

- c) a study of the national VET system and providers which aims to complement the analysis of specific VET practice changes in the Republic of Bulgaria.

The primary source of information, along with the literature review, is an online questionnaire distributed through online survey software and interviews with relevant key stakeholders to explore further specific aspects related to approaches and evaluation of outcomes of innovative VET practices in the Republic of Bulgaria. The study period is one year (May 2023 – May 2024). Each questionnaire consists of several parts focused on a specific topic. The first part focused on the first research question ("Which PBL evaluation indicators from the list are most important?"). Each subsequent part of the questionnaire consists of an in-depth analysis of the specific topic, analyzing individual approaches and evaluation indicators, their use, development, and comparison of their use in the studied economic sectors. Thus, separate parts of the questionnaire were used to illustrate and further explore change processes about specific evaluation approaches and indicators and their combination. The main changes in innovative learning in VET during the research period and the effects of the changes were studied. Also, the impact of digitization on assessment approaches and possible long-term changes (some changes may only be temporary, while others could be permanent) on innovative VET practice in the sectors considered were highlighted.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The research results helped to gain a deeper understanding of the trends in innovative VET practices in the Republic of Bulgaria on a one-year basis and within the two economic sectors studied - the IT sector and the Consultancy Sector. Based on the obtained results, the following main trends were established:

- 1) Differences are observed between the key indicators used to evaluate innovative VET practices in the two economic sectors studied: while the consulting services sector supports the use of more standardized indicators to assess the results of innovative VET practices, the IT sector focuses on implementation of indicators related to digital transformation and technological development;
- 2) The pressure for change and the effects it causes within innovative VET practice increases its impact on the participants in the learning process and their needs;
- 3) External transformations of the environment (digital evolution) have the potential to lead to changes in VET policies and programs;
- 4) The push for immediate change, for example, when learners have to work independently in virtual space, reinforces the need to develop new approaches to effectively delivering VET through digital learning.

The results of the study also show that some of the future challenges to building sustainable approaches and indicators for evaluating the results of innovative learning in VET are each likely to be related to the increasingly assertive use of digital technologies, AI, sensory technology, and big data. These processes can become transformative tools and require the construction of VET practices based not only on assumptions that individual participants possess a high set of skills universally developed in response to technological advances but also on documented data about their competencies and opportunities. The optimization of a wide range of learning techniques and technological innovation will continue to accelerate, requiring VET providers to sustainably manage both the development and use of digital tools for their educational purposes. The systematic development of innovative educational approaches and the sustainable evaluation of their effectiveness can strengthen the societal role of Industry 5.0 as an engine of prosperity and promote the digital transition for the benefit of both the economy and society.

REFERENCES

1. Cedefop, The future of vocational education and training in Europe: synthesis report. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop reference series; No 125. (2023), <http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/08824> last accessed 2024/09/03