



## Article

# The Transformation of Educational Values via Cultural Offerings in the Context of Teacher Education

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**Abstract:** Education and culture are seen as key components of the learning process. In this context, discussions about the quality of education and approaches to strengthening educational values, as well as the importance of culture in the transmission of these values, are becoming increasingly relevant. However, in Latvia, studies regarding people who attend various cultural events do not focus on strengthening educational values or linking them to the cultural context. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to explore how educational values are linked to current trends in cultural offerings and how they are reflected in teacher education. The research methodology followed a qualitative and quantitative research paradigm and the specifics of interdisciplinary research. The data were obtained using surveys and focus group discussions. The overall strategy of the study is based on a holistic, multidisciplinary approach that takes the regional discourse in Latvia into account. The research results prove that cultural experiences have contributed to the development of most respondents' personalities and emphasize the role of teachers in the transmission of educational values. The qualitative and educational content of cultural offerings promotes a culture of discussion, strengthens community consciousness, and shapes cultural taste.

**Keywords:** culture; educational values; teacher education; transformation



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## 1. Introduction

The concepts of education and culture have always been closely intertwined, as education is often described as a purposefully organized process that contributes to the preservation of culture. Education and culture are also considered key components of the learning process at all levels of education, where different visions and perceptions of culture contribute to the formation and understanding of culture–education relationships (Gesche-Koning 2018; Matusov and Marjanovic-Shane 2017).

The study presented here is part of a larger research project, “Transformation of Educational Values for Cultural and Economic Growth of Social Community”, which researches educational values in the national and regional context from four different perspectives: teacher education, culture, social welfare, and entrepreneurship. In this article, the authors particularly emphasize results related to the relationship between educational and cultural contexts.

### 1.1. Relationship between Educational and Cultural Contexts

Nowadays, education, culture, and cultural heritage are viewed less as responses to the changing demands of the market economy and more so as tools for promoting sustainable development and respecting human rights and the fundamental freedoms of expression, information, and communication, which are, in turn, considered prerequisites for the creation and dissemination of diverse cultural expressions; promoting equal access, openness, and balance to the flow of cultural services, including courses of action to support diverse cultural manifestations, is also becoming increasingly important (Gesche-Koning

2018; Rieckmann 2020; UNESCO—United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2022; Varela-Losada et al. 2022; Wolff et al. 2022a). Thus, culture is viewed not only as a trait that a person possesses or has acquired via assimilation or socialization but also as a dynamic and process-oriented approach that promotes involvement in cultural experiences throughout life and forms a value system based on pre-established knowledge and understandings (Valsiner 2014; Valsiner et al. 2021).

Furthermore, research in the context of psycho-cultural approaches has revealed a connection between culture and education, pointing to the spiritual life of the individual, which takes place during interactions and communication with others and develops via cultural codes and traditions (Bruner 1996).

In turn, Matusov and Marjanovic-Shane (2017) characterize the concept of culture and its connection with education from several perspectives: (1) culture as a pattern, where education is described as a process influencing the formation of the human personality and which promotes participation in the cultural model; (2) culture as a boundary, which characterizes education as promoting communication, tolerance, pluralism, awareness of diversity, and social justice and instills an understanding of the internal boundaries of culture and the boundaries between cultures at both social and personal levels; and (3) culture as a critical dialogue, which includes the testing of existing ideas, approaches, worldviews, perspectives, beliefs, desires, and values (Matusov and Marjanovic-Shane 2017).

This shows that quality education must be based on certain educational values because not only do knowledge and skills form a personality but so do cultural values and society. In turn, culture embodies the values formed in response to historical and social needs and the circumstances that society wants to pass on to future generations. However, this is a current topic of debate and a subject of research in the context of education in Latvia because the post-Soviet vision of cultural and educational spaces is still partially preserved, in which the implications of the previous value system can be observed (Rubene et al. 2019). It is necessary to critically reflect on and understand the historical, cultural, and biographical aspects that underlie people's needs, desires, and interests. To adapt to alternative perspectives, students need to think beyond their past experiences, expectations, values, and beliefs (Jones 2009).

Since human development takes place within a specific environment wherein social and cultural experiences are acquired, each person's development should be explored as processes of socializing interactions and cultural acquisition (Nieto 2008). In this context, teacher education is one of the most important tools for ensuring the connection between education and culture and developing an understanding of values in both educational and cultural contexts.

### *1.2. Educational Values and Their Transformative Aspects in Teacher Education*

Nowadays, it is important for individuals to be aware that they are part of a learning community and that they can manage their own learning process; this is one of the basic competencies in current educational spaces. It is believed that teachers form the basis of high-quality education because, most often, it is the teachers' personal interests, pedagogical mastery, and enthusiasm that determine the quality of students' first acquaintance with cultural and educational values and can determine whether these values become significant (Everington 2013; Tomsons and Ābola 2014; UNESCO 2020).

In the Latvian curricula of general primary and secondary education, these values are embedded in the goals and learning outcomes formulated in all areas of learning; they are also practiced in the learning approach, in teachers' relationships with learners, in the school's internal culture, and in the wider community. These values can help students understand the essence of the education being provided, as well as provide meaning and motivation to learners (Skola2030 2019).

Educational values are understood as a synthesis of human, moral, national, cultural, and historical values, which are reflected in an individual's behavior and beliefs and which are observable in educational content and policy planning documents at the local and

national levels. Educational values reflect individuals' views or ideas that have a direct or indirect influence on other educational concepts ([Abbas 2020](#); [Toker Gökçe 2021](#); [Tomsons and Ābola 2014](#)).

However, educational values cannot be taught directly; children and young people learn them from adults as well as by developing habits at school based on values that gradually transform into virtues, such as responsibility, dedication, courage, honesty, wisdom, kindness, compassion, moderation, self-control, solidarity, justice, and tolerance ([Skola2030 2019](#)). Regulation No. 747 of the Cabinet of Ministers "Regulations Regarding the State Standard in Basic Education and Samples of Basic Educational Programs" mentions life (including health), human dignity (including equality), freedom, family, work, nature, culture, the Latvian language and the Latvian state, the development of evaluative thinking, and responsibility for oneself and one's actions as the general values of basic education that should be integrated into the process of learning ([Grozījums Ministru kabineta 2023](#)). It is important that teachers, school staff, and parents agree on core values, as this will enable children to be exposed to educational values consistently and build a common understanding of them in the community.

The transformative approach to the learning process is becoming more and more relevant in the Latvian education space. It is necessary to prepare student teachers to not only be the agents of change but also to be able to preserve and transform educational values in society by encouraging them to question the attitudes and values that underpin their worldviews and social processes ([Varela-Losada et al. 2022](#); [Wolff et al. 2022a, 2022b](#)). In this regard, [Mezirow \(2009\)](#) thematizes the quality of education and the importance of culture in the transformation of educational values in the following transformative learning dimensions:

- Psychological dimension: how understanding the value of education changes a person's self-awareness;
- Changing values and attitudes: how seeing education as a value changes a person's beliefs and attitudes;
- Behavior (lifestyle) changes: expanding existing worldviews and perspectives by recognizing and articulating one's own personal contribution to personal/communal/national well-being and economic growth ([Mezirow 2009](#)).

Thus, it can be concluded that cultural context, interpersonal relationships, and the transformative learning process play significant roles in education, as they involve learning to think critically and constantly asking critical questions about held assumptions that affect thinking and understanding, contributing to a change in an individual's values and attitudes. As a result of such learning, a person understands themselves better, creates new knowledge, and transforms their habits and behaviors, thereby increasing resilience, flexibility, and adaptability, as well as their understanding of their own values and morals ([Mezirow 2009](#); [Zhu and Li 2019](#)). Moreover, [Friedman \(2022\)](#) emphasizes the importance of the actions of individuals who experience transformation and focuses on the connections between their points of view and their habits of mind in terms of purpose, norms, goals, and meanings. This promotes not only individual change but also influences societal change ([Friedman 2022](#); [Varela-Losada et al. 2022](#)).

### 1.3. Cultural Offerings and Cultural Participation

Exploring the inter-relationships between the educational and cultural contexts, as well as keeping in mind the transformative aspect of the process of education and understanding the existing cultural offerings and their importance in raising awareness of educational values, becomes relevant. In the context of this study, the concept of 'cultural offerings' refers to the available cultural events that give everyone the opportunity to experience and enjoy culture. In turn, the concept of 'cultural participation' describes the involvement in experiences that create and share symbolic and aesthetic meanings. Participation in cultural events shapes the individual and their social processes, encourages behavioral changes, and influences public goals and interests. Cultural participation can be active or passive;

that is, an individual can be the one who is creating the meaning or the one who is being exposed to meanings created by others. Cultural participation is linked to social inclusion, education, innovation, health, and well-being, as well as civic engagement, and can be a tool in tackling societal challenges (OECD 2022).

However, data from the Latvian Cultural Consumption and Participation Impact Study indicate that the search for quality cultural offerings is not a general trend. In addition, attendance at cultural activities and overall cultural participation is significantly decreasing. The study found that respondents who prioritize quality over quantity are struggling to find satisfaction in the wide range of cultural offerings (*Kultūras aktivitātes barometrs* 2022; OECD 2022). Emphasis should thus be placed on education as one of the key components for promoting cultural participation, with the active involvement of current teachers, student teachers, and other individuals. It is important to apply appropriate teaching methods that foster critical thinking. Therefore, in teacher education it is necessary to critically reflect on taken-for-granted assumptions (Friedman 2022; Jones 2009; Varela-Losada et al. 2022).

In Latvia, research on the population attending various cultural events and personal participation in culture has a relatively young history—the first cultural consumption study was conducted in 2006. However, no study has aimed to strengthen educational values and explore the cultural context. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the relationship between educational values and the existing cultural offerings in the Latvian context, as well as the implications of this relationship on teacher education by answering the following questions:

- (1) What are the educational values that society considers important?
- (2) How are educational values reflected in the existing cultural offerings?

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Research Design

A sequential explanatory research design was chosen for this study, which combines qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis strategies and integrates them into the interpretation of the study results (Asenahabi 2019; Burke et al. 2007). The data were obtained using surveys and focus group discussions.

Based on the theoretical findings of the research project “Transformation of Educational Values for Cultural and Economic Growth of Social Community” mentioned in the Introduction and discussions by the authors involved, an online survey was developed for data collection. An assessment of face validity and content validity was performed. After the validity was verified, an internal consistency test was performed in which Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha > 0.7$ ) indicated good internal consistency.

The survey consists of three question blocks—the first two relate to all respondents, while the third is optional, according to the respondent’s affiliation with a particular social group. The three blocks concern the following information: (1) profile, including regional specifics (Riga, Pierīga, Kurzeme, Vidzeme, Zemgale, and Latgale) and level of education; (2) attitude to education and understanding of educational values in the cultural context; and (3) affiliation to a social group (student, teacher, entrepreneur, unemployed, etc.), with questions exploring access, choices, quality of education, etc.

A focus group discussion was organized to explore and analyze the relationship established between the existing cultural offerings and educational values in more depth, also looking at its importance and transformative aspects.

Since both qualitative and quantitative data were obtained (closed and open questions), the following tools were employed in the data analysis: (1) coding was used for qualitative data analysis, but the quantitative analysis was based on descriptive statistics and correlations using SPSS. Cronbach’s for the entire survey was  $\alpha = 0.940$ , which indicates internal coherence and the validity of the results obtained. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test results ( $p < 0.05$ ) show that the data obtained do not follow a normal distribution, and therefore, non-parametric tests (frequency test, Kendall’s correlation test, Mann–Whitney test, and Kruskal–Wallis test) were used in the analysis of quantitative data. (2) Content analysis was

conducted on the answers to open-ended questions and focus group discussions, which includes data coding, the development of categories, grouping, and generalization.

## 2.2. Respondents

Random sampling was used in recruiting respondents for the survey with the following criteria: (1) affiliation to different social groups (student, teacher, parent or guardian, entrepreneur, employed in social care, unemployed), (2) diversity of education levels, and (3) diverse representation of Latvian regions. Since the research instrument was an online survey, the respondents were recruited by sending e-mails.

In total, 422 respondents participated in the survey. The regional distribution was as follows: Kurzeme, 46%; Latgale, 29.9%; Vidzeme, 8.1%; Riga, 7.6%; Zemgale, 5.2%; and Pieriga, 3.3%. The respondents had different levels of education, with 22.5% not having higher education, 7.3% having the first level of higher education, 8.5% having higher education, 18.7% having a bachelor's degree, 36.5% having master's degree, and 6.4% having a doctoral degree. In terms of belonging to social groups, 274 respondents indicated that they are parents, 169 that they are teachers, and 166 that they are students; moreover, 109 respondents indicated that they are employed in the field of social care, 24 are entrepreneurs, and 72 respondents were unemployed at the time of the survey. Of note, it was possible to indicate belonging to several of these groups, so the sum of each does not correspond to the total number of respondents.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for the focus group discussion according to the following criteria: the groups must include (1) developers and organizers of cultural activities and (2) diverse regional representation. Each participant was individually invited to participate in the focus group discussion. In total, eight respondents—organizers of cultural activities and representatives from different regions of Latvia—participated in the study. The focus group discussion took place over Zoom.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Survey Analysis

To answer the research question “What educational values does society consider important?”, the responses to the survey questions “In your opinion, what is good education?” and “What do you think is the value of education?” were analyzed.

According to the respondents, a good education comprises a variety of knowledge that can be applied in practice. A good education ensures competitiveness in the labor market and competitive salaries. Good education is also internationally recognized and develops reasoning, critical thinking, and self-reflection skills and motivates further self-improvement. In a broader context, good education is beneficial to the individual and to society, promoting social participation and socialization, as well as developing emotional intelligence and communicative competence.

In the analysis of the data on the most important values of education in the view of the study participants, knowledge is mentioned most frequently (87%), followed by aspects such as teachers' competence, understanding of global contexts, formation of values and attitudes, changing thinking patterns, personal growth, well-being, critical thinking, creativity, honesty, motivation, culture, etc. Interestingly, sustainability as a value is mentioned by only 5% of respondents, which should be noted by educators.

When analyzing the responses, some contradictory responses appeared. For example, a participant shared their opinion on the essential value of education by saying, “Education itself is a value that contributes to the formation of other values and attitudes”. In contrast, another participant did not see any value in education: “Nowadays, education does not matter much; you need to have some connections to get a job in the profession you desire”.

To answer the research question “How are educational values reflected in cultural offerings?”, the data obtained from the responses of all study participants ( $N = 422$ ) to questions from Block 2 of the survey (regarding educational values in the context of cultural offerings) were analyzed. According to the data obtained, existing cultural offerings

promoted or somewhat promoted 238 (56%) respondents' understanding of educational values, while 84 (19.8%) participants replied that they have not (or have somewhat not) had such a stimulating effect and 101 (23.9%) indicated a neutral answer. Similar results were also obtained for the statement that the existing cultural offerings correspond to the values, with 259 (61.2%) study participants agreeing or somewhat agreeing with this statement, while 76 (18%) of study participants responded negatively or somewhat negatively and 88 (20.8%) answered, "I do not know".

Moreover, the data suggest strong correlations between the following statements: (1) 'the existing cultural offerings promote my understanding of education as a value' and 'the educational process has influenced my willingness to engage in cultural activities' ( $r = 0.643$ ) and (2) 'the existing cultural offerings promote my openness to diversity' and 'the existing cultural offerings promote my tolerance' ( $r = 0.602$ ).

In turn, the following statements show a moderate correlation: 'the existing cultural offerings contribute to my willingness to participate in social processes' and 'the existing cultural offerings promote my understanding of education as a value' ( $r = 0.421$ ); 'the existing cultural offerings contribute to my willingness to participate in social processes' and 'the educational process has influenced my willingness to engage in cultural activities' ( $r = 0.517$ ); 'the existing cultural offerings contribute to my willingness to participate in social processes' and 'the existing cultural offerings promote my understanding of education as a value' ( $r = 0.436$ ); and 'culture has promoted/influenced the formation and growth of my personality' and 'the educational process has influenced my willingness to engage in cultural activities' ( $r = 0.475$ ). A lower, although still moderate, correlation is also observed between the statements 'culture has promoted/influenced the formation and growth of my personality' and 'the existing cultural offerings promote my understanding of education as a value' ( $r = 0.430$ ) (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Correlations between the survey statements.

Statements/Correlations (r)	The Educational Process Has Influenced My Willingness to Engage in Cultural Activities	The Existing Cultural Offerings Promote My Understanding of Education as Value	I Choose to Engage in Cultural Activities by Choosing from the Existing Offer	The Existing Cultural Offerings Contribute to My Willingness to Participate in Social Processes	The Existing Cultural Offerings Contribute to My Willingness to Be in Touch and to Understand My Fellow Human Beings	The Existing Cultural Offerings Promote My Tolerance	The Existing Cultural Offerings Promote My Openness to Diversity
The existing cultural offerings promote my understanding of education as value	0.643						
I choose to engage in cultural activities by choosing from the existing offer	0.372	0.327					
The existing cultural offerings contribute to my willingness to participate in social processes	0.517	0.436	0.443				
The existing cultural offerings promote my tolerance	0.384	0.396	0.298	0.472	0.530		
The existing cultural offerings promote my openness to diversity	0.444	0.349	0.392	0.462	0.465	0.602	
Culture has contributed/influenced the formation and growth of my personality	0.475	0.430	0.291	0.409	0.439	0.413	0.468



Since the focus of the study is on the context of teacher education, it is important to look at the correlations in the answers given by teachers ( $N = 169$ ) and students ( $N = 166$ ). It can be observed that the most significant correlations in teachers' responses are observed between the statements 'how much education is valued today' and 'the educational process has influenced my willingness to engage in cultural activities' ( $r = 0.221, p = 0.001$ ) and between the statement 'education is important to me' and the statements (1) 'the educational process has influenced my willingness to engage in cultural activities' ( $r = 0.273, p = 0.000$ ), (2) 'the existing cultural offerings promote my understanding of education as a value' ( $r = 0.260, p = 0.000$ ), and (3) 'culture has contributed to/influenced the formation and growth of my personality' ( $r = 0.302, p = 0.000$ ).

In turn, the most significant correlations in students' responses are observed between the statements 'how much today's education is a value for you' and 'the existing cultural offerings promote my understanding of education as value' ( $r = 0.230, p = 0.000$ ), as well as between the statement 'education is important to me' and the statements (1) 'the educational process has influenced my willingness to engage in cultural activities' ( $r = 0.333, p = 0.000$ ), (2) 'the existing cultural offerings promote my understanding of education as value' ( $r = 0.290, p = 0.000$ ), (3) 'the existing cultural offerings contribute to my willingness to participate in social processes' ( $r = 0.300, p = 0.000$ ), and (4) 'culture has promoted/influenced the formation and growth of my personality' ( $r = 0.277, p = 0.000$ ).

### 3.2. Focus Group Analysis

To clarify the relationship between the understanding of educational values and the existing cultural offerings, as well as to reflect on the recommendations for specialists in the field of education, eight cultural life organizers from the regions involved in the study were invited to a focus group discussion. The discussion focused on the contribution of organizers of cultural events to education in general and the respondents' views on the relationship between the existing cultural offerings in Latvia and their impact on individuals' awareness of educational values.

When discussing the contribution of organizers of cultural events to education (formal or informal) and the sustainability of society, several values, promoted in different areas of cultural life were emphasized: creativity, civic engagement, the development of a culture of discussion, a sense of community, responsibility, and involvement. Since values permeate teacher education, cultural offerings should also support these values. The task for the organizers of cultural events is to develop high-quality cultural content, ensure regularity, and adopt a broader outlook—thinking not only locally but also globally (glocally).

For the teachers, it is important to respect the creativity of each student, helping them discover a niche where their creativity manifests itself most independently and unconventionally. Cultural knowledge can also help to boost creativity. The questions of how to generate interest among visitors, spectators, and participants, as well as how to find ways to for those uninterested in culture to "get out of the homes" on a daily basis was raised because the content of the cultural offerings should correspond to what audiences can consume. Teachers and cultural specialists can also collaborate in promoting civic engagement, keeping in mind the sustainability of the cultural offerings and the development of a culture of discussion.

The importance of communication was also stressed, suggesting that people engage less and less in meaningful conversations due to the presence of new technologies. At the same time, digital culture must be considered, as it will continue to affect our lives more and more.

When discussing the question 'how, in your opinion, the existing cultural offerings in Latvian cultural context transform the values of society', it was emphasized that it is important to start building cultural competence at an early age, rather than only encouraging youth to focus on culture after high school. The solution could be a holistic cultural education, starting from a child's first steps. Moreover, culture is one of the educational

values named in the document issued by the Cabinet of Ministers ([Grozījums Ministru kabineta 2023](#)).

Furthermore, the need to preserve art and music in education, especially in small towns and counties, was acknowledged: “It does not matter if the child will later become a professional in art or music, but the child will have the basics for understanding art, music, culture. It is also about promoting cultural visibility, educating children’s parents, and developing cultural taste”. Via awareness of cultural values, a sense of belonging to one’s country, region, and people is also promoted. Informal education and interest groups that promote connection to real-life situations were mentioned as a solution for the popularization of culture.

The cultural offerings available in Latvia are very wide; therefore, we need to be able to critically evaluate them. Just as contemporary educational practices suggest, it is also necessary to teach student teachers self-reflection skills, as these will be very useful in their professional lives.

The value of cooperation was emphasized—not only cooperation between cultural professionals and teachers and educators but also cooperation with municipal and regional authorities, companies, and professionals from different fields because “an individual is not a player in any field, also not in the offer of a cultural product”. The focus group participants advised educators to not only participate in preserving the cultural–historical traditions of local communities but also to encourage their students to look at the broader, global culture: “We want to engage everyone because globalization is about raising community awareness”.

#### 4. Discussion

By analyzing the existence of educational values in cultural offerings and their transformative aspect in the context of teacher education, the data show the importance of culture in the transmission of educational values. Looking at the responses obtained from the teachers and students, there is a connection to the dimensions of transformative learning defined by [Mezirow \(2009\)](#), namely that the statements included in the survey correlate to the psychological dimension as well as to the dimension of changing values and attitudes. For example, respondents agreed with the statement that ‘the existing cultural offerings contribute to my understanding of education as a value’. This statement has a significant correlation with students’ responses to the questions ‘to what extent education is a value nowadays’ ( $r = 0.230, p = 0.000$ ) and ‘education is important to me’ ( $r = 0.290, p = 0.000$ ), whereas in the teachers’ answers, the correlation is found only for ‘education is important to me’ ( $r = 0.260, p = 0.000$ ). The low but statistically significant correlation can be explained by other important factors that influence the correlation, for example, affiliation to different social groups, access to cultural offerings that match with one’s personal values, and others.

The behavioral and lifestyle change dimension is also important to the implementation of the transformative approach ([Abbas 2020](#); [Friedman 2022](#); [Jones 2009](#); [Mezirow 2009](#); [Varela-Losada et al. 2022](#); [Zhu and Li 2019](#)). This importance was convincingly revealed in the correlations between the responses of students and teachers and the statements ‘education is important to me’ and ‘culture has contributed/influenced the formation and growth of my personality’ (in the answers of teachers,  $r = 0.302, p = 0.000$ ; in the answers of students,  $r = 0.277, p = 0.000$ ). In the context of critical thinking, attitudes, and values, the statement ‘the educational process has influenced my willingness to engage in cultural activities’ correlates with the statement ‘education is important to me’ (for teachers,  $r = 0.273, p = 0.000$ ; for students,  $r = 0.333, p = 0.000$ ).

Although the data from the Latvian Cultural Consumption and Participation Impact Study ([Kultūras aktivitātes barometrs 2022](#)) show that attendance at cultural activities has decreased significantly, our study indicates a positive trend, as it reveals a strong correlation between the statements ‘the existing cultural offerings promote my understanding of education as a value’ and ‘the educational process has influenced my willingness to engage in cultural activities’ ( $r = 0.643$ ). The results of the focus group discussion also show that organizers of cultural events are moving towards ensuring the quality of cultural



offerings to promote the sustainability of the transmission of educational values. Cultural offerings require intent, vision, effort, and resources. There is a need to prioritize cultural participation both for individual development and the benefit of the larger community.

It is important to consider that the educational values that are important in the process of personality formation depend on the era—that is, they are not static or stagnant. The purpose of education is to promote meaningful learning, which includes a developmental dimension that means exploring the connections between an individual and the world around them in more depth. Questions about learning skills and the use of information and acquired knowledge in an innovative learning process become increasingly important for future teachers. This socio-pedagogical issue deals with how to develop transformative learning spaces for everyone, as well as how to best foster the potential and abilities of every member of society (Matusov and Marjanovic-Shane 2017; Nieto 2008; Skola 2030 2019; Toker Gökçe 2021). Thus, it is necessary to rethink the content of teacher education, increasing awareness of educational values and the importance of the teacher's role as a cultural mediator and an agent of change.

The findings of this study and their implications should be discussed in the context of sustainability in that they encourage individuals to critically reflect on their attitudes, values, and worldviews, establishing a transformative learning environment (Friedman 2022; Rieckmann 2020; Varela-Losada et al. 2022).

## 5. Limitations of the Study

The sample of respondents involved in the survey is on limitation of this study. Since the survey took place online, the respondents were selected randomly; therefore, all groups of respondents were not represented equally. Undergraduate students and respondents with a master's degree were the most represented groups. In addition, the analysis indicates only the most important trends in the context of the research questions, which need to be explored more deeply. In future studies, it would be useful to adopt stratified sampling, which would enable different target groups to be included in the research sample.

On the other hand, the qualitative data provide a deeper understanding of the contribution of cultural event organizers to education in general and the ways existing cultural offerings in the Latvian cultural context might influence community awareness of educational values. Further in-depth research is needed to find ways of promoting cultural participation.

## 6. Conclusions

1. Culture is interpreted as an active process that builds awareness of educational values and defines the place of culture in a person's life, thus justifying the understanding of education as part of culture. Education offers a dynamic approach to understanding culture and its symbolic systems and promotes an individual's involvement in cultural experiences throughout their life.
2. It is necessary to update the discussion in teacher education about the quality of education and the importance of cultural offerings in the transmission of educational values, emphasizing the dimensions of the transformative approach; these dimensions include self-awareness, changing values and attitudes, as well as changes in behavior and lifestyle.
3. In the respondents' view, knowledge is an important educational value that provides an opportunity to compete in the labor market, promotes self-reflection, motivates further self-improvement, and provides benefits to society. Teachers' competence, the ability to navigate innovations, changes in mindset, the formation of values and attitudes, the stability of growth, honesty, and a sense of security are also mentioned, which emphasizes the importance of teachers and teacher education professionals in bringing these values to life in social contexts.
4. The empirical results of the study reveal significant correlations between the statements 'education is important to me', 'the existing cultural offerings promote my

understanding of education as a value', 'the educational process has influenced my willingness to engage in cultural activities', and 'culture has contributed/influenced the formation and growth of my personality'.

5. The educational values that were emphasized in the focus group discussion (creativity, civic engagement, creating a culture of discussion, and taking responsibility) stress the concept of social returns, making it important to consider how education and cultural offerings help people to not just be passive consumers but also to contribute to the well-being of society at large. Both cultural event organizers and consumers participate in the strengthening of the consciousness of the community and the formation of cultural tastes.

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