Parents' Expectations about Children's Education Targets in the Future Perspective in Latvia

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ABSTRACT

Parents are important educational partners in schools as they are the first educators of their children and play an important role in their children's education, educational targets, and future professions for their children. Parents have their expectations about their children's educational targets but are these expectations connected with targets defined in education documents, and more important – are these expectations aimed at the future perspective of education?

The purpose of the study was to compare the educational targets of parents with educational targets defined in education documents – Latvia education system change project "School 2030" (Skola 2030), Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030, and UNESCO new social contract for education for 2050.

The methodology used in this study was an express – survey for parents, in May 2022, with the open question "What do you expect for your child's educational targets?"; literature and source analysis with mapping review strategy, documents detecting the perspective of the education; finding educational target keywords, analysing data, and synthesising categories with data collected in express – survey; data analysis was done using data identifying method by selected keywords. Analysing three educational documents with the future perspective, 7 educational targets as keywords were found and analysed – curricula and skills, cooperation and collaboration, digitalization, inclusion, sustainability, research and innovations, and globalisation. 240 respondents participated in the express survey, detecting the problem of the research, that parents' expectations only partly overlap educational targets defined in education documents.

Analysing survey data, family and parents cannot be considered as educational partners in the educational process as is shown in literature and document analysis. There are two main survey answer tendencies – child-centred education and education based on knowledge and achievements. Parents' behaviour is customer – centred, what is that school can provide for a child's education.

Keywords: collaboration, cooperation, educational partners, educational targets, expectations, parent, parents' expectations

TO BE OR NOT TO BE A GREAT EDUCATOR, 2022   **971**

I. BARONE, B. KAĻĶE. Parents' Expectations about Children's Education Targets in the Future . ..

Introduction

Parents are important educational partners in school systems in Latvia and worldwide. They are the first educators for their children and often play an important role in their children's education. But what about their expectations for their children's educational targets from the perspective of future education? Are these educational targets aimed at the targets of Latvia education system change project "School 2030" (Skola 2030), the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030, and UNESCO new social contract for education for 2050? One simple question in the survey of this research was asked to parents – "What do you expect for your child's educational targets?" and mostly received answers were not about educational targets but the way or process to achieve them. More advanced, happy, and smiling teachers, less work for students, and no cooperation or collaboration for all these educational partners – teachers, students, and parents.

Just 100 years ago, when the national education system in Latvia was developed, attention was paid to democratisation. One of the signs of a democratic school was the teacher or school and the parent or family cooperation. If only the educational targets of school and family training and parenting coincide or are similar, only then children can develop effectively. There can not be a situation where education at home and in school differs and children then should live in separate, even hostile worlds (Jansons, 1924). The development of the new education system and its functioning should be involved by teachers and parents, including family and society. Also, understanding, cooperation, and collaboration in Latvia education system were important from the last centuries till now – school and family should speak in one language and completely understand each other, otherwise, the matter of parenting and teaching at school will be abnormal (Bebru Juris, 1939).

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948) states all three partners in education – teachers, students, and parents or the family, and the educational objectives of this declaration are shared with each partner in education: students have the right to education, parents have the opportunity to choose the type and form of education to be able to fully develop their personality in cooperation with teachers (The Universal Declaration on Human Rights, 1948).

Latvian Children's rights protection law (1998) and Education law (1998) clearly define rights and obligations for children and parents or families. Children's needs include physical, emotional, and social communication, healthcare, education, and development as a state, society, and parents or family responsibility. Children have the right to get an education and they are obliged to study by their physical and mental development (Bērnu tiesību aizsardzības likums [Children rights protection law], 1998). Parents are responsible for obtaining compulsory education for the child, ensuring the necessary conditions for the education, cooperating with an educational institution, with educators and other persons

TO BE OR NOT TO BE A GREAT EDUCATOR, 2022   **972**

I. BARONE, B. KAĻĶE. Parents' Expectations about Children's Education Targets in the Future . ...

involved in the education process, to respect the legal rights and interests of the child (Izglītības likums [Education law], 1998). Teachers should creatively and responsibly participate in the implementation of the relevant educational programs, raise decent, honest, responsible people, develop a responsible attitude of the student towards himself, others, work, culture, and nature, to respect the right of the student and to cooperate with the family of the student in matters of education (Izglītības likums [Education law], 1998).

The target of this research is to compare the educational targets of parents to educational targets defined in education documents, answering the study question- to compare parents' expectations with educational targets defined in education documents. This comparison will show if the educational targets of Latvia student parents are aimed not only at educational standards but mostly – at the future perspective for future education. In this case study, education documents were analysed to discover educational targets, and an express survey was done for parents asking about educational targets for their children. Data were collected, sorted, and analysed by discovered educational targets, and conclusions were made to reveal the expectations of educational targets as they are now (the year 2022), whether they are connected to the education documents and related to the educational targets of the future perspective.

The educational targets from a future perspective

Three documents were analysed to reveal a future perspective on the educational targets in Latvia and worldwide.

From the year 2019 in every school in Latvia, the change in educational approach has started. The basic idea of this change is to enhance the curriculum and educational approach based on 21st-century skills, knowledge, and attitudes. **Project "School 2030"** (Skola 2030) objective is competency, that is an improved curriculum and skilled students who want and can study all their life, create innovations and develop a personality. What is more important – every student should possess the ability to use knowledge, skills, and attitudes in a complex way, addressing problems in changing situations of real life. Teachers must provide students with clear and meaningful results to be achieved, adequate support, and regular feedback during the educational process and encourage students to reflect on their learning and thinking processes. In project materials, it is emphasised that these changes in education are possible if only three educational partners – students, teachers, and parents collaborate. Also, parents' perspective in this educational change process is clear – parents should make a positive attitude toward learning, and engaging every day in their family home life. Parents need to help their children to become more independent and how to overcome trouble and failings. Parents must build constructive relationships with the school and teachers, as it is the best way to support students (Skola 2030, 2019). (Skola 2030, 2019).

TO BE OR NOT TO BE A GREAT EDUCATOR, 2022   **973**

I. BARONE, B. KAĻĶE. Parents' Expectations about Children's Education Targets in the Future . ...

The main idea of **the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030** is to value the necessities of the current generation for the future evolution in economics, the well-being of society, and preserving the environment. (Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030, 2010). This strategy was developed by analysing global processes such as demographic changes, innovations and globalisation of economic processes, skills and competences requested from the labour market, urbanisation and the climate changes. This strategy indicates a changing education paradigm in assessing qualitative and long-life education. The educational objective of this strategy is to create one of the best education systems in Europe. One of the priorities is long-term action directions to change the organisation of educational processes and the way of access to education. E-school, and the use of information technologies provide the best solutions to every priority. Regarding educational partners' and parents' expectations about children's educational targets, it is mentioned that parents should be involved in the study process, and teachers and schools should form a close and constant collaboration with parents, using different methods (Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030, 2010).

UNESCO document **Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education**, the report from the international commission on the futures of education. This contract reveals the future of education worldwide, showing the main criteria for future education up to the year 2050. The main topics discussed in this contract are moving towards more equitable educational futures, disruptions and emerging transformations, pedagogies of cooperation and solidarity, curricula, transformative work of the teachers, transforming schools, research and innovations, global solidarity, and international cooperation. This contract leaves the main question open – building futures of education together with proposals of building a new social contract, calls to action, dialogue and participation, and an invitation to continue.

This contract specifies that education is the key pathway and there is a necessity to transform education. "Education must build skills needed in 21st-century workplaces, taking into account the changing nature of work and the different ways that economic security can be provisioned (UNESCO Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education, 2022). Contract reveals educational targets for every educational partner all over the world, it demonstrates not only the curricula of the future education but more – it demonstrates the main keywords.

Analysing three education documents with the future perspective, 7 educational targets as keywords were found (see Figure 1) and analysed as it is described in the materials of documents. These educational targets are curricula and skills, cooperation and collaboration, digitalization, inclusion, sustainability, research and innovations, and globalisation. Some explanations are similar, some

TO BE OR NOT TO BE A GREAT EDUCATOR, 2022   **974**

I. BARONE, B. KAĻĶE. Parents' Expectations about Children's Education Targets in the Future . ..

of them need more explanation or they are described from different perspectives. Three educational partners are described in every document, outlining the importance of collaboration for a successful educational process.
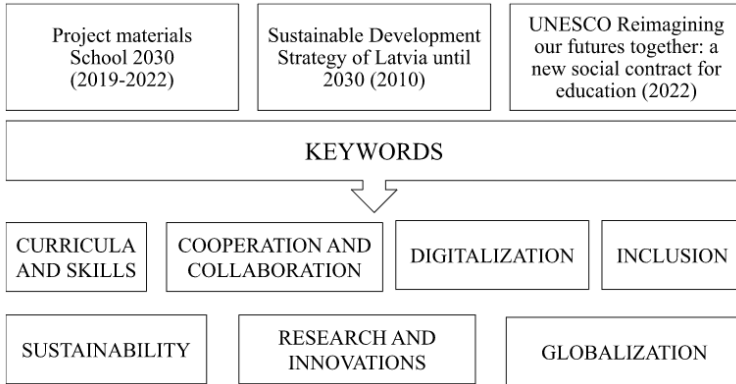

Figure 1. Defined educational targets

Table 1. Educational targets and their explanations in the future perspective of education

Educational target	UNESCO Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education	Latvian educational project "School 2030" (Skola 2030)	Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030
Curricula and skills	The acquisition of knowledge; creation of new knowledge, and education across time and space	New approach and curricula of education, based on 21st-century skills, knowledge and attitude	Quality and accessibility of education, creative thinking in the learning process
Cooperation and collaboration	Together, teachers, students, and parents need to form a community of knowledge – seekers and builders, problem-oriented collaborative learning	Cooperation and collaboration of schools and families to encourage and stabilise learning experiences for students to become more competent	Close cooperation and collaboration from teachers and schools to parents to promote educational process
Digitalization	Digitalization of education and the possible emergence of new hybrid or virtual-only models of schooling	Digital skills help students to use digital technologies efficiently, intelligently, and responsibly	Digitalization of schools and libraries to ensure access to a modern study process and information

TO BE OR NOT TO BE A GREAT EDUCATOR, 2022   975

I. BARONE, B. KAĻĶE. Parents' Expectations about Children's Education Targets in the Future . ..

Table 1. Continued

Educational target	UNESCO Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education	Latvian educational project "School 2030" (Skola 2030)	Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030
Inclusion	The right to inclusion is based on each person's diverse	Inclusive education – recognition and evaluation of different learning needs of students	Integration of people in the society via the educational system as the result of systematically implemented state policy
Sustainability	Education and care across the lifespan	The sustainability of society and the environment are linked to the daily behaviour of the individual, locally and globally	—
Research and innovations	Research and innovation must strengthen capacities for foresight and future literacy, research from within education, mobilising the learning sciences	Creativity is the process of creating new ideas that are useful for a person or group of people	Innovation economics continuously demands new skills and competences
Globalisation	Deterritorialization from social, political, and economical relationship	The understanding about changes in Latvia and the world necessary for the future development for the skills and knowledge	The globalisation of the economy and promotion of creative activity

After analysing data summarised in Table 1, educational targets definitions as it is understood in this research are summarised in Table 2 as some definitions are slightly different and do not reveal the definition by its meaning.

Table 2. Research definitions of educational targets

Educational target	Explanation
Curricula and skills	An adapted course for academic studies acquired with training to be able to produce solutions for problems. The combination of instructional practices, learning experiences, and student performance assessment is designed to bring out and evaluate the target learning outcomes of a particular course (Wilson, et al., 2021; William, et al., 2020). The subject matter that is to be learned (Kirchhoff, Keller, 2021).

TO BE OR NOT TO BE A GREAT EDUCATOR, 2022   976

I. BARONE, B. KAĻĶE. Parents' Expectations about Children's Education Targets in the Future . ..

Table 2. Continued

Educational target	Explanation
Cooperation and collaboration	The practice of cooperating, where all three educational partners cooperate and collaborate, joint operation or action, the act of working jointly. Individuals working together to accomplish goals (Goulet, et al., 2003; Fadel et al., 2015; Spencer, 2020 A; Spencer 2020 B).
Digitalization	The use of digital technologies to change an educational model and provide new revenue and value-producing opportunities (Schmidt, Tang, 2020).
Inclusion	A mode of teaching that intentionally designs course content and curricula to engage with students of diverse backgrounds, abilities, and lived experiences, the practice of educating children in the general education classroom, including children with physical, mental, and developmental disabilities (Dale McManis, 2016; UNESCO, 2016).
Sustainability	The property of being sustainable, the use of methods that do not cause long-term harm to the environment or deplete natural resources, in education – the content, learning methods, and outcomes that help students develop a knowledge base about the environment, the economy, and society (UNESCO, 2022)
Research and innovations	The quest for new knowledge and studies to determine the problem or the fact, finding new solutions and development of education. The result of experiments and research is the creation of something in the mind (OECD, 2019).
Globalisation	Growth, inside and awareness on a global or worldwide scale, Worldwide flow and integration of culture, media, and technology due to advances in communication systems and economic interests (Bakhtiari, 2011).

Some definitions of educational targets in Latvia education documents must be assessed and evaluated for 21st-century skills and economical and political development in the educational system. Definitions of curriculum and skills, cooperation, and collaboration cover several more definitions as it is described in the result section of this research.

Parents' partnership in education

As it was analysed in education documents – the future perspective demonstrates the importance of parents or family engagement for a successful educational process. Over the last two decades, the emphasis has shifted to the establishment of meaningful collaborative relationships that engage families, schools, and communities (Christenson, Reschly, 2012).

Education includes different partnerships, the most fundamental and most widely researched of them is the teacher-student partnership, but also other partnerships are important at different levels of the education system.

There is a discussion about the term used in the latest research – parent, parents, or family – who is the person or people responsible for a child's successful

TO BE OR NOT TO BE A GREAT EDUCATOR, 2022 977

I. BARONE, B. KAĻĶE. Parents' Expectations about Children's Education Targets in the Future . . .

educational process. The term "family" is often chosen over "parent" as the first term refers to caretakers who are important contributors to a child's life. "The term "family" is used here as inclusive of members who may or may not live together but who share a common history, a significant bond, and who play an important role in a child's development and uprising" (Mitchell et al., 2021). The terms family/ies and parent/s are used to represent any adult caretakers who have responsibility for the well-being of a child or children, for example, biological parents, foster care providers, grandparents, aunts and uncles, siblings (Mapp, Kuttner, 2013).

There are several theories describing parent's partnership for the educational process – Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1975, 1977, 1979, 1986, 1994, 2001, 2006), Epstein Model for Parental Involvement (1995, 2001, 2002, 2010, 2011), Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model for Parental Involvement (1995, 2001, 2002, 2005), Christenson and Sheridan Families and Schools Partnership (2001, 2004, 2010), Garbacz et al Parent Education Involvement (2017). All these theories describe the importance of parent involvement in a child's successful, normal, and enforceable educational process, showing interwoven spheres of influence (Reynolds, Miller, 2013). Theories joined together to create the new term "Family-School-Community Parenting (FSCP) as a multi-dimensional process in which schools, families, and communities work together to ensure a child's social, emotional, and academic success" (Miller et al., 2022).

As parents are important not only for children and their well-being but as significant participants in educational partnerships, strong relationships, welcoming environments, multidirectional communication, and mutual under-standing are the key to educational partnership, depending on every educational partner and their educational objectives. Multidirectional communication – deep listening, facilitative approaches during meetings, handling conflicts, and posi-tive, predictable, and proactive communication leads to meaningful collaboration (Lerner, 2005). Mutual understanding for each educational partner by devel-oping targeted skills as a shared responsibility to promote student development, shared or joint work involved by all parties, the importance of interactions is collaborative and intervention efforts are targeted across home and school and communication allows for a multidirectional flow of information from either party (Miller, et al., 2022). Productive parents' relationship with teachers or school is powerful with collaboration, trust (benevolence, honesty, openness, reli-ability, competence), problem-solving process, and resolving leadership problems through productive dialogue (Cardno, 2012).

As there are several educational partners, there are different ways for the part-nership. Schools or teachers as leaders in this partnership must make connections with families, communicate intentionally to build relationships, and collaborate with families (Chavkin, 2017). Collaboration is one of the cornerstones in this

TO BE OR NOT TO BE A GREAT EDUCATOR, 2022   978

I. BARONE, B. KAĻĶE. Parents' Expectations about Children's Education Targets in the Future . ..

relationship that is family-centred practice when school, teachers, parents, and families work as equal partners to support the learning and development process of the child (Gonzalez-Mena, 2011).

Parents are important educational partners and their expectations about their children's educational targets are meaningful. Effective and qualitative cooperation and collaboration of all educational partners leads not only to the achievement of educational targets but also academic accomplishments and ensures children's well-being starting from childhood and lifelong.

Methodology

This case study discovers the educational targets in the future perspective as a partnership tool for educational partners – teachers, parents, and students' application of a theory to real education situations in the Latvia education system. As it is described in the result section of this research, characteristic behaviour of parents' expectations about their children's education targets was discovered. Also, cross – case research was done to discover multiple sources.

Table 3. Methods used for the research

Method	Details	Results
Express -survey for parents (McDonald, Rosier, 2011) as data acquisition method	Latvia, May 2022, online survey distributed on social networks; 1 opened question "What do you expect for your child's educational targets?"; Selection questions – gender of the child and parent	240 respondents, a wide spectrum of answers that are ranged in Table 5 with educational targets defined in Table 1 and Table 2
Literature and source analysis with mapping review strategy (Petticrew, Roberts, 2006) as data analysis methods	3 different documents demonstrate the future perspective of the education, theoretical literature, and source; Data analysis and synthesis performed by narrative type of synthesis	54 units of documents, literature, and sources were analysed for this research, shown in the reference section of this article Three consecutive steps were analysed: 1. finding categories as keywords 2. analysing data from defined categories 3. synthesised categories with data collected from express – survey
Express – survey data analysis as data processing method using data identifying method by selected keywords (Tran et al., 2017)	Data analysis was done by 7 identified keywords defined by mapping review strategy; univariate analysis method was used to analyse single variable	Analysed data is summarised in Table 5; the coding of this analysed data was done by dividing data by defined keywords, adding one new keyword that could not be identified as defined categories

TO BE OR NOT TO BE A GREAT EDUCATOR, 2022   979

I. BARONE, B. KAĻĶE. Parents' Expectations about Children's Education Targets in the Future . ..

In this study there have been observed all ethical norms. Informed consent was received from the survey participants, the respondents were informed about the nature, purpose and progress of the study, the anonymity of the respondents is guaranteed. The results of the survey were analyzed and will be used in an aggregated way and published.

Several methods were used to achieve the results of this research (see Table 3).

Results

Document, literature, and source analysis reveal the roles, partnerships, and importance of every educational partner now and in the future perspective. An open question for parents "What do you expect for your child's educational targets?" uncovered different problems in Latvia's educational system during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic starting from 2019. The school year 2021/2022 was the year when schools were mostly open and after a year and a half of children could go to school and not study at home. Parents' answers also show that they are tired of the educational process as the school year is almost over. They are tired of teaching children by "themselves" at home when the educational process was managed remotely.

240 respondents participated in the express survey, 87% of respondents were women, 13% were men, and the gender of the children was 45% girls, and 55% boys. Educational levels – primary school (class 1–3) 46%, elementary school – 51% and secondary school – 3% (see Table 4).

Table 4. Survey respondent analysis

	Primary school	Elementary school	Secondary school	Total
Respondents	107	122	11	240
Parent – woman	92	107	10	209
Parent – man	13	17	1	31

After analysis of defined educational targets, parents' expectations about their children's educational targets reveal the education system in Latvia in 2022 – 54% of parent's expectations relate to educational target curricula and skills, and there is no significant difference between the gender of the children about this educational target (see Table 5).

TO BE OR NOT TO BE A GREAT EDUCATOR, 2022   **980**

I. BARONE, B. KAĻĶE. Parents' Expectations about Children's Education Targets in the Future . ..

Table 5. Survey analysis by defined educational targets

Educational target	Primary school		Elementary school		Secondary school		Total	
	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy
Curricula and skills	22	32	32	32	5	3	62	67
Cooperation and collaboration	3	5	2	1	1	–	6	6
Digitalization	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Inclusion	1	4	–	–	–	–	1	4
Sustainability	2	–	1	–	–	–	3	–
Research and innovations	–	1	2	–	–	1	2	2
Globalisation	3	2	2	2	–	–	5	4
Others	12	20	18	27	2	–	31	47

The next biggest group is not connected with educational targets defined in this study, named – others. These educational target expectations are not related to defined educational targets and mostly relate to the teacher's profession and teaching skills. As it is defined in education documents, it can be defined as the transformative work of teachers – recasting teaching as a collaborative profession, envisioning and enchanting curriculum and pedagogy, educational research, teacher education, and professional development (UNESCO Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education, 2022), teacher professional self – sufficiency – aware of decisions on their practices, observations and in reflexie, the possibility of planning training in cooperation with colleagues, (Project "School 2030), 2019) teachers as leaders not only to teach and help students, but to inspire, help, organise, cooperate and collaborate (Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030, 2010). This group cannot be imposed as one of the educational targets for children, this is more parents' expectations outside the provisions of effective educational partners' cooperation and collaboration.

Other educational targets such as cooperation and collaboration, inclusion, sustainability, research and innovations, and globalisation make a small number of parents' expectations. This situation can be explained by the idea that school is education, combined with knowledge and skills and all other educational targets concede in front of the most important expectations about educational targets. Also, society in general is not well educated about these processes as express survey analysis reveals this significant difference between educational target expectations (see Figure 2).
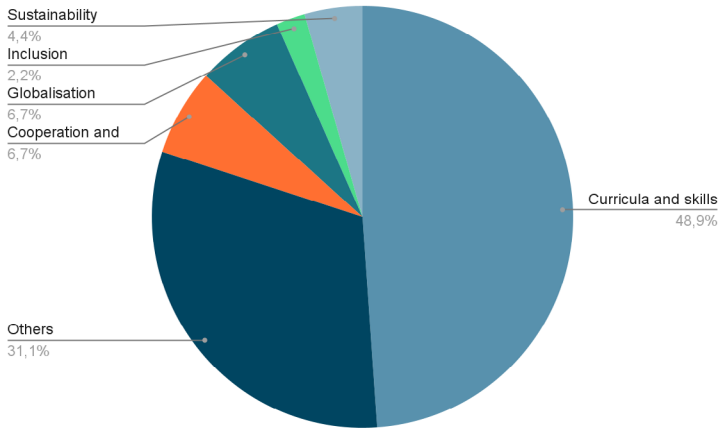
TO BE OR NOT TO BE A GREAT EDUCATOR, 2022   **981**

I. BARONE, B. KAĻĶE. Parents' Expectations about Children's Education Targets in the Future . ..

Figure 2. Parents' expectations and defined educational targets

Digitalization is an educational target from defined keywords that is not mentioned as parents' expectations. This is an interesting discovery because of the importance of digitalization in the educational process and society. There is a problem of term insight in Latvia society – digitalization and children using devices. One of the explanations is that more than 70% of children spend more than 3 hours on devices every day and 96% of parents need to set limits on their child's digital habits (Kaspersky, 2021) and there is a discussion about useful techniques used in the educational process, not free time spent by children. Also, COVID-19 pandemics remote or partly – remote educational process for almost 2 years influenced the use of technologies and parents are not satisfied with the long hours children are spending in front of the screen (OECD, 2021).

The answer to the study question – what are parents' expectations about educational targets that are defined in education documents is that parents expect their children to have knowledge and skills for the 21st century and parents know how to transfer teachers' work to achieve this goal. Significant indications about other educational targets, especially digitalization, reveal that parents as educational partners are focused on the result of the educational process and academic results more than society, economic and political development in Latvia and worldwide and their children's ability to live in this future world, to study, get a profession and work.

Conclusions

Analysing survey data, family and parents cannot be considered as educational partners in the educational process as is shown in literature and document analysis. Parents see their role in the educational process as counsellors, and

TO BE OR NOT TO BE A GREAT EDUCATOR, 2022 **982**

I. BARONE, B. KAĻĶE. Parents' Expectations about Children's Education Targets in the Future . ..

examiners, not educational partners, but still – their expectations are important as the theories of the effective educational process reveal partnership importance.

There is no significant difference between educational targets divided by the gender of the child, so parents' expectations are similar whether the child is a boy or a girl.

Parents' answers about their expectations about their child's educational objectives are more about the educational process – how to manage it and less about what is the educational objective.

There are two main survey answer tendencies – child-centred education and education based on knowledge and achievements. Both these tendencies are without child engagement.

Parents' behaviour is customer-centred, discovering the problem – that is what can school provide for a child's education?

As one of the skills for qualitative future education is self-guided education, parents' opinions are against it – their child must not learn by himself, but the school must provide knowledge. Flipped learning and flipped classroom technique as a methodology are criticised by parents, especially for secondary school students.

Only 13% of respondents were men. This situation shows the problem of parents' partnership, where one parent is responsible for communication and collaboration with the school, and expectations for educational targets are mostly personal, in this case, the study – women are the parents managing educational partnership in the school.

As the biggest part of respondents were for children in primary and elementary schools (class 1–9), the older a child gets, the fewer parents are involved in the child's education process. The most criticised educational process, especially teachers' work revealed by primary school parents, is explained by the fact that after 9th class children can continue studies in other schools and the competition for best gymnasium and schools is significant. Numerous respondents expect their children to study in the top-rated gymnasium in Latvia.

The next development of this study is how parents range the defined educational targets if they must choose one of the defined targets.

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TO BE OR NOT TO BE A GREAT EDUCATOR, 2022 **983**

I. BARONE, B. KAĻĶE. Parents' Expectations about Children's Education Targets in the Future . ...

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TO BE OR NOT TO BE A GREAT EDUCATOR, 2022 **984**

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