executive Boards of ROC's and AOC's and the MBO institutions have to follow these guidelines, deciding very little themselves. The Inspection of Education and the Supervisory Board would play a big role and would extensively check whether ROC's and AOC's comply with the guidelines provided the Ministry. In NPM, the Ministry would conclude contracts with ROC's and AOC's including targets for which the Executive Board

and the directors of the MBO colleges are responsible to achieve. In return for meeting targets, ROC's and AOC's would receive money as an incentive for performance. NPM would also include competition between ROC's and AOC's because contracts could for example contain agreements stating for example: the better a school's study success, the more money it receives from the Ministry. PVM would include a more bottom-up approach where the Executive Boards of ROC's and AOC's would take more initiative in deciding on their strategy, in partnership with the Ministry, firms in their region and the municipality council or citizen representatives. The partners would pursue a common goal, which improving the quality of the skills of MBO graduates and provide the region with graduates that are adequately trained.

1. Managerial goals

This characteristic examines whether the management of the ROC van Twente focuses on bureaucratic inputs, performance or on public value. A strong bureaucratic oversight will be identified by looking at the extent to which there is attention for compliance, rules and procedures. Whether the management of the ROC van Twente emphasizes performance will be identified by looking at the extent to which it focuses primarily on efficiency and targets such as a low dropout rate and study tempo instead of e.g. goals that are closer to what students want. A focus on public value by the management will be identified by examining how much attention there is for what students actually want, for instance the quality of the education and satisfaction of the students as expressed through student surveys, but also satisfaction of the personnel. The different management goals can also be seen in the first row of table 1.

2. Key stakeholders and communication

The various stakeholders and their relationships and influence on management decisions will be examined. Figure 3 displays the organizational chart of the ROC van Twente and the stakeholder that is referred to will be between brackets. These stakeholders are the Executive Board (College van Bestuur), the Supervisory Board (Raad van Toezicht), the Student Council (Centrale Deelnemersraad), the Employees Council (Ondernemingsraad) and the directors of the eleven MBO colleges. Furthermore, external stakeholders such as businesses, employers and government bodies such as the education inspection and the MBO council will not be approached on this matter due to limited available time, but still their influence will be examined through interviews with the directors of the ROC van Twente. As can be seen in the middle row of table 2, a strong influence of the Supervisory

Board and government inspection might indicate a TPA kind of management approach. A strong influence of the managers such as the Executive Board and the directors of the MBO colleges might indicate an NPM kind of management approach. Last of all, a strong influence of the Student Council, the Employees Council and businesses might indicate a shift towards a PVM kind of management approach. Especially the latter stakeholders mentioned will be examined. If the opinions of the Student Council, Employees Council and businesses are taken more into account in the choice of goals and setting goals, it will be more likely that the hypothesis can (for some part) be accepted.

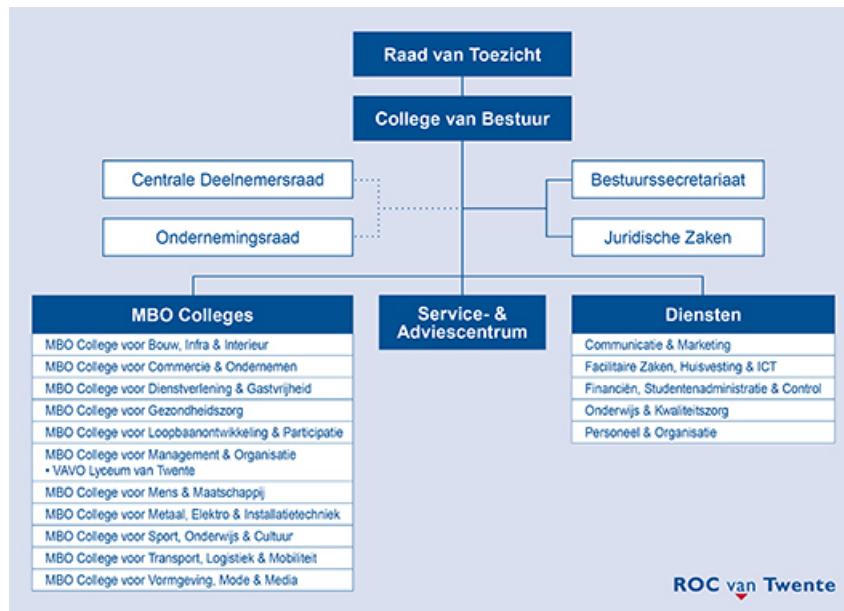


Figure 4: Organizational chart ROC van Twente

3. Rewards/Evaluation

This characteristic examines what is evaluated during meetings of the management and what type of consequences are connected to that. In TPA the Executive Board would typically focus on the extent to which the MBO colleges comply to rules and procedures. The Executive Board can also punish or reward the MBO colleges on the basis of their performance, which could indicate an NPM kind of management approach. Those punishments and rewards are mostly in terms of money, where the amount of money the Executive Board distributes to the ROC institution depends on the college's performance. Last of all, the Executive Board could include the colleges,

Student Council and potential other stakeholders to reflect on what is going wrong in the courses and learn from the mistakes that might have been made. This learning approach to evaluation could indicate a PVM kind of management approach. The different ways of evaluating in the three paradigms can also be seen in the last row of table 2. The quality plan of the ROC van Twente has been examined in the light of these three paradigms and on that basis interview questions have been developed to interview the mentioned stakeholders: directors of the MBO colleges, policy makers and a member of the Student Council of the ROC van Twente.

Chapter 5

Recent developments in the national policies regarding MBO

In this chapter recent development of national policies is studied and the theory is used to interpret this development. In section 5.1, the recent developments of national policies are explained in a factual, descriptive manner. Section 5.2 subsequently interprets this development with the use of the paradigms of TPA, NPM and PVM. The following sub question will be answered in this chapter: "How can we interpret recent developments in the national policies regarding MBO?"

5.1 The road towards quality agreements

The most important developments of recent years are consequences of two policy plans consecutively introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. These are 'Focus op vakmanschap' implemented in the period 2011-2015 and the Quality Agreements implemented in the period 2015-2018. The most important aspects of the two plans are laid down in the first section of this chapter. The plans will be analyzed through the lens of the paradigms of TPA, NPM and PVM in the second section of this chapter.

5.1.1 'Focus op vakmanschap' (2011-2015)

From 2011 to 2015 a government policy called 'Focus op vakmanschap' was implemented consisting of a set of initiatives to increase the quality of voca-

tional education. These initiatives were mainly focused on improving quantitative indicators of the quality of the education programs such as dropout rate and study success (Ministerie van Onderwijs Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2017). The details of the above mentioned policy plan can be found in the appendix, annex I. In section 2 measures are mentioned to make the programs provided by ROC's shorter and more intense. Programs with level 4 were shortened from 4 years to 3 years and the amount of hours that students spend in the classroom instead of in their internship was increased. Furthermore it states that teachers would get extra training to increase their competences and the teachers will be held more accountable for the quality of their education. In addition, the qualification structure was simplified and an authority was appointed to monitor the relationship between the institutions and businesses. Section 3 follows stating that qualification 1 would become the only level that does not require prior education certificates. An interesting point follows in section 5, which states that the Ministry will make money available to reward good performance and increase monitoring of performances of the various institutions (Ministerie van Onderwijs Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2017).

In vocational education, The measures that are taken as a result of 'Focus op vakmanschap' concern the goals of vocational education and are focused on increasing output. In this context output is an indicator of the quality of the education measured on aspects that can be measured quantitatively such as drop out rate and study success. pointing towards the NPM way of steering public institutions.

Many pupils that are still in high school intend to go to higher vocational education, which can be done via either vocational education or via 2 extra years of high school. In section 2 of 'Focus op vakmanschap' is stated that the aim is to make the education route via vocational education more competitive in order to make it more attractive than the route via high school. This competition between public institutions is also an element belonging to the NPM paradigm. Section 3 states that a binding recommendation on continuation of studies will be introduced for level 1. This binding recommendation will oblige students of the lowest qualification of vocational education have to perform as compensation for their student grant. Furthermore, the section holds that the adult education ('vavo') will fall under the authority of the national government and only students under the age of 30 years will be applicable. Section 4 concludes with stating that sharper agreements will be made between the Ministry of Education, Culture and

Science and the ROC's about the price and quality of education. Furthermore, a digital counter is established to report absenteeism. In addition studies on the satisfaction of students, employees and businesses are conducted and the supervision of supervisory boards of ROC's is strengthened as compensation for less supervision of the MBO council.

5.1.2 Quality agreements (2015-2018)

In 2015, 'Focus op vakmanschap' was succeeded by the Quality Agreements that would be implemented in period 2015-2018. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science gave ROC's the opportunity to create a quality plan in which these quality agreements had to be integrated. The quality agreements are therefore integrated into the quality plans of each ROC that made a request for extra financial support. The quality agreements consist of six themes:

- Intensifying Dutch language skills and numeracy (intensivering van het taal en rekenonderwijs)
- Vocational training (beroepspraktijkvorming)
- Excellence (excellentie)
- Professional development (professionalisering van de staf)
- Reducing dropout (verminderen van voortijdig schoolverlaters)
- Improvement of study success (vergroten van de studiewaarde)

The Dutch government spends around 4,3 billion euro on vocational education annually. For the quality agreements a total amount of 400 million euro is made available by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science for MBO colleges with a quality plan. This is about 10% of the total amount of money spent on vocational education in the Netherlands. The total budget consists of an investment budget and a result-based budget. The investment budget accounts for 189 million euro and is invested during the period 2015-2018 distributed every first of January to the colleges. The volume of an ROC's investment budget is basically the same every year but it can vary a bit, just like the regular budget, dependent on the number of student registered in the ROC. The result-based budget accounts for 211 million euro and is distributed during this period to MBO colleges that achieve an improvement of results or to MBO colleges that already have excellent

results and manage to keep it that way. The topics dropout rate, study success and vocational training are chosen as indicator for 'result' because they can be measured most unequivocally (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2013). The exact amount differs per year and this can be found in the appendix. For the result-based budget a distribution model is used. This model means that in case an ROC does not achieve the results that were expected, a part of their result-based budget will be distributed among the other ROC's that qualify for a result-based budget.

The two plans, 'Focus op vakmanschap' (2011-2015) and the quality agreements (2015-2018), are important developments in the MBO sector during the past years. In the following section, the theoretical framework introduced in chapter 3 will be used to analyze the two plans in order to find out whether we can detect towards which paradigm these developments are moving in Dutch vocational education. In chapter 6, the internal governance and management approach of the ROC van Twente will be specifically analyzed using the interviews, annual reports and the individual quality plan that the ROC van Twente developed.

5.2 Interpretation of developments in light of TPA, NPM and PVM

The two government interventions that were mentioned in the previous section, 'Focus op vakmanschap' and the quality agreements, characterize the recent developments of national policies regarding MBO. When analyzing these two plans, while keeping the three paradigms that are explained in chapter 3 in mind, a paradigm shift might be observed. As explained in chapter 3, the three paradigms are in this thesis distinguished on the basis of three characteristics: goals, stakeholders and evaluation.

5.2.1 'Focus op vakmanschap' (2011-2015)

'Focus op vakmanschap' aims to make the education programs that the ROC's provide shorter and more intense. These measures are very focused on efficiency and increasing output. To intensify programs means that the ROC institutions are obliged to provide more hours for the pupils to spend in the classroom, and that teachers monitor the study progress of pupils. The intensification of programs is expected to increase study progress and makes it less likely that students will drop out. Shortening of programs holds that some programs are reduced from 4 years to 3 years, making it more attractive for students to enroll and it makes it less likely that they will drop out. In essence these measures are meant to reduce dropout rate, increase study success and increase the amount of students enrolling in an MBO institution. In other words, they are meant to improve the output of the institutions rather than the outcome. These elements of 'Focus op vakmanschap' indicate an NPM way of steering public institutions.

5.2.2 Quality agreements (2015-2018)

The quality agreements shift the attention from an output based system to the quality of education. As an example, the quality plan of the ROC van Twente states that by focusing on output in the last couple of years, the quality of the education has not received enough attention. The quality agreements are an attempt to correct this. 'Career guidance' is one of the important aspects of the quality agreements. Whereas 'Focus op vakmanschap' was focusing on the study success, the quality agreements focus on study career guidance in the broad sense to help students think about what they want to do after their program. The quality agreements obliged ROC's to provide every student with a study career mentor. This means that the

ROC's are expected to not only try to increase the output, but also the outcome by helping students think about their career. Furthermore, 'Excellence' as one of the themes of the quality agreements is based on projects in which pupils that have a special skill get the opportunity to do a project outside of school hours. This has no particular influence on the output of the institution, but it helps the student achieve something valuable, often also together with businesses, from which he/she and society can profit

5.2.3 Conclusion

In this chapter the following research question has been answered: "How can we interpret recent developments in the national policies regarding MBO?". There are quite some elements where the quality agreements as successor of 'Focus op vakmanschap' shifted the attention from quantitative measurements to qualitative measurements such as career guidance and connections with businesses. On the basis of two of the three characteristics that distinguish the three paradigms, 'goals' and 'key stakeholders and communication', one could observe a potential shift towards public value management. Although the quality agreements show some elements that regard to optimization of the output, the main focus lies on the quality of education and the development of pupils, hence on outcome such as reducing dropout. But in addition it holds some elements that are more focusing on the quality of the education and development of pupils. 'Excellence' as one of the themes of the quality agreements has been pointed out as well to be an indicator of a PVM way of steering. 'Focus op vakmanschap' and the quality agreements interpreted in light of TPA, NPM and PVM is depicted in table 2 below.

		<i>TPA</i>	<i>NPM</i>	<i>PVM</i>
<i>Focus op vakmanschap</i>	Goals		X	
	Stakeholders	X		
	Evaluation		X	
<i>Quality agreements</i>	Goals			X
	Stakeholders			X
	Evaluation		X	

Table 2: FoV and the QA's in light of TPA, NPM and PVM

To assess more deeply whether this shift towards attention for quality of education and development of students also holds in practice, one particular case has been studied: the ROC van Twente. We have collected empirical material from interviews, annual reports and the quality plan of the ROC van Twente. In chapter 6 the development of the management approach and governance of the ROC van Twente will be discussed.

Chapter 6

The management and governance of the ROC van Twente

6.1 Introduction

The case of the ROC van Twente was studied to assess what the policy framework discussed in chapter 5 implies for the management practice of this particular case. A lot of empirical data for this inquiry has been collected by conducting interviews with several important players in the ROC van Twente. A number of directors of individual MBO colleges within the ROC van Twente, policy makers and a member of the student council of the ROC van Twente have been interviewed. They were asked to what extent they think that the quality plan of the ROC van Twente was followed by a different way of managing the institution. The most relevant statements of these interviewees will be mentioned in this chapter. Three characteristics of 'way of managing' were identified in chapter 3 from relevant literature to produce interview questions. The quality plan of the ROC van Twente itself is a very important document to identify characteristics of the three paradigms and it formed the basis for the interview questions. In addition, the yearly reports of the ROC van Twente from before 2015 were compared to those from after 2015 for the same reason. These data are combined in this chapter to compare the situation from before the introduction of the quality plan to after the introduction. On that basis, the final and most important sub question will be answered at the end of this chapter: "To what extent does the management and governance of the ROC van Twente institution

contain elements of the TPA, NPM and PVM paradigms and how does that compare to the situation before the introduction of the quality agreements?” In the appendix the protocol can be found that was used in order to guide the interviews and collect relevant information. The quality plan of the ROC van Twente integrates the quality agreements with their own ambitions to create a strategy for the ROC van Twente for the period 2015-2018.

6.2 Interviews

Due to promised anonymity of the interviewees, the interviewees will be referred to using codes. People of three different types of functions in the ROC van Twente were interviewed: directors of the MBO colleges of the ROC van Twente, policy advisers and a member of the central student council (student representative). Directors of MBO colleges of the ROC van Twente will be referred to as D1, D2, D3, D4 and D5, the policy advisers as PA1 and PA2 and the member of the student council as SR1.

6.2.1 Goals

The first interviewee (D1) mentions that the ROC’s quality plan was put together with a lot of input from teachers and their team managers. The aim of the executive board was to make teachers think about, while providing input for the quality plan, the quality of education other than in terms of intensifying, shortening and output. This output directed approach is seen as commercialization of education, while the executive board wanted that the quality plan made the teachers’ attention shift towards pedagogy, didactic, use of internships, use of blended learning, and other outcome directed aspects of education. Furthermore he states that the quality plan has a theme called ‘career and orientation’ which has received a lot more attention in the past couple of years instead of merely study progress. Every pupil has been assigned a teacher as career guide, and these teachers have a certificate in order to do so. This shifts the attention towards the student: before the introduction of the quality plan there was more focus on the study progress, but after the introduction students are helped to think about more than only their current program. However, he adds that the increasing attention to career guidance, pedagogy, didactic, and other outcome directed themes is supplementary to the output related matters rather than a substitute. With the theory of chapter 3 in mind, a lot of elements of PVM can be found, but they do not replace elements of NPM per se.

Concerning the use of technology in education: this has increased to make education more flexible and teach students 21st century skills, but it is hard to say whether this is an influence of the quality plan because this is also a development that is occurring in society in general. Furthermore, the ministry of education, culture and science wants an increase of nationwide standards concerning the exams to guarantee a certain standard of quality. The increase of nationwide standards can be seen as a TPA element because it increases bureaucratic oversight from the central government, which has increased after the introduction of the quality plan. D1 also states that there are indeed sector-wide standards. These are a consequence of the quality plan and are meant to enable the ROC to show the ministry and the MBO council that the money they received for the quality plan is well spent. In other words, the ministry wants to see results in the exchange for the money that the ROC received for their plan. This is a clear example of an NPM element.

PA1 refers to an interview conducted with two policy advisers at the same time. One of the interviewees explained that 'Focus op vakmanschap' was very focused on effectiveness and shortening of programs. He states that there was a lot of attention to effectiveness without thinking about the qualities that a student should obtain. As a reaction to this, the quality agreements came in the picture. These led the ROC van Twente to stop focusing on making the programs more effective to look broader to pedagogy and teaching methods.

This view is shared by D2 who states that, although this is not directly related to the quality plan per se, the ROC van Twente is increasingly looking at how to teach students general skills that give them a sustainable position in the labour market. He states that there is indeed a shift where students have to make themselves capable of changing a position in the labour market using their '21st century skills'. This is a clear example of development towards PVM in practice.

PA2 has noticed the same developments in more informal settings. She agrees with the statement that the quality plan made the various colleges of the ROC van Twente think more about how to increase the quality of education and skills in terms of pedagogy and didactic approaches. This interview serves as confirmation that this is at least to some extent also implemented in the ROC van Twente. She also states that, as she notices in informal conversations among the teachers, intensifying and shortening

of programs has retreated into the background.

In the fifth interview, D3 states that he thinks that the management of the ROC van Twente and the department of education and quality care of the ROC van Twente is predominantly concerned with meeting formal targets for the inspectorate and not with the creation of the best education for the students. He mentions as well that the extent to which the ROC van Twente monitors its progress and all formal requirements concerning exams has increased due to the quality agreements. This is again a consequence of the fact that the ROC van Twente has to justify the way it spends the money received for the quality plan. Furthermore he states that teachers have broadened their attention towards the student by also looking at the general development of the student instead of only their subject in particular.

A different view on this was held by D4 who states that the goals have not changed in general terms: the goal has always been to provide the best education as possible. The quality plan does change the goals within the college, but at the same time it hinders him on some aspects. The focus on '21st century skills' has increased as well. Furthermore, the interviewee explains that the ROC van Twente is one of the largest ROC's in the Netherlands making it harder to convince everyone in the organization to work towards a common goal. The quality agreements helped in this, and D4 thinks that this is due to the fact that the ROC van Twente has risen a lot in the ranking list of best ROC's in the Netherlands the recent years.

Something along the line of these thoughts are shared by D5 who states that her way and process of management has not changed since the quality plan, but it has helped her to establish priorities within her policy plan. The themes in the quality plan are already a part of her general college plan, but it has helped to prioritize some aspects where ambitions need to be met, such as examination. Furthermore, in her college they have always put the welfare of the student above targets and output, that is also a characteristic of their college and the quality plan has not had influence on that. In addition, it also helps her to convince the teams that work for her to prioritize on some themes by mentioning the quality plan, especially on themes where there is some resistance such as educative technology. She thinks that her college was already ahead on the ROC van Twente in general on the aspect of having attention for the student as an individual. Therefore, the quality plan has not had a large influence. But still, the the themes described in the quality plan are indeed developments that are happening in the their

college. Therefore this could, although not as a consequence of the quality plan per se, be an indicator of a trend towards PVM.

The last interview was conducted with SR1. She states that she thinks a lot has changed over the past concerning the role of the central student council in the ROC van Twente. The relationship between the student and teacher has become less hierarchical and the students are taken more seriously. The central student council receives emails from students with issues students cope with or ideas students for initiates. The central student council decides on which one they consider to be the most important and brings it forward to the executive board.

6.2.2 Key stakeholders and communication

D1 mentions that the introduction of the quality plan brought about the establishment of lots of projects in which businesses are involved more than before the quality plan was introduced. All these projects can be found in the last section of the quality plan. An example of how businesses are increasingly involved is a visiting lecturer from the work field teaching pupils as part of such a project. Furthermore he explains that in the career guidance, mentioned in the previous paragraph, students also have a guide during their internship in practise. This also increases the influence and involvement of businesses in the education of the ROC van Twente. Furthermore, students are increasingly involved because due to the quality plan, the youth organization for vocational education (JOB) conducts a survey every two years among students on topics of education. The executive board uses this in their policy plan. In addition, a theme called 'excellence' in the quality plan is meant to challenge talented students to extra assignments in which businesses are also involved. D1 talks about the involvement of businesses in the vocational education, where the ROC is very much in favour of the idea that students take their exams in their internships under supervision of the businesses, but since the government is so focused on monitoring the quality of the exams that most businesses were not willing to cooperate anymore. Ever since, the exams are regularly conducted in the schools which can be seen as a TPA element.

In the second interview is stated that the quality plan brought about an increasing involvement of businesses to the curriculum. An example that is given: which part does a pupil learn in school and which part does he or she learn in class and in which sequence. Furthermore, the quality plan has

strongly increased the dialogue with the business sector according to PA1. PA1 also mentions the JOB survey, where they indeed want a stronger input from the student to make better decisions. That the dialogue with businesses has increased since the introduction of the quality plan is also the view of PA2. While she thinks that the quality plan has indeed stimulated this dialogue, she does not want to state that it is fully the consequence of it and other factors might have played a role as well.

On the other hand, D3 states that he does not think that the relationships with businesses has changed since the introduction of the quality plan. He does think however that the extent to which the management of colleges think about how external stakeholders can contribute to exams has increased since the quality plan was introduced. Furthermore he does not think that the extent to which students are involved has increased. Another interesting point is mentioned by D4 who states that in recent years the setup of the classroom has changed and has become more interactive, where the learning process has become less hierarchical and the student can increasingly decide on what kind of content is taught and in what way. Through the increase of ICT-assisted education, students are more involved both in education content and in planning schedules, especially after the introduction of the quality plan according to D4. He agrees with many of the other interviewees on the notion that businesses are increasingly involved as a result of the quality plan, differently for every theme, but in general it has increased according to D4.

The last but one interviewee discerns herself because she thinks that also on the aspect of the involvement of stakeholders, the quality plan has not brought about much change according to D5. The plan of improving internships that came from the quality plan was already a part of the general policy plan of her college. She thinks that the quality plan indeed reflects current developments and helps to bring a focus on some aspects and to make everyone commit to the same goals, but it has not brought forward new ambitions.

The view of a student on this point is of course interesting. SR1 feels that the extent to which students have a connection with businesses strongly differs between the various colleges. She does think that it has increased in general, but she states that she thinks it might be her own perspective on the matter.

6.2.3 Evaluation

D1 mentions that executive boards of ROC's in general used to steer on quantitative measures: these are output related matters such as dropout rate, study success etc. But in the last couple of years this has shifted towards qualitative measures, where the relationship between the colleges and the executive board is more based on trust rather than on statistics. There is an increase in dialogue between the mentioned stakeholders, and the relationship has become less hierarchical. The director states that he really thinks that this is a consequence of the quality plan.

An important point mentioned by the PA1 has to do with the internships. This is a theme for which a separate plan was made connected to a result-based budget. This is a clear example of an NPM element: targets need to be met in order for the ROC van Twente to receive money. Evaluation is done by sanctions and reward in monetary terms, which is said to be the result of the quality plan. However, a PVM element was mentioned as well: as a result of the quality plan, the ROC van Twente organizes an extra yearly evaluation to assess the opinion of the students. This development can be seen in more themes of the quality plan: there is a strong increase in monitoring progress in the ROC van Twente to justify the money it received for that plan.

D2 mentions an interesting point as well. The MBO colleges indeed have to increasingly monitor their progress to justify the money they receive concerning the quality plan and the themes within that plan. But at the same time, they have gotten more autonomy to decide for themselves how that money is spent, as long as they can justify these decisions afterwards. This also indicates that there more trust from the executive board towards the colleges. On the other hand, D3 thinks that the aspect of evaluation has not changed in recent years. It is still the same, both between the executive board and him and between him and the education teams and teachers working below him.

Furthermore, D4 states that evaluation has changed in the sense that the quality agreements brought about a common agenda. This makes that directors are increasingly responsible for the success of the ROC in general. This means that the executive board are in some sense more strict in meeting the agreements that were made in the quality agreements. This view is shared by D5 who states that the extent to which directors

have to justify their choices concerning the themes from the quality plan has increased towards the executive board. This obviously has to do with the great sum of money they received for that quality plan, and the ministry wants to see results in return. SR1 does think that there is an increase in the extent to which the executive board listens to the central student council.

6.2.4 Conclusions

The statements to which the interviews were exposed were assessed on an ordinal scale, as depicted in figure 5. A ++ typically represents that an interviewee thinks that there are a lot of PVM elements regarding a particular characteristic present and that these developments are also due to the introduction of the quality plan. A + typically means the interviewee thinks that there are indeed a lot of PVM elements regarding a particular characteristic present due to the introduction of the quality plan, but these elements do not necessarily replace the NPM elements. A +/- typically represents an interviewee who thinks that there are a lot PVM elements regarding a particular characteristic visible in the management of the ROC colleges, but these would also have been there without the introduction of the quality plan. A - sends mixed signals: certain elements are directed towards PVM and other elements are directed towards NPM or TPA. A – means that the interviewee thinks the quality plan might have an influence on the management and governance of the ROC van Twente, but these are not developments with a PVM character.

<u>Interviewees</u>	Goals ¹	Stakeholders ²	Evaluation ³
D1	+	+	++
PA1	+	+	-
D2	+/-	+	-
PA2	+	+/-	-
D3	--	--	--
D4	+/-	+	-
D5	+/-	+/-	-
SR1	+/-	+/-	+/-

¹To what extent do you think the quality plan of the ROC van Twente was followed by more focus on the student and less on quantitative measures such as dropout rate and study success?

²To what extent do you think stakeholders such as students, teachers and Businesses are more involved in strategic decision making of the ROC van Twente after the introduction of the quality plan

³To what extent do you think the relationship between the executive Board and the MBO colleges has become less hierarchical and more based On dialogue after the introduction of the quality plan.

Figure 5: Interviews

As can be seen in figure 5, interviewees generally thought that on the characteristics 'goals' and 'stakeholders and communication' elements of PVM can be observed in the management approach and governance of the ROC van Twente. However, the opinions differed on whether PVM elements replaced NPM elements and on whether the quality plan played a role in this development. On the aspect of evaluation, interviewees were often not convinced that a lot of PVM elements were visible in the management approach and governance of the ROC van Twente.

6.3 Yearly reports

The yearly reports will be discussed in this section. Due to the great amount of information that the yearly reports contain, they will only be discussed in general terms.

2013

This is one of the years where 'Focus op vakmanschap' was being implemented, and as can be read in the yearly report this has had a large influence

on the ambitions of the ROC van Twente in that year. The general slogan is phrased as 'excellence is performance' where, amongst other things, this refers to percentage of dropouts of 4,4 percent in that year which is lower than ever before. Another important highlight in this year is the negative judgment from the inspectorate on the chauffeurs program. In their platform Education, Work and Income the ROC van Twente maintains close contact to the work field in Twente.

2014

The dropout rate has been reduced even more to 4,2 percent. More attention is given to the influence of teachers and involvement of parents in the education process. Furthermore, in 2014 the connection to the region has grown stronger by participating in several initiatives to improve the international position of Twente on technological innovation. This already paid off in that same year, since the ROC van Twente together with a group of businesses submitted an investment plan to the state in the sectors construction and infrastructure which got approved. In this year there are also more students participating to a skills competition, amongst others in Brazil. This year the inspectorate of education did not have any negative judgments, but there was a request to make improvements on the exams and assurance of education quality.

2015

The improvements requested by the inspectorate on exams and assurance of education quality are made and marked as adequate. This is also the year where the quality plan of the ROC van Twente was created, which has been discussed already in the previous section. Furthermore, the executive board has used the input internal and external stakeholders to formulate a new strategy where the connection with the region is again highlighted. The student council has helped to create this strategy and the chairperson of the student council has become a member of 'JOB': the youth organization for vocational education.

2016

This year the drop out rate has declined yet again, to 3,8 percent. This remains an important statistic for the ROC van Twente. Interesting is that in this yearly report, the JOB survey is named because of its remarkable high turnout rate of ROC van Twente students participating in this year's survey. But also because the scores that the students assign to both the ROC van Twente as education provider, as well as their program in particular, is

steadily increasing. The JOB survey is conducted every two years and 2016 is an improvement on these aspects of turnout and scoring in comparison to 2014 and 2012. This increasing attention for the JOB survey might have to do with the growing importance of the student council, as mentioned by the member of the student council that has been interviewed for this thesis.

Conclusions

In terms of goals of the ROC van Twente, the yearly reports do not show a lot of change during the years. Dropout rate remains an important quantitative indicator of success for the ROC van Twente. Furthermore, a strong connection to the region of the ROC van Twente remains important as well. These yearly reports did show some interesting points on the aspect of involvement of stakeholders. The years 2015 and 2016 clearly show an increase in involving teachers and students in strategies for the ROC van Twente. The yearly report of 2015 states that the quality plan of the ROC van Twente was created with a lot of input from teachers and students. The yearly report of 2014 does report to aim an increase in involvement in the teaching process but not specifically in the strategy of the ROC van Twente. In 2015 however, the report specifically mentions adopting input of the teacher in the quality plan, hence in the strategy of the ROC van Twente. Furthermore, both the yearly reports of 2015 and 2016 as well as the interview with a member of the central student council report that the central student council has increased in importance in 2015 and 2016 compared to 2013 and 2014. This development can be seen as a PVM-directed one. On the aspect of evaluation, the yearly reports do not indicate a clear change in the relationship between the executive board and the MBO colleges or how the executive board deals with results from the colleges.

6.4 Conclusion

Some similarities can be found between the opinions of the interviewees and the yearly reports. The interviewees thought that, regarding the characteristics *goals* and *stakeholders*, elements of public value management are increasingly visible. An interesting element from the yearly reports regards the increasing role of the central student council. The increasing role of the central student council is an element of PVM regarding the characteristics *goals* and *key stakeholders*, because there is more attention for the students and the students are more involved through the central student council.

In this chapter, the following sub-question has been answered "To what extent does the management and governance of the ROC van Twente institution contain elements of the TPA, NPM and PVM paradigms and how does that compare to the situation before the introduction of the quality agreements?".

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to answer the following research question: “To what extent can we observe a shift in management approach towards public value management at the ROC van Twente following the introduction of the quality agreements?”. The theoretical framework of this thesis is centered around three paradigms describing a way of steering public institutions: traditional public administration, new public management and the most recent and central to this thesis: public value management.

Subsequently, the paradigms were distinguished on three characteristics on the basis of relevant literature: *goals; key stakeholders; rewards/evaluation*. The third sub question is “What are the developments of management and governance of MBO colleges over the past 10 years, in light of the three paradigms?” In this section, government documents were used and in particular two plans initiated by the ministry of Education, Culture and Science. These two plans are ‘Focus op vakmanschap’ and the quality agreements and the elaboration documents were used to identify a pattern potentially towards public value management. The final and most important sub-question is “To what extent does the management and governance of the ROC van Twente institution contain elements of the TPA, NPM and PVM paradigms and how does that compare to the situation before the introduction of the quality agreements?” In this section, interviews and yearly reports of the ROC van Twente were used to identify elements of the three paradigms and to see if the expected pattern that was identified in the third sub-question can also be observed in practice. These interviews were conducted with several directors of the MBO colleges, several policymakers of the department of quality care and education and a member of the student council.

Following from chapter 3, it was expected that the quality agreements would shift the management and governance of ROC's towards a PVM-directed approach, in comparison to 'Focus op vakmanschap'. The conclusion of chapter 3 reports that one can expect that the quality agreements would bring about a shift towards PVM on two of the three characteristics of the paradigms, namely *goals* and key *stakeholders*. The quality plan of the ROC van Twente did not report any significant changes on how the executive board evaluates the results of MBO colleges, hence one would not expect a significant change on the aspect of evaluation in the management and governance of the ROC van Twente. Chapter 4 examined this for the case of ROC van Twente using interviews and by analyzing yearly reports. The interviewees were asked to what extent they thought that the ROC van Twente is more focused on the development of the students rather than on quantitative measurements such as dropout rate and study success after the introduction of the quality plan. Furthermore, they were asked to what extent they thought businesses are more involved in the education process, to what extent students are more involved in decisions on the education process in the MBO colleges and on what aspects and how the executive board evaluates the MBO colleges.

On the basis of these interviews, the opinions of the interviewees were assessed on an ordinal scale with five categories ranging from - to ++. This shows that the interviewees on average did indeed think that quality plan was followed by developments towards PVM on the aspects of goals and stakeholders. However, the opinions were divided on whether this was the consequence of the quality plan and interviewees generally thought that PVM elements have not replaced NPM elements. Regarding the characteristic of *evaluation*, the general opinion of interviewees was that the autonomy of the MBO colleges has increased in the sense that the MBO colleges can increasingly decide on how to spend the budget which indicates a PVM element. But at the same time the MBO colleges have to justify these decisions and increasingly report progress in return for the budget, which can be seen as a NPM element.

On two of the three characteristics of TPA, NPM and PVM identified in the literature, the goals and stakeholders, an increase of public value management elements can be observed. Regarding the characteristic *evaluation*, no significant change in the management approach and governance of the ROC van Twente can be observed following the introduction of the

quality agreements. We can indeed observe that to some extent a shift towards public value management has occurred in the management approach and governance of the ROC van Twente following the introduction of the quality agreements. However, the results have shown that the public value management elements do not necessarily replace new public management elements and a development towards public value management is not necessarily the consequence of the quality agreements.

This thesis was partly based on a case study, making that the results do not allow one to make inferences on vocational education in general. Hence, a suggestion for future research would be that a more extensive study could be conducted including more ROCs. This would allow for statements regarding Dutch vocational education in general. In addition the results show that, for the management and governance of the ROC van Twente, few elements of PVM can be observed regarding the characteristic *evaluation*. This means that the ROC van Twente could discuss that internally to consider developing more PVM elements regarding the characteristic of *evaluation*.

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Appendix

7.1 Interview questions

7.1.1 The Director of the department of quality care and education and the three policy advisors

Interview leidraad Allereerst, ontzettend bedankt dat u tijd voor mij heeft kunnen maken. Dit interview zal worden afgenomen in het kader van mijn studie European Public Administration aan de Universiteit Twente. Voor mijn scriptie onderzoek ik het MBO onderwijs in Nederland en het ROC van Twente in het bijzonder. Het betreft de gevolgen van het kwaliteitsplan dat is ingevoerd in 2015, de wijze waarop het geïmplementeerd is in de planning en control cyclus van het ROC van Twente en de uiteindelijke gevolgen voor de student.

Inleiding (1)

- In het kwaliteitsplan (KP) wordt aangegeven dat er meer aandacht zal worden gegeven aan de kwaliteit van het onderwijs en minder aan intensiveren, verkorten en rendementen. In het gesprek over het onderwijs zou de kwaliteit meer aandacht moeten krijgen ‘in de volle breedte’.

- o Hoe worden de stakeholders (studenten, bedrijfsleven, docenten) daarbij betrokken?

- o Denkt u dat er als gevolg van het KP meer aandacht is gekomen voor de kwaliteit van het onderwijs? Ligt de aandacht nu minder op numerieke rendementen?

Studieloopbaanbegeleiding (2)

- In het KP wordt aangegeven dat het concept Entree 2.0 wordt ingevoerd, waarmee bedrijven worden betrokken om leerlingen naar betaald werk

te begeleiden. Eveneens wordt genoemd dat er meer nadruk zal komen te liggen op loopbaanontwikkeling in de brede zin.

o Denkt u dat bedrijven meer betrokken worden bij de studieloopbaanbegeleiding van leerlingen als gevolg van de introductie van het kp? Welke bewijzen heeft u daarvoor?

o Wat wordt er bedoeld met ‘loopbaanontwikkeling in de brede zin’? o Denkt u dat er na de introductie van het kp inderdaad minder aandacht is voor de studievoortgang en meer voor de loopbaanontwikkeling in de brede zin?

Beroepspraktijkvorming (3)

• In het KP wordt er gesproken over ROC-standaarden die breed gedragen worden o In welke mate denkt u dat er meer ROC brede standaarden gekomen zijn na de introductie van het kp?

o Hoe komen de belangen/wensen van studenten hierbij aan de orde? Hebben zij kans zich erover uit te spreken en hun waardering/ervaringen te uiten?

ICT in het onderwijs (4)

• In het KP wordt er gesproken over ICT in het onderwijs om zo de kwaliteit, de flexibiliteit en de aantrekkelijkheid van het onderwijs te verhogen o In welke mate denkt u dat er meer ICT in het onderwijs is ingevoerd na de introductie van het kp?

o Hoe komen de belangen/wensen van studenten hierbij aan de orde? Hebben zij kans zich erover uit te spreken en hun waardering/ervaringen te uiten?

Examinering (5)

• Hier wordt er in het kp gesproken over een ‘sectorbreed keurmerk’.

o Wat houdt dit in en hoe is dit geïmplementeerd na de introductie van het kp?

• Er wordt ook genoemd dat het werkveld meer betrokken moet worden en dat er een meer intensieve samenwerking met externe partners zal zijn ten behoeve van de ontwikkeling van examenproducten.

o Hoe (en hoe vaak) is het werkveld (en eventueel andere externe partners) betrokken bij het ontwikkelen van examenproducten na de introductie van het kp? o Hoe komen de belangen van studenten hierbij aan de orde? Hebben zij kans zich erover uit te spreken en hun waardering/ervaringen te uiten?

Stimuleren van excellentie (6)

- In het kp staat dat er meer aandacht zal worden geschonken aan het stimuleren van excellentie. Hierbij wordt genoemd dat de ambitie is om het werkveld, de studenten en de docenten te betrekken hierbij.
 - o Hoe en in welke mate is dat gebeurd na de introductie van het kwaliteitsplan?
 - o Denkt u dat dat de aandacht meer gericht is op het uitblinken als ROC, of meer gericht is op het bevorderen van de aandacht voor de student als individu?

Terugdringen van VSV (7)

- In het kp wordt genoemd dat activiteiten bij zullen dragen aan het succes van de student.
 - o Deze vraag is gerelateerd aan de allereerste vraag van dit interview. Denkt u dat er na het kwaliteitsplan inderdaad meer aandacht is gekomen voor de ontwikkeling van de student? In welke zin? En is er minder aandacht voor rendementen?
 - o Hoe komen de wensen en oordelen van studenten hierbij aan de orde?

Evaluatie (8)

- In het kp wordt vaak genoemd dat een bepaald orgaan verantwoordelijk zal zijn om over een bepaald onderwerp (2x per jaar o.i.d.) te rapporteren aan het College van Bestuur.
 - o Hoe gaat dat rapporteren in zijn werk?
 - o Hoe gaat het College van Bestuur om met de resultaten?
 - o Is er een vorm van bijsturen (straffen/belonen) van MBO colleges na slechte/goede resultaten?
 - o Betreft het CvB stakeholders bij het evalueren van resultaten? En zo ja, welke?

7.1.2 The other three directors of MBO colleges

- Sturing en doelen?
 - o Wordt er anders gestuurd, zijn de doelen veranderd?
 - o Meer of minder op rendementen gestuurd?

- o Is er meer aandacht voor de student?
- o Is dit het gevolg van het kwaliteitsplan denkt u?
 - Stakeholders
 - o Worden er meer stakeholders betrokken nadat dit kwaliteitsplan is geïntroduceerd?
 - o Wordt de student meer betrokken?
 - o Is dit het gevolg van het kwaliteitsplan denkt u?
 - Evaluatie
 - o Is er iets veranderd op het gebied van resultaten: de verantwoording die u aflegt bij het CvB?
 - o Gaat het CvB er anders mee om?
 - o Worden studenten hier meer bij betrokken?
 - o Is dit het gevolg van het kwaliteitsplan denkt u?

7.1.3 The member of the student council

- Wil jij wat over jezelf vertellen?
- Hoe is het om het CDR te zitten? Hoe gaat het in zijn werk? Hoe vaak vergaderen jullie?
- Waarover kunnen jullie je in het CDR uitspreken?
- Merk je dat de stem van het CDR, of de stem van de student in het algemeen gehoord wordt? Wordt er iets mee gedaan?
- Zijn jullie de laatste jaar meer met bedrijven in contact gekomen dan ervoor?
- Wordt er ook gevraagd of dingen goed of slecht zijn gegaan in het afgelopen jaar?