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VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF TEACHERSHIP – A SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS APPROACH
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines social representations of teachership of students, teachers, and the Finnish Trade Union of Education through visual representations of teachership. Simultaneously, it examines the contribution of visual images – and the visual in general – in the formation of social representations. In addition, the study explores the potential of membership categorization analysis, content analysis, and analysis of visual rhetoric to capture the contribution of visual images in the processes of social representation – namely, anchoring, objectification, and naturalization.

Three different forms of empirical data were used in the study. The first form consisted of students’ verbal comments on portrait paintings that they observed as images of teachers. The second form was comprised of students’ and teachers’ drawings (with verbal comments) of a typical teacher. The participating students and teachers were recruited from upper secondary schools in Finland. The third form of data included cover images of Teacher (Opettaja) magazine, published by the Trade Union of Education in Finland.

The findings of the study showed that teacher-student interaction and teachers’ relations with students formed the core of social representations of teachership among participating students, whereas well-informed expertise and multitasking characterized teachers’ social representations of teachership more than did communicative interaction with students. The Trade Union of Education’s social representations of teachership included diverse aspects such as expertise, playfulness, recreation, and pedagogy. However, one primary type of teacher was identified across the imagery. Hence, the cover images appeared to be vehicles of inclusion and exclusion that promoted certain social representations of teachership while marginalizing others.

The study identified diverse functions of visual images in the processes of social representation: perceiving teacher images triggered certain social representations of teachership that were used in making sense of teacher images (anchoring), drawing teacher images concretized social representations of teachership (objectification), and representing certain kinds of teacher images in the cover images of Teacher magazine disseminated certain social representations of teachership (naturalization). Membership categorization analysis, content analysis, and analysis of visual rhetoric proved to be capable of capturing the different functions that visual images exercised in the processes of social representation.

The study contributes to the understanding of visual images in the processes of social representation and the development of qualitative image-based research methods in social representations research. In terms of teachership, the study contributes
to the understanding of social representations of teachership and teachers’ visual expressiveness in teacher-student interaction. In addition, the study increases critical awareness of the narrowness of the visual representations of teachership in media. The study design and the findings can be applied, for instance, in teacher education.

**Keywords:** teachership, social representation, visual representation, teacher-student interaction, teachers’ professional identity, membership categorization analysis, content analysis, analysis of visual rhetoric
TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä väitöskirja tarkastelee opiskelijoiden, opettajien ja opettajien ammattijärjestön (OAJ) opettajuutta koskevaa sosiaalisia representaatiota opettajuuden visuaalisten representaatioiden kautta. Lisäksi väitöskirja tutkii visuaalisten representaatioiden osuutta sosiaalisten representaatioiden muodostumisessa. Tutkimusmenetelmien näkökulmasta tutkimus soveltaa ja kehittää jäsenyyskategoria-analyysia, sisällön-analyysia ja visuaalisen retoriikan analyysia visuaalisii aineistoihin perustuvissa ankkuuroinnin, objektiivoinnin ja naturalisoinnin prosesseissa.


Tutkimus tunnisti kolme kuvien tehtävää sosiaalisen representaation prosesseissa: opettajakuvina tarkasteltujen maalausten havainnoiminen aktiivisesti tiettyjä opettajuuden sosiaalisia representaatiota tulkinnan resurseiksi (ankkuurointi), opettajakuvien piirtäminen konkretisoivat opettajuuden sosiaalisia representaatiota (objektiivointi) ja toistamalla tietyllä aineistossa tulostajuvat kuvat levittävät ja vahvistivat tietyllä aineistossa opettajuuden sosiaalisia representaatiota (naturalisointi). Jäsenyyskategoria-analyysi, sisällönanalyysi ja visuaalisen retoriikan analyysi mahdollistivat kuvien tehtävien tarkastelun näissä prosesseissa.

Tutkimus tuottaa tietoja kuvien ja muiden visuaalisten aineistojen osuudesta sosiaalisten representaatioiden prosesseissa sekä lisää ymmärrystä laadullisten kuvalähde- ja tietoisten tutkimusmenetelmien käytöstä sosiaalisten representaatioiden tutkimisessa. Opettajuuden tutkimuksen osalta väitöskirja valottaa opettajuuden sosiaalisten repre-
sentaatioita Suomessa. Lisäksi se tuo tietoa opettajan visuaalisten viestien tulkinnasta ja opettajuutta esittävien media-kuvien kapea-alaisuudesta. Väitöskirjan tutkimusasettelmaa ja tuloksia voidaan hyödyntää esimerkiksi opettajakoulutuksessa.

_Asiasanat:_ opettajuus, sosiaalinen representaatio, visuaalinen representaatio, opettajan-opiskelija-vuorovaikutus, opettajan ammatillinen identiteetti, jäsenyyskategoria-analyysin, sisällönanalyysin, visuaalinen retoriikan analyysi
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In Kuopio on 20 November 2019

Jari Martikainen
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1 INTRODUCTION

In our everyday lives, we are surrounded by the visual and constantly communicate through visual means. The visual contributes in important ways to our understanding of social reality and its phenomena, which influences our thoughts, emotions, and actions. Similarly, the visual contributes to our conceptions of ourselves and people around us. This dissertation examines the conceptions of teachership of students, teachers, and the Finnish Trade Union of Education through visual images. Simultaneously, it examines the contribution of visual images – and the visual in general – in the formation of these conceptions. In this study, teacher images and teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior are understood as visual representations of teachership. The conceptions of teachership, for their part, are understood in this study as socially constructed and culturally shared common-sense understandings of teachership, drawing on the theory of social representations (Moscovici, 1961/2008).

1.1 WHY STUDY VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF TEACHERSHIP FROM A SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS PERSPECTIVE?

Why choose teachership as the topic of a social psychology dissertation? This is the question I have been asked several times during my dissertation project. Whereas some questioners seemed to regard the topic as relevant to the education sciences rather than the social sciences, others seemed to be concerned about the familiarity of the topic due to a plethora of prior studies on matters related to teachers. So, why did I choose teachership?

To begin with, this study understands teachership as conceptions and ideas about teachers, teaching as a profession, and teaching as pedagogic performance (Ursin & Paloniemi, 2019). In Western societies, teachers are part of practically every person’s life for a notable period of time. During the school years, teachers make important contributions to the development of the youth. In addition, in these days of lifelong and continuous education, teachers are frequently part of adults’ lives as well. Thus, because teachers occupy an influential position in most people’s lives, it is important to study diverse aspects of teachership in order to enhance teacher-student relationships.

In the sense that almost everybody has personal experiences of teachers, teachers might be understood as “figures of impossible familiarity,” as stated by Weber and Mitchell (1995, p. xi). Often, this familiarity is surrounded by taken-for-granted assumptions that draw on cultural knowledge constructed over a long period of time (Mallozzi, 2012; Weber & Mitchell, 1995). However, as ideals of education change due to changes in pedagogic principles as well as social, political, and economic contexts (Jodelet, 2011), so too change the duties, tasks, educational guidelines, and requirements of teachers contributing to the conceptions of teachership. For this reason, the taken-for-granted assumptions of teachership might appear dissonant and even controversial when met with teachership that, on the one hand, is recommended and required by educational policy and, on the other hand, is put into practice – performed and experienced – in classrooms. However, since taken-for-granted assumptions may at least subconsciously influence teacher-student interaction and the way students
perceive teachers and teachers perceive themselves as teachers, it is important to make those assumptions visible and critically reflect on their appropriateness.

This study uses visual representations of teachership as a means of studying socially constructed conceptions of teachership. A “representation” can be defined in a number of ways depending on the context, but most often, it is used with the meaning of “referring to” or “standing for” something (Knuuttila & Lehtinen, 2010; Prendergast, 2000; Rossi, 2010). This study understands visual representations as visually perceivable “matters” meant or perceived to express, stand for, or refer to an idea, phenomenon, or concept (Knuuttila & Lehtinen, 2010; Rossi, 2010; Räsänen, 2012). Hence, visual representations are understood as combinations of visual forms and the meanings attached to them in a social context (Perini, 2005). Räsänen (2012, p. 2), for instance, regards visual representations as processes and products of social construction, stating that “representations are used to produce and mediate meanings between the members of a culture” (see also Johansson & Knuuttila, 2008).

In this study, visual representations of teachership are understood in terms of two broad meanings. First, they are understood as images of teachers in art, media, films, and other forms of visual expression. Second, they are understood as manifestations of teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior in classroom situations and depictions of it in teacher images. Both kinds of visual representations are regarded as capable of communicating and constructing conceptions of teachership. However, this study examines only teacher images and teachers’ visual expressiveness depicted in them. In order to make a conceptual difference, the study uses the expression visual nonverbal behavior when referring to classroom situations and the expressions teachers’ visual expressiveness or visual cues when talking about the depictions of teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior in images.

The decision to study students’, teachers’, and the trade union’s conceptions of teachership through visual images is based on both student-related and teacher-related reasons. Regarding student-related reasons, research in the education sciences has shown that teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior makes an important contribution to student motivation, classroom participation, and even study outcomes (Burroughs, 2007; Pladevall Ballester, 2015). This study, in turn, aims to find out what kinds of socially shared conceptions of teachership are activated among and constructed by participants when perceiving portrait paintings and drawing images of teachers with different types of visual expressiveness. As for teacher-related reasons, media-images of teachers have been found to contribute to teachers’ understanding of their profession and themselves as teachers (Breault, 2009; Dalton, 2013; McGrail & McGrail, 2016). Internationally, media imagery of teachers has been studied widely; however, in Finland, studies on the topic are scarce. In addition, teacher imagery in Teacher (Opettaja) magazine, published by the Trade Union of Education in Finland, has not been previously studied. Hence, this study attempts to promote critical reflection on the contribution media images of teachers might make in shaping conceptions of teachership among Finnish teachers. These approaches to teachership root the study in the domain of social psychology.

When examining the conceptions of teachership communicated and constructed through visual representations of teachership, this study uses the theory of social representations (Moscovici, 1961/2008) as the main theoretical framework. The theory of social representations provides the basis for examining visual representations of teachership and the meanings attached to them as social practices in order to detect socially constructed and culturally shared lay theories – i.e., social representations – of
teacherness. Similarly, social representations theory provides the means of examining the perception and production of visual representations of teacherness as social practices of meaning construction. By adopting a social representations approach, this study endeavors to discover the types of social representations of teacherness that are related to, activated by, or constructed through visual representations of teacherness, which, according to Chaib (2015), is a less-studied dimension of teacherness. Figure 1 illustrates the framework of this study.

As Figure 1 illustrates, paintings, drawings, and media images are used as visual representations of teacherness in this study. In Sub-study 1, students perceive paintings of diverse people (other than teachers) as if they were depictions of teachers. In Sub-study 2, students and teachers draw pictures of a typical teacher. In Sub-study 3, cover images of Teacher magazine (published by the Trade Union of Education in Finland) are used as the data. The dashed line between visual representations of teacherness and teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior in the classroom indicates that the latter is not directly investigated in this study. The black arrows between the different types of images and teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior in the classroom, in turn, refer to two aspects. First, the way students perceive teachers’ visual expressiveness in images partly draws on experiences of teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior in the classroom. Second, the findings of the image-based sub-studies in this dissertation are used as the basis for making inferences about teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior in the classroom.

In addition, this summary draws overarching findings from the sub-studies that can be related to teacher-student interaction and teachers’ professional identity. This study anchors teacher-student interaction in its social and cultural context by focusing on its socially constructed nature, which differs from a large body of research examining teacher-student interaction from, for instance, the point of view of learning theories (e.g., Green & Joo, 2017; Harðarson, 2018; Kamel-El Sayed & Loftus, 2018; Korthagen, 2010). Teachers’ professional identity, in turn, is broadly understood in terms of teachers’ conceptions of teaching as a profession and themselves as teachers, as well as other factors influencing teachers’ professional identity (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Geka & Gregoriadis, 2018). According to Beijaard (2019) and Geka and Gregoriadis (2018), teachers’ professional identity is a current but relatively new research topic since, traditionally, teacherness has been studied in terms of its contribution to students and their learning (Split, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011).
examining social representations of teachership communicated through media images and discussing their relation to teachers’ professional identity, this study approaches teachership from a social psychological perspective, which, according to Chaib (2015), is a less-common approach to teachership.

Visual materials and means of communication contribute in important ways to the formation of social representations (Moscovici, 1984). Hence, this study aims to ascertain what image-based approaches can teach us about social representations of teachership. In addition to this substance-related reason, this study also has theory-based reasons for applying images in research on social representations.

Social representations theory has acknowledged the contribution of images in the formation of social representations from the very beginning (Moscovici, 1961/2008). However, the visual nature of images and the way visual images communicate meanings have been inadequately articulated from a social representations perspective. To address this shortcoming, this study attempts to contribute to the understanding of visual materials in social representations research. It uses images in the processes of anchoring, objectification, and naturalization and elucidates the contribution of images in these three processes, paying due attention to their content, form, and function. In this study, anchoring refers to the process of making sense of teacher images by drawing on social representations of teachership. Objectification, in turn, refers to the process of visualizing social representations of teachership through images depicting teachers. Naturalization, for its part, refers to the process of disseminating and normalizing certain social representations of teachership through repeating certain kinds of teacher imagery in media (see Moscovici, 1961/2008, 1984).

1.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

As part of the introduction, it is reasonable to map the context of the study briefly. For this purpose, some basic guidelines concerning teachership in Finland and in Finnish upper secondary vocational education and training are elucidated. In addition, some background knowledge pertaining to myself as the researcher will be provided.

In Finland, there has been a long tradition of authoritarian teachers and teacher-centered instruction based on delivery of information (Räty et al., 2011). However, toward the end of the 20th century, behaviorist and cognitive learning theories were replaced by more constructivist and experiential learning theories that set the needs, interests, prior knowledge, and experiences of students as well as their personal growth at the center of learning and teaching (Jordan, Carlile, & Stack, 2008; Kay & Kibble, 2016; Stewart, 2012). This shift changed the teacher’s role from authoritarian instructor to more student-centered and consultative educator, which corresponds to contemporary guidelines of Finnish educational policy (Kumpulainen, 2014; Malinen, Väisänen, & Savolainen, 2012; Räty et al., 2012). Student autonomy and self-direction are encouraged from the early stages of education in Finland, and instead of hierarchy and distant power relations, teacher-student relations are characterized by equality (Räty et al., 2011, 2012). Finnish educational policy values teacher education highly and emphasizes the importance of teachers’ substantial knowledge and pedagogic skills (Kumpulainen, 2014; Malinen et al., 2012). The majority of teachers in Finland are middle-aged women (Kumpulainen, 2017). In addition, the teaching workforce is highly homogenous in terms of ethnic background and language, consisting predominantly of teachers of Finnish origin (Lefever et al., 2014; Miettunen & Dervin,
However, in terms of language, there is a notable minority of Swedish speaking teachers in Finland.

Similar guidelines of pedagogy and details of the teaching workforce also characterize teaching in Finnish upper secondary education, which is the context of this study. However, one feature that particularly characterizes the instruction in upper secondary vocational education and training is its focus on developing students’ work-related practical skills (Finnish National Board of Education, 2014; Stenström & Virolainen, 2014). Hence, theory-based classroom instruction is minimized, and practice-based learning and internships are emphasized (Stenström & Virolainen, 2014). This type of practice-based instruction deconstructs the traditional hierarchical teacher-student relation and furnishes instruction with qualities of collaborative teaching and learning-by-doing.

With regard to presenting some contextualizing background information about myself, I am a Finnish, middle-aged male teacher of visual culture studies (particularly art history) and a post-graduate student of social psychology. I have worked as a teacher for more than twenty years at various levels of education, the last 18 years in upper secondary vocational education and training. As someone who is interested in visual communication related to arts and human behavior and appreciates diversity and equality, I am sensitive to messages communicated through visual nonverbal behavior. My pedagogical thinking and practice are student-centered and collaborative, based on constructivist and experiential learning theories. In my own school years, teacher-centered pedagogy prevailed, and I still remember how the visual nonverbal behavior of some teachers communicating strictness made me feel unsure and frightened. For this reason, I have attempted to cultivate trust, friendliness, and appreciation of diversity in my own teaching.

It is evident that my visual culture background, experience of teaching, and interest in the visual dimension of human behavior, in general – and teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior, in particular – are important motivations for the choice of this research topic and methodology using visual materials. My own school-time experiences of teachers and experience working as a teacher, Master’s degree in Education Sciences, teacher training, and knowledge of educational policy in Finland contribute to constructing the lens through which I approach the topic. The aforementioned matters may flavor the social representations of teachership available to me and sensitize me to certain aspects and nuances in the data. However, because I have lived most of my life in Finland, been educated in Finnish schools and universities, followed Finnish media, and interacted with Finnish students, teachers, and other people, my understanding of teachership is strongly influenced by the socially constructed understanding of teachership in Finland. Compared to people lacking teacher training, experience of teachers’ work in practice, and research interest in teachership, my social representations of teachership might be more polyphasic in terms of multiple social representations.

1.3 AIMS AND RESEARCH TASKS OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to increase understanding of the kinds of social representations of teachership that are related to, activated by, or constructed through visual representations of teachership. In addition to this overall goal, this study aims to increase teachers’, teacher educators’, and student teachers’ awareness of their visual expressiveness, on the one hand, and to advance their critical reflection on teacher
images in media, on the other. In addition, it is hoped that this study will increase media professionals’ awareness of the perceptions and implications of media imagery. As to theoretical aims, this study represents an attempt to increase understanding of the visual in the processes of social representation, namely, anchoring, objectification, and naturalization. Finally, in terms of methodology, this study seeks to contribute to the development of qualitative image-based research methods in social representations research.

In addition to presenting the central findings of the three sub-studies included in the dissertation, this summary has three research tasks that relate to teachership, the theory of social representations, and research methodology. These research tasks are as follows:

1) to draw and discuss overarching findings from the sub-studies in relation to teacher-student interaction and teachers’ professional identity,
2) to elaborate the contribution of visual images – and the visual, in general – in the processes of social representation, and
3) to examine the potential of membership categorization analysis, content analysis, and analysis of visual rhetoric in capturing the processes of anchoring, objectification, and naturalization based on images.

1.4 CONTENT OF THE STUDY AND STRUCTURE OF THE SUMMARY

This dissertation is comprised of three sub-studies and the present summary. The sub-studies are enumerated below:


The aim of Sub-study 1 is to examine the kinds of categories of teachers students construct when perceiving portrait paintings as images of teachers, which is associated with the process of anchoring. The aim of Sub-study 2, in turn, is to examine the kinds of social representations of teachership that are suggested by students’ and teachers’ drawings of a typical teacher. This sub-study is associated with objectification. Finally, the aim of Sub-study 3 is to discover the kinds of social representations of teachership that the Trade Union of Education in Finland communicates through the cover images of its Teacher magazine. Sub-study 3 is related to the process of naturalization.

This dissertation is composed of six chapters. Chapter 2 summarizes prior literature on visual representations of teachership (teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior and teacher representations in media) and social representations of teachership. Chapter 3 presents and discusses the theory of social representations, paying attention to its
premises as well as visual materials in the processes of anchoring, objectification, and naturalization. Chapter 4 elaborates the methodological choices in this study. First, it provides reasons for using a qualitative approach and visual materials in social representations research. After that, the choice of the methods of analysis is justified sub-study by sub-study based on the nature of the data and the process of social representation. Finally, ethical questions are reflected upon. Chapter 5 presents the findings of each sub-study as well as the overarching findings, and Chapter 6 discusses them in relation to prior research. In addition, Chapter 6 draws conclusions, presents the contributions of the study, and evaluates the study, paying attention to its strengths, limitations, and reliability. Finally, suggestions for future research are proposed.
This chapter presents the central findings of prior research on teachers' visual nonverbal behavior (Section 2.1), media representations of teachers (Section 2.2), and social representations of teachership (Section 2.3). Together, these sections provide a contextualizing ground for examining visual and social representations of teachership.

### 2.1 TEACHERS’ VISUAL NONVERBAL BEHAVIOR

Teachers present teachership – to a great extent visually – while teaching, and when students perceive and interpret this presentation as referring to a certain kind of teachership, it becomes a visual representation of teachership for them (Babad, 2009a; Brekelmans, den Brok, van Tratwijk, & Wubbels, 2005). Even though this dissertation does not study teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior in the classroom but rather only its depictions in teacher images, it is assumed that students’ experiences of teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior in classroom situations form an important precondition for making sense of teacher images (Steier, Pierroux, & Krange, 2015; Yang, 2015). In addition, aspects of visual expressiveness, such as age, gender, facial expressions, gestures, and attire, play a central role in perceiving images depicting people (Bell, 2012). For these reasons, the inclusion of the topic in the literature review is regarded as relevant. That being said, the approach of the studies on teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior reviewed in this chapter differs from a social representations approach. Whereas they present certain kinds of teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior as generating certain student responses without addressing their social preconditions, a social representations approach assumes that the social representations of teachership available to students shape their perceptions of teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior (Chaib, 2015).

Nonverbal behavior is an important constituent of interaction (Gulec & Temel, 2015; Yang, 2017). Nonverbal behavior and nonverbal communication both refer to a wide spectrum of visual, audible, haptic, and kinesthetic aspects of human behavior and are often used more or less synonymously (Bonaccio, O’Reilly, O’Sullivan, & Chiocchio, 2016; Hall, Horgan, & Murphy, 2019; Krauss, Chen, & Chawla, 1996). Similar to verbal utterances, nonverbal expressions can be harnessed to communicate deliberate meanings; however, unlike verbal utterances, they are often executed spontaneously and unconsciously, without intentional meanings or communicative purposes (Babad, 2009a). Despite this unintentional quality from the side of the executer, the perceiver may interpret unintentional nonverbal expressions as carriers of deliberate meanings (Mottet, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2016). To capture the embeddedness of nonverbal substrata in human conduct as well as its intentional and unintentional dimensions, this study prefers the concept of “nonverbal behavior” to “nonverbal communication.”

Babad (2009a, 2009b) includes within visual nonverbal behavior such visually perceivable matters as facial expressions, gestures, body language, postures, movement, attire, physical appearance, and behavioral patterns in interpersonal interaction (see also Mottet et al., 2016). These aspects of visual nonverbal behavior play an important role in terms of teachership as well. First impressions of new teachers are often formed based on visual cues in fractions of a second and may
have long-lasting effects influencing teacher-student interaction far ahead (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993; Babad, 2009a; Skowronski & Ambady, 2008). Similarly, teachers’ nonverbal behavior during the very first minutes after entering the classroom may influence the mood of the whole lesson (Becker, Goetz, Morger, & Ranellucci, 2014; Okon, 2011). Naturally, the importance of teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior is not limited to such first impressions but is related to all classroom management in terms of creating and maintaining favorable conditions for studying and learning (Postholm, 2013). Thus, visual nonverbal behavior forms an essential constituent of teachers’ competence (Babad, 2009a; Buja, 2009). However, as Alibali with her colleagues (2013) and Zeki (2009) argue, teachers often tend to downgrade the importance of nonverbal behavior in instruction and do not pay conscious attention to it.

Because the context of this study is Finnish upper secondary vocational education and, except for one student, all participants are of Finnish origin, the literature review on teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior mostly cites studies conducted in Western countries. However, as research on teacher nonverbal behavior pinpoints, its norms, conventions, expectations, and perceptions may vary in different cultures (Babad, 2009b; Hosotani & Imai-Matsumura, 2011; Kalat, Yazdi, & Ghanizadeh, 2018). For this reason, the perception of teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior and, accordingly, the research findings related to it might differ in other cultural contexts.

Age, gender, and ethnic background

As visually perceivable cues, age, gender, and ethnic background form a group of visual characteristics that are not subject to change in response to situational social encounters but instead constitute more invariant visually perceivable features (Bonaccio et al., 2016; Brooks & Freeman, 2018). Even though they differ from more dynamic visual cues, their perception and influence on learning have been of wide interest to educational scholars. For instance, studies on teacher age conducted among Italian and American university students show that teachers’ older age negatively influences teaching evaluations (Bianchini, Lissoni, & Pezzoni, 2013; Stonebraker & Stone, 2015; Wilson, Beyer, & Monteiro, 2014). In terms of teachers’ gender, Sebastian and Bristow (2008) found that American university students participating in their study addressed male professors more formally than female professors. In addition, Boring’s (2017) study in France and MacNell, Driscoll, and Hunt’s (2015) study in the United States found that university students rated male teachers’ instruction higher than they did female teachers’ instruction. Despite this tendency, there seems to be disagreement whether or not teachers’ gender has an impact on actual study achievements, as indicated by the studies of Hoffmann and Oreopoulos (2009), Stonebraker and Stone (2015), and Young, Rush, and Shaw (2009) in Canadian and American universities. Similarly, opposing views on whether or not teachers’ ethnic background influences student evaluations and study performance have been presented in studies conducted in the United States (Dee, 2004; Egalite, Kisida, & Winters, 2015; Howsen & Trawick, 2007).

Research on teachers’ gender has traditionally approached gender as a rigid binary system that understands teachers as either male or female (McCarthy, 2003; Wells, 2018) and by discussing male and female teacher stereotypes (Beyazkurk & Anliak, 2008; McDowell & Klattenberg, 2019). Recently, this dichotomy has been diversified (Harris & Jones, 2014; Seffner & Reidel, 2015), and attention has been
given to transgender teachers challenging “traditional discourses of trans invisibility, silence, shame, and fear” at school (Wells, 2018, p. 1543). This diversification in terms of gender is connected with a broader initiative to challenge heteronormativity and cisnormativity in education and discuss identity, experiences, and perceptions of LGBTQ teachers as well as their contribution as role models for students who struggle with their gender identities (Atkinson & DePalma, 2009; McCarthy, 2003; Wells, 2018). Correspondingly, research on teachers’ ethnic background has shown that teachers coming from ethnic minorities are under-represented in the teaching workforce in many Western countries, including Finland (Egalite et al., 2015; Miettunen & Dervin, 2014; Raento & Husso, 2002), which Dee (2004) and Pitts (2007) regard as problematic from ethnic minority students’ point of view.

Physical appearance and attire

In terms of teachers’ physical appearance, a number of studies conducted in the United States have shown that attractive professors score higher in university students’ course evaluations (Hamermesh & Parker, 2005; Liu, Hu, & Furutan, 2013; Mixon & Smith, 2013). Similar to Hamermesh and Parker’s (2005) study among American university students, Bokek-Cohen and Davidowitz’s (2008) study among Israeli university students found the influence of professors’ looks on course ratings to be higher for male than female professors. Gurung and Vespia (2007), for their part, found that American students at various levels of education experienced having learned more when taught by an attractive professor. In addition, Liu, Hu, and Furutan (2013) found that professors’ attractiveness might contribute to students’ motivation. Theyson’s (2015) study conducted in the United States, in turn, found that the quality of instruction itself may influence the perception of attractiveness since “high quality instructors are likely to establish a rapport with their students that positively influences those students’ perceptions of the instructor’s attractiveness” (p. 7).

Much of the research on teacher attire has focused on comparing perceptions of formally versus casually dressed teachers. In these studies, formal clothing is characterized as natty business-style attire such as a suit or blazer combined with neat trousers or skirt, whereas casual attire is characterized as jeans, T-shirts, and sweatshirts, for instance (Dunbar & Segrin, 2012; Morris, Gorham, Cohen, & Huffman, 1996; Workman & Freeburg, 2010). The studies by Dunbar and Segrin (2012) and Lighstone, Francis, and Kocum (2011) in American and Canadian university contexts showed that formally dressed teachers were perceived as professional, credible, competent, knowledgeable, intelligent, and well-prepared, and their instruction was often rated higher than the instruction of informally dressed teachers. In addition, several studies have shown that American university students associate a formal dressing style with authority and distance in relation to students (Shoulders & Smith, 2018; Slepian, Ferber, Gold, & Rutchick, 2015). Similar to American undergraduate students, secondary and tertiary level students in Trinidad and Tobago considered professionally dressed teachers to be positive role models, resulting in increased respect toward teachers and attention to what they teach (Freeburg & Workman, 2010; Joseph, 2017). On the other hand, Morris, Gorham, Cohen, and Huffman (1996), as well as Dunbar and Segrin (2012) found that teachers wearing casual clothes – such as jeans and a T-shirt – were perceived most positively by university students in the United States. They perceived casually dressed teachers as fun, friendly, caring,
flexible, and approachable (Lightstone, Francis, & Kocum, 2011; Sebastian & Bristow, 2008; Slepian et al., 2015). However, casual attire may lessen teacher credibility and respect, and for this reason, casually dressed teachers are more likely to encounter student misbehavior (Dunbar & Segrin, 2012; Roach, 1997; Shoulders & Smith, 2018).

Besides generating various impressions in terms of professional competence and connectedness with students, research conducted in American universities has also found that classes taught by formally dressed teachers have achieved higher scores on exams than classes taught by casually dressed teachers (Craig & Savage, 2014; Roach, 1997). Thus, teachers’ attire might influence students’ classroom behavior, commitment to studying, attitude to learning, as well as study performance (Carr, Davies, & Lavin, 2010; Craig & Savage, 2015; Freeburg, Workman, Arnett, & Robinson, 2011). Yang (2017) argues that teachers’ non-professional and striking appearance might divert students’ attention, disturb concentration on studying, and, thus, have a negative impact on learning. However, conceptions of what is professional or striking may vary across cultures and institutions (Dunbar & Segrin, 2012; Mallozzi, 2012).

Dunbar and Segrin (2012) and Freeburg and Workman (2010) state that there are deep-rooted cultural norms and conceptions of what kind of attire is appropriate and inappropriate for a teacher. In her dissertation conducted among Finnish teachers, Kamila (2012) found that teachers form judgments on each other’s professionalism based on attire and use their own clothing as a means of impression management. However, teacher attire is not considered to communicate individual teachers’ professional competence, credibility, and commitment exclusively but also the professional image of whole institutions of education (Joseph, 2017; Workman & Freeburg, 2010). For this reason, many schools in the United States, for instance, have implemented dress codes for teachers in order to manage their professional image and credibility as institutions of education (Freeburg et al., 2011; Workman & Freeburg, 2010).

Facial expressions and gestures

While attire seems to be a nonverbal cue reflecting the credibility and professionalism of teachers and entire institutions of education both toward students and the public at large (Dunbar & Segrin, 2012; Joseph, 2017; Workman & Freeburg, 2010), teachers’ facial expressions and gestures have been discussed in relation to teachers’ emotional expressions, teacher-student interaction, instructional effectiveness, student motivation, and study performance (Hale et al., 2017; Matsumoto & Mueller Dobs, 2017; Sutton & Wheately, 2003). In this study, gestures are understood broadly as hand movements that either communicate teachers’ intentional meanings or are produced spontaneously without deliberate communicative content (Buja, 2009; Fei Lim, 2019). For instance, Zeki (2009) found that Cypriot university students considered teachers’ facial expressiveness and gestures important in terms of motivating students, creating confidence, maintaining attention, clarifying topics, as well as stressing important points. Matsumoto and Mueller Dobs (2017) made a similar finding in the American university context.

Emotions are involved in learning and teaching. In order to have an impact on students, teachers’ emotions must be articulated through teachers’ behavior so that students can perceive or sense them (Babad, 2009a; Becker et al., 2014). Even though emotional expressions and responses are related to visual nonverbal behavior overall
(Gulec & Temel, 2015; Yang, 2017), teachers' facial expressions and gestures are also considered to play a major role in the communication of their emotional states and relationship to students, subject matter, and teaching in general (Hale et al., 2017; Sathik & Jonathan, 2013; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). In research on teacher-student interaction, emotions are often categorized as positive emotions (e.g., joy, pride, trust, enthusiasm) or negative emotions (e.g., anger, sadness, fear, anxiety) (Prosen, Smrtnik Vitulić, & Poljšak Škraban, 2011). Based on their studies in American higher education, Matsumoto and Mueller Dobs (2017) and Roberts and Friedman (2013) concluded that teachers' positive emotional expressions, such as eye contact, smiles, and welcoming gestures, may increase student participation and promote interaction with peers and teachers. The results are congruent with Becker, Goetz, Morger, and Ranellucci’s (2014) study in the context of upper secondary education in Switzerland. In contrast, studies conducted in upper secondary schools in Germany (Raufelder et al., 2016) and a university in Cyprus (Zeki, 2009) showed that teachers' negative emotional expressions, such as avoidance of eye contact, graveness, and withdrawing gestures, may lessen student motivation, contribute to negative student emotions, and decrease the use of cognitive strategies needed for deeper information processing. Similar findings were made by Fried, Mansfield, and Doboz (2015) based on their review of teacher emotion research in English language journals between 2003 and 2013. For this reason, regulation of emotions and their expression are considered key areas of teaching professionals’ competence (Fried, 2011; Sutton, Mudrey-Camino, & Knight, 2009).

Despite teachers’ conscious attempts to regulate their emotions and attitudes, students are often capable of noticing them from subtle nuances of teachers’ facial expressions and gestures (Stutton & Wheatley, 2003). Even though teachers may succeed in controlling the expression of their emotions and judgments verbally, they may, nevertheless, leak out through teachers’ nonverbal cues that express their conceptions about students’ talent and skills, for instance (Armstrong & Hope, 2016; Gulec & Temel, 2015). Thus, teachers’ differential visual nonverbal behavior may communicate to students whom teachers regard as low-achievers versus high-achievers (Ambady, Bernieri, & Richeson, 2000; Babad, 2009a).

Two aspects of teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior have attracted a great deal of attention in the research literature – namely, immediacy and enthusiasm. While immediacy refers to teacher warmth and approachability as well as closeness between teacher and students (Lazarides, Buchholz, & Rubach, 2018; Roberts & Friedman, 2013), enthusiasm refers to the enjoyment teachers experience during instruction (Keller, Woolfolk Hoy, Goetz, & Frenzel, 2016; Lazarides et al., 2018). Eye contact, a friendly facial expression, smiles, use of gestures and head nods, direct face and body orientation, and movement around the classroom are features of visual nonverbal behavior that have been associated with both teacher immediacy and enthusiasm (Babad, 2009b; Keller et al., 2016; Pladevall Ballester, 2015). This kind of teacher visual behavior tends to promote positive and effective interaction between teachers and students, motivate and engage students, encourage their participation in class, and enable better study achievements, as shown by Burroughs’ (2007) study conducted in the United States and Kalat, Yazdi, and Ghanizadeh’s (2018) study conducted in Iran. In contrast, teacher visual nonverbal behavior communicating distance – e.g., monotonic facial expressions, avoidance of eye contact, body language communicating boredom, and teachers’ location behind a podium – may contribute to a negative atmosphere which, in turn, may decrease student motivation and engagement and,
finally, have a negative impact on study achievement, as shown by studies conducted in American (Armstrong & Hope, 2016), Turkish (Gulec & Temel, 2015), and Cypriot (Zeki, 2009) universities.

Several studies conducted in the United States have shown that teachers’ gestures promote students’ learning and comprehension regardless of their age (Alibali, Spencer, Knox, & Kita, 2011; Matsumoto & Mueller Dobs, 2017; Valenzeno, Alibali, & Klatzky, 2003). However, based on their study among American middle school students, Yeo and her colleagues (2017) warn teachers against drawing the conclusion that more instructional gesturing is better since redundant and excessive teacher gesturing may be detrimental and hinder learning. In fact, prior research has shown that teachers routinely use gestures, but often without conscious instructional intention (Alibali et al., 2013). Hence, Babad (2009a) and Smotrova (2017) call for teachers to be aware of their gestural style and its implications for learning and, for this reason, regard it as important that teacher training pays more vigorous attention to gestures and other forms of visual nonverbal behavior as aspects of pedagogical competence.

**Teachers’ point of view**

While research on teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior has mostly discussed it in terms of pedagogy – meaning conduct and practices that promote students’ learning and personal growth (Atjonen et al., 2008) – recent research has begun to approach the topic from the point of view of teachers’ professional identity and well-being as well. For instance, several American studies have paid critical attention to the fact that teachers may experience regulations concerning dress to restrict their autonomy and limit their potential as teachers (Freeburg et al., 2011). Atkinson (2008, p. 119) regards clothing as a discursive practice that not only influences how others see the person but also “shapes the person’s sense of who she is relative to her context.” Teachers might experience conflict between their personal preferences and values, on the one hand, and norms related to the profession, on the other (Shoulders & Smith, 2018). According to Freeburg, Workman, Arnett, and Robinson (2011) and Workman and Freeburg (2010), this might burden inexperienced teachers especially. Similarly, this might burden teachers who cannot identify themselves in terms of such norms due to issues related to gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, and religion, for instance (Atkinson, 2008; Jeans, 2015; Mallozzi, 2012). Teachers who do not adhere to or cannot identify themselves with such “socially constructed images of ‘teacher’ set forth in the dress code, may be viewed as unprofessional and therefore unskilled . . . and lead to excluding skilled and dedicated teachers” (Jeans, 2015, p. 4).

Similarly, teacher enthusiasm has mostly been studied from the students’ point of view (Keller et al., 2016; Lazarides et al., 2018). Taxer and Frenzel (2018) have studied teacher enthusiasm from teachers’ perspectives in German secondary and higher education, raising a critical question regarding inauthentic teacher enthusiasm. Being aware of the positive implications of enthusiastic teacher behavior, teachers may feel obliged to present themselves as enthusiastic even if it contradicts their true feelings. The discrepancy between displayed behavior and emotion might be a burden that threatens teachers’ well-being. In addition, the intended positive outcomes of inauthentic teacher enthusiasm might not be achieved if students recognize the enthusiasm as fake. (Taxer & Frenzel, 2018.)
2.2 TEACHER REPRESENTATIONS IN MEDIA

Media permeates our social lives and contributes to the construction of our identities, social relations, and social realities (Chamberlain & Hodgetts, 2008; Silverstone, 2007). As Chamberlain and Hodgetts (2008, p. 1109) argue, “media are foundational to the symbolic landscape within which people make sense of the world and their place in it.” Giroux (2011), in turn, understands media as a form of public pedagogy reaffirming or questioning our beliefs and educating us in how to lead our lives and relate to other people. Media educate us not only when we consciously orient ourselves to be informed by their diverse forms but also when media images and content influence our thoughts and behavior beyond our awareness (Chamberlain & Hodgetts, 2008; Krausz, 2002). Thus, media extend beyond pages, screens, and applications into our social practices (Silverstone, 2007). In fact, Gregory (2007, p. 8) states that media images of teachers “haunt real classrooms” and merge with our experiences of real-world teachers.

Media representations of teachers

Matters related to teaching, teachers, and education in general form one popular topic area in the press, magazines, television series, films, and other forms of media that shape public conceptions and perceptions about teachers and education in general (Goldstein, 2011). A host of international studies on representations of teachers in movies (Ambrosetti, 2016; Beyerbach, 2005; Dalton, 2010), printed media (Cohen, 2010; Goldstein, 2011), and the Internet (Bergman, 2017; Guimãraes & Guimãraes, 2014) show that such representations in media tend to be stereotypical. Accordingly, similar types of representations of teachers circulate in diverse forms of media, contributing to people’s conceptions of teachership.

In a comparative study on media representations of teachers across five countries (Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Oman, Bangladesh, and Australia) based on newspaper articles, Alhamdan and his colleagues (2014, p. 40) identified four types of teachers, namely, “caring practitioners, professionals, moral and social role models and transformative intellectuals.” In her study on teacher portrayals in the Swedish press between 1982 and 2002, Wiklund (2003) also found the understanding and caring type of teacher; however, she additionally identified two further types – namely, administrators and disciplinarians. Cohen (2010), for her part, identified the predominant discourses of care and accountability when examining teacher identity in an American newspaper between the years 2006 and 2007. These positive or neutral modes of teacher representations in the press and newspapers seem compatible with Hansen’s (2009) and Shine and O’Donoghue’s (2013) findings based on longitudinal studies on teacher portrayals in the American, Australian, and British press, which showed that teachers are increasingly depicted as committed professionals fighting against hardships. They found that even though individual teachers’ misconduct continues making headlines, the righteousness of teachers as a collective of professionals is not questioned as a rule (Hansen, 2009; Shine & O’Donoghue, 2013).

Teacher portrayals in Western fictional TV series and movies, in turn, customarily make a clear division between good and bad teachers, recycling certain stereotypical teacher characters (Beyerbach, 2005; Dalton, 2010, 2013; Shine & O’Donoghue, 2013). Good teachers are often depicted as inspirational, charismatic, and heroic individuals
challenging institutional norms and encouraging students’ intellectual and personal growth (McGrail & McGrail, 2016; Scanlon, 2008). Bad teachers, in contrast, are represented as cynical and cruel authorities who maintain strict discipline and “teach through fear” or are indifferent and unskilled milquetoasts who cannot manage a classroom and are not interested in students’ learning (Scanlon, 2008). In addition to polarization between good and bad teachers, teachers of certain subjects are often depicted in a stereotypical manner. Sellers (2012), for instance, found that Latin teachers are represented in films as pedantic and strict “taskmasters” (p. 237) who are both socially detached and estranged from contemporary times. Art teachers, in contrast, are often depicted as relaxed and broad-minded (Miettunen & Dervin, 2014).

In Finland, for example, Punakallio and Dervin (2015) studied how teachers were represented in headlines and photos on Finnish tabloid front pages between 2000 and 2013. They identified a shift in representations of teachers from traditional professionals with authority and high morals to more vulnerable teachers who do not have the same authority and respect as before. They explained the shift through the changes in educational policy and the status of teachers in general. Similar findings on the parallel changes in representations of teachers and educational policy can also be found in Sahlberg’s (2009) and Silventoinen’s (2008) studies on representations of teachers in Finnish novels. Sahlberg (2009) introduced seven teacher types – teaching as vocation, teacher officer, teacher technician, socially aware teacher, teacher as didactician, teacher as researcher, and reflective teacher – reflecting historical biases and ideals of pedagogy in Finland. Silventoinen (2008), in turn, identified a wide spectrum of teachers ranging from routinized and ossified teachers to reflective, reformative, and rebellious teachers. According to Sahlberg (2009), the reflective type of teacher corresponds to contemporary teachership, which is characterized by critical reflection, a holistic approach to pedagogy, as well as openness to change.

In their study on representations of teachers in a Finnish TV series, Miettunen and Dervin (2014), on the one hand, identified stereotypical teacher characters; on the other hand, however, they noticed that representations of art teachers challenged stereotypical teacher representations. In general, they found the teacher representations to be highly homogeneous and lacking diversity, for instance, in terms of teachers’ ethnic background. In addition, several Finnish students of education sciences have utilized visual data in order to study teachership in their master’s theses. For instance, Ranta (2016) studied teacher representations in a Finnish TV comedy series and found the humor in the series to be based on the ways the selfish and unethical teacher character deviated from the norms of a good teacher. Keskiväli (2012) and Nygren (2007) studied representations of teachers in Finnish films, recognizing gender-based differences in – often stereotypical – teacher representations. Nygren (2007) found that female teachers were represented as motherly or dictatorial characters whose physical appearance was extremely groomed and tidy, whereas male teachers were represented as inflexible, strict, or helpful characters wearing either scruffy or tidy clothes. Both female and male teachers acted in friendly or evil ways, either supporting and motivating learning or hindering it (Nygren 2007). In his doctoral dissertation on male teacher characters in Finnish films, Kujala (2008) found that recent films depict male teachers increasingly as caring and encouraging educators.
Influence of media representations of teachers

People use “symbolic and media resources” to construct their identities (Vandermeersche, Soetaert, & Rutten, 2013, p. 88). Media representations of teachers not only shape public conceptions of the profession and education in general (Alhamdan et al., 2014; Cap & Black, 2014; Shine & O’Donoghue, 2013) but also impact teachers’ perception of their profession and professional identity (Gregory, 2007; Kirby, 2016; Vandermeersche et al., 2013). Grant (2002), Trier (2005), and Vandermeersche, Soetaert, and Rutten (2013) consider media portrayals as especially influential for preservice teachers who do not have prior experience of teaching work in practice. A further aspect of their influence is brought up by Barmby (2006), Carter (2009), and Krausz (2002), who argue that media imagery of teachers and education might influence young people’s interest in choosing a teaching career. Interestingly, Breault (2009) argues that even though people know that movies, for instance, are fictional, they still influence the expectations, perceptions, and evaluations of real-world teachers.

Several studies conducted in the United States have brought up the disruptive and misleading impact of both positive and negative stereotypical media representations of teachers on teaching, learning, and classroom interaction (Breault, 2009; Dalton, 2013; McGrail & McGrail, 2016). According to Dalton (2013), the presentation of negative teacher stereotypes, including unskilled, bad-behaving, cruel, lazy, and indifferent teachers, may contribute to negative perceptions of schooling and education among students, contributing to the problematization of teacher-student interaction. McGrail and McGrail (2016), in turn, claim that the, per se, positive stereotype of charismatic super-teachers who effortlessly master their duties and inspire their students may set the bar unrealistically high and create feelings of insufficiency in real-world teachers who struggle with diverse duties, responsibilities, and regulations in their work (see also Gregory, 2007; Vandermeersche et al., 2013).

In addition to impacting practicing and future teachers, the way teachers are represented in media also positions students in relation to teachers. According to Gregory (2007), classroom interaction between teachers and students is mediated through media images of teachers and students that influence not only teachers’ and students’ self-conceptions but also their perceptions of each other as well as their relationship. Media depictions of empathetic, encouraging, and knowledgeable teachers may generate positive perceptions of studying and teachers among students (Ambrosetti, 2016). However, students may also compare their teachers with teacher heroes on the silver screen and become disappointed because they do not measure up to their larger-than-life colleagues (Breault, 2009; Gregory, 2007; Sellers, 2012). Similarly, the depiction of learning and studying as fun in “feel-good teacher movies” (Sellers, 2012, p. 251) may distort students’ expectations of the nature of their studies. Negative teacher stereotypes, in turn, may contribute to negative student expectations and attitudes toward teachers and studying in general, thus decreasing their appreciation (Sellers, 2012).

In addition to stereotypical and unrealistic media representations of teachers, prior studies have also identified the predominance of certain types of teachers in media imagery. Berkovich and Benoliel (2019), for instance, identified a whiteness or Eurocentric bias on the covers of OECD education-related publications. Niemi, Smith, and Brown (2014), for their part, noticed that in American and British children’s fiction books, the majority of teachers were female, white, straight, and non-disabled. Also, Dockett, Perry, and Whitton (2013) noted the exclusion of disabled teachers and
teachers belonging to gender and ethnic minorities in English language children’s picture storybooks and argued that narrow portrayals of teachers might convey messages about who belongs at school and who does not. Thus, visual representations of teachers may participate in the social construction of how we understand teachership (Alhamdan et al., 2014; Goldstein, 2011).

Mitchell and Weber (2005) consider the fictional teacher representations in popular forms of media as misguided and irresponsible because they do not take teachers’ actual experiences into consideration (see also Weber & Mitchell, 1999). Furthermore, Breault (2009) and Sandefur and Moore (2004) regard it as important for teachers to be aware of teacher stereotypes circulated in media since they might inform teachers about the way teachers are perceived in society. A better understanding of teacher representations in media as well as their mechanisms and potential influences might help teachers to adopt a critical stance to media representations of teachers and avoid internalizing distorted and discriminatory portrayals (Zemke, 2007). In a similar vein, Vandermeersche, Soetaert, and Rutten (2013) emphasize that scholars of media representations of teachership need to go beyond labeling stereotypes as distorted and harmful and disapproving of them. Instead, they should challenge distorted media representations and critically discuss the reasons for their inappropriateness as well as their functions and implications (Goldstein, 2011).

2.3 SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF TEACHERSHIP

Conceptions and perceptions of teachers and teachership have been amply discussed in the research literature. However, there seems to be less research that explicitly mentions and implements a social representation approach to study teachership in terms of socially constructed and commonly shared understandings of teachership. That being said, research on social representations of teachership is not non-existent, and especially South American scholars have recently applied the theory of social representations to study teachership (Geka & Gregoriadis, 2018). Perhaps one reason for the lack of this kind of research is that a social representations approach was originally targeted to studying unfamiliar social phenomena (Moscovici, 1961/2008, 1984). Teachers, instead, are “figures of impossible familiarity” (Weber & Mitchell, 1995, p. xi), of which most people have firsthand experiences. Since recent research has increasingly used social representations theory to study familiar phenomena as well (Hakoköngäs, 2017; Hakoköngäs & Sakki, 2016a; Sakki & Menard, 2014), this study regards it as a tenable theoretical frame to explore contemporary teachership.

Social representations approach in educational context

Jodelet (2011) considers the relation between social representations and education both historical and logical since both are interested in the distribution and formation of knowledge and are concerned with values, norms, and identities. Education practices are not “matters” limited to actual teaching and learning in the classroom exclusively but are also related to and dependent on societal, political, and economic conditions that regulate and modify the ideals and requirements of education (Gebran & Trevizan, 2018; Jodelet, 2011). Jodelet (2011) regards a social representations approach as providing the means for studying these various dimensions of education.
The theory of social representations has been widely used to explore diverse topics related to education. Such topics include, for instance, conceptions of different subjects (Castellotti & Moore, 2002; Gorgorió & de Abreu, 2009; Okemba, Essono, Moulongo, & Massamba, 2016), teaching methods (Ailincai & Gabillon, 2018; Carneiro & Monteiro, 2018; Kilpiö, 2008; Prasad, 2018), intelligence and educability (Carugati & Selleri, 2011; Räty, 2014; Räty, Komulainen, & Hirva, 2012), education in general (Koshkin, Abramov, Rozhina, & Novikov, 2018; Miettinen, 2012), inclusive education (Linton, Germundsson, Heimann, & Danermark, 2015, 2016; Tuval, 2014), multicultural education and racism (Carignan, Sanders, & Pourdavood, 2005; Howarth, 2007; Howarth & Andréouli, 2015; Kudo, 2016), parental engagement (Boulanger, Larose, Grenier, Saussez, & Couturier, 2014), trust and justice between students, teachers and school personnel (Berti, Molinari, & Speltini, 2010; Pirrtilä-Backman, Menard, Verma, & Kassea, 2017), social representations of the European Union in school curricula and textbooks (Sakki, 2010, 2016) as well as perception of school premises (Rajala, Itkonen, & Laine, 2015), to name but a few.

**Teachers’, student teachers’, and students’ social representations of teachership**

Studies conducted among Brazilian teachers have detected diverse and even contradictory social representations of teachership. For instance, da Silva, Dias, and Pimenta (2014) found that academic competence in terms of substantial knowledge and rationality dominated Brazilian public school teachers’ social representations of teachership. Da Silva and Camargol (2017), in turn, identified responsibility and commitment as key constituents of social representations of teachership among youth and adult-education teachers. Osti and Brenelli (2012) found that elementary school teachers associated learning with the absence of errors and regarded it as an individual process, whereas Velloso and Lannes (2010) noticed that university professors’ – similar to undergraduate students’ social representations of teachership emphasized teachers’ knowledge of the subject of teaching. Even though Gebran and Trevitzan (2018) recognized social representations of teachership that can be associated with both teacher-centered and student-centered pedagogic approaches, traditional teaching arrangements emphasizing face-to-face contact instead of e-learning and teacher-centered methods seem to prevail (Carneiro & Monteiro, 2018; da Silva, Dias, & Pimenta, 2014). For this reason, it is a challenge for teacher education in Brazil to train teachers in skills of arranging more diverse and motivating learning experiences for students (da Silva et al., 2014).

Quite different social representations of teachership were identified by Ens, Eyn, Gisi, and Ribas (2014), who found that Brazilian elementary school teachers’ social representations of teachership include such negatively valenced aspects as low wages, student misbehavior, lack of working conditions, and low investment in education. The researchers assume these negative images might be the reason why young people are becoming less interested in the teaching profession in basic education in Brazil. In addition, the conception that it is an innate calling of women to educate children in Brazil has led to the common-sense understanding that teaching in basic education is a female profession (Fischman, 2000; da Silva, 2012). Fischman (2000) argued that men who challenge this stereotypical setting and strive for a teacher’s position in
primary schools violate heteronormative expectations and might become subject to gender prejudice.

Research on social representations has been conducted not only among teachers but also among student teachers. Pardal, Albuquerque, Lopes, and Ferrão (2013) studied social representations of teachership among student teachers in Argentina, Brazil, and Portugal. They found that even though knowledge of the subject matter was regarded as important, teachers’ skills in promoting students’ emotional well-being was often regarded as a more important constituent of professional competence. For this reason, the participants associated teachers with psychologists. Also, a study conducted by Campo-Redondo and Labarca Reverol (2009) among education science students in Venezuela draws conclusions from similar social representations of teachership that emphasize the importance of taking students’ needs into consideration. In her study on the social representations of Brazilian student teachers regarding teacher identity and work, da Silva (2012) found that male student teachers emphasized teachers’ ability to communicate with students more than did female student teachers, who regarded teaching and learning as key activities. According to da Silva (2012), this finding deviates from a common representation of female teachers being caring, mother-like figures.

In their study on Brazilian high school and university students’ social representations of teachership, Triani, Magalhaes, and Novikoff (2017) found that knowledge of the subject occupies an important position in conceptions of teachership. Martinez-Sierra’s (2014) study, conducted in Mexico, and Cândido, de Assis, Ferreira, and de Souza’s (2014) study, conducted in Brazil, reached similar findings but, in addition, noticed that elaborate and motivating ways of teaching and interacting with students formed another key constituent of students’ social representations of teachership. Additionally, the study conducted by Pardal and his colleagues (2013) in Argentina, Brazil, and Portugal emphasized the role of teachers’ interactional skills. Carvalho and de Andrade (2013), in turn, found evidence that Brazilian high school students’ social representations of teachership might be subject-specific; while students mostly considered teachers as facilitators of learning and providers of learning possibilities, teachers of mathematics and history, for instance, were understood as traditional distributors of knowledge.

When the findings of South American studies on teachers’, teacher students’, and high school students’ social representations of teachership are compared, one can note different biases. As is typical, different groups of people may have different social representations of the same object (Moscovici, 1961/2008, 1998; Moscovici & Marková, 1998). Whereas acting teachers’ social representations of teachership communicate traditional and teacher-centered pedagogy as well as insufficient conditions and resources allocated to teaching (Ens, Eyng, Gisi, & Ribas, 2014; da Silva et al., 2014; Velloso & Lannes, 2010), student teachers’ social representations tend to be more positive and refer to student-centered pedagogy that takes into account not only students’ knowledge and skills but also their emotional well-being (Campo-Redondo & Labarca Reverol, 2009; Pardal, Albuquerque, Lopes, & Ferrão, 2013). One is inclined to relate these different biases to the change of pedagogic ideals as well as to the different amount of practical experience of classroom teaching among practicing teachers versus teacher students (da Silva & Camargol, 2017). Students’ social representations of teachership, in turn, indicate that for their understanding of teachership, both teachers’ substantial knowledge and pedagogic skills in terms of creating learning possibilities are central (Carvalho & de Andrade, 2013; Martinez-
Sierra, 2014). Since social representations of teachership are actualized and constructed in daily educational practices as well (da Silva & Camargol, 2017), one might ask whether students’ social representations of teachership that include student-centered aspects might signal that a transformation of teaching practices is gradually taking place in the South American context (Valencia-Peris & Lizandra, 2018).

When reviewing research on social representations of teachership conducted in Europe, both similarities with and differences from South American research can be identified. In their study on social representations of teachers’ professional identity among teachers in Italian primary, middle, and high schools, Rochira, Guidi, Mannarini, and Salvatore (2015) identified the following five themes around which social representations were clustered: teachers’ pedagogic competence to teach effectively, deterioration of the image of the school system and teachers, teachers’ authority and asymmetric relation to students, supportive pedagogic relationships with students, and trust in teachers’ skills and competence to promote students’ critical thinking and personal growth. The researchers relate the diversity and partial controversy of these social representations of teachership to the different levels of education included in the study as well as to the reforms taking place in the Italian school system that teachers experience in different ways.

In their study on Romanian high school and university students’ and teachers’ social representations of teachers’ social competence, Mazilescu and her colleagues (2010) found that pedagogical sensitivity, consistency, self-control, and confidence were appreciated the most. Minervini and Fontani (2003) conducted a study among Italian special support teachers examining the social representations of their profession. The researchers identified four main themes that can be summarized as passion toward the profession, a supportive approach to education, teaching competence, and a patient and sensitive personality. Geka and Gregoriadis (2018), for their part, studied Greek kindergarten teachers’ and student teachers’ social representations of their professional identity. They found that kindergarten teachers’ and student teachers’ social representations of teachership drew on their childhood experiences of preschool teachers and their own teaching experiences, cultural knowledge, and teacher education. The role of academic knowledge and apprenticeship in the formation of student teachers’ social representations increased in the course of studies. Consequently, Geka and Gregoriadis (2018) concluded that kindergarten teachers’ professional identity was a dynamic construct, or a process, in which social and cultural knowledge of children and education merged with knowledge and skills achieved through training and experience in work life.

In Finland, Räty and his colleagues (2011, 2012) studied schoolchildren’s conceptions of intelligence in Finnish and Russian Karelia from a social representations perspective using children’s drawings as research data. While the 2011 study focused on children’s conceptions of an intelligent pupil, the 2012 study examined children’s conceptions of intelligent men and women. Intelligence was strongly associated with education in both studies. Some of the participating children represented intelligent men and women as teachers or professors – intelligence being signaled by eyeglasses, formal and neat clothing, as well as teaching tools, such as a pointer. However, Räty and his colleagues (2011, 2012) found that Russian children’s drawings were more strongly associated with educational setting than Finnish children’s drawings. Thus, for Russian children, the prototype of an intelligent woman seemed to be a neatly dressed school teacher, and the prototype of an intelligent man seemed to be a bald-headed
professor wearing eyeglasses (Räty et al., 2012). Thus, teachership was associated with education, knowledge, and intelligence.

2.4 SUMMARY

To sum up the findings presented in the literature review, teachers’ age, gender, ethnic background, overall physical appearance, attire, facial expressions, and gestures have been found to contribute to teacher-student interaction, student motivation, and even actual study performance. The studies conducted in Western countries, and mostly in the United States, show that students tend to rate older teachers’ instruction lower than younger teachers’ instruction and relate to male teachers more formally than to female teachers. In addition, teachers’ attractive physical appearance has been associated with higher motivation and positive study outcomes. Teachers with a serious facial expression, restrained gestures, and formal clothing are often perceived as less communicative than their friendly-looking and casually dressed colleagues. However, formal-looking teachers are regarded as more competent, credible, and well-prepared than casual and relaxed-looking teachers. The features of visual nonverbal behavior perceived as expressing immediacy and enthusiasm in terms of approachability, communicativeness, and commitment to counseling are regarded as promoting teacher-student interaction and learning. Teachers’ excessive immediacy and artificial enthusiasm, in contrast, might come to be perceived as inauthentic, thus problematizing teacher-student relationships. As the above summary indicates, prior research has identified certain tendencies regarding how students perceive teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior. However, as Babad (2009b) and Kalat, Yazdi, and Ghanizadeh (2018) remind us, such findings cannot be generalized to all levels of education and cultural contexts.

With regard to prior research on media representations of teachers, it has been found that Western media images tend to depict teachers in a stereotypical manner – either as good or bad teachers. Whereas good teachers are characterized as student-centered, caring, and compassionate educators, bad teachers are depicted as evil or cruel punishers who suppress students’ personal growth or neglect their instructional duties. In addition, several studies have paid attention to the narrowness of teacher imagery that excludes diversity. Such stereotypical and narrow media representations of teachers have been found to have mainly negative implications, both in terms of teacher-student relationships and teachers’ professional identity. Nevertheless, prior research has pinpointed the importance of teachers being aware of media images of teachers in order to anticipate students’ perceptions of teachers and to critically reflect on and resist stereotypical and narrow teacher representations in media.

Based on prior research, teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior is a multi-dimensional matter related to 1) students and learning, 2) teachers’ pedagogic competence, 3) teacher image (inside and outside the school), 4) the image of the school, 5) teachers’ professional identity, and 6) teachers’ work-related well-being. In these dimensions, teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior not only contributes to learning and instruction but also to the way students, teachers, and the public at large perceive and relate to teachers and institutions of education.

As for research on social representations of teachership, prior studies conducted in South American and European countries have identified some common denominators. The social representations of teachership seem to focus on three main themes – namely,
teachers’ knowledge and skills, teachers’ pedagogical actions, and students’ learning. While these can be identified as common themes, the way they are understood seems to vary depending on the culture, educational context, and the role the participants play in the educational setting. Thus, there seem to be both similarities and cultural and contextual differences in the socially shared understanding of teachership.

In classroom situations, teachers’ and students’ social representations of teachership “meet” and mutually influence each other (Gebran & Trevizan, 2018). However, social representations of teachership are not constructed solely based on what happens in the classroom; rather, prior experiences, mass media, the Internet, social media, literature, and cultural knowledge contribute to the formation of those representations (Chaib, 2015). According to Chaib (2015, p. 364), one of the challenges of contemporary teachers is to understand “what kind of representations people bring with them into school[,] … how to manage these representations and how to negotiate their functions in the instructional process.” According to da Silva (2012), a central precondition for coping with the situation is that we identify and recognize social representations of teachership and understand their roots and implications. Chaib’s (2015) and da Silva’s (2012) statements seem to suggest that teacher-student interaction and students’ perceptions of teachers are shaped by social representations of teachership. However, this seems to be an under-researched topic (Chaib, 2015). The research at hand attempts to address this research gap by examining how students make sense of teachers’ visual expressiveness in images based on social representations of teachership available to them. In addition, it studies the contribution of media images in the formation of social representations of teachership.
3 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter presents the theoretical frame of the study: the social representation approach. The theory of social representations is regarded as a flexible theoretical frame that encourages scholars to use their creativity when applying it (Arruda, 2015; Howarth, Kalampalikis, & Castro, 2011; Moscovici & Marková, 1998). Indeed, social representations research has witnessed a variety of theoretical and methodological uses (Sakki, 2010; Sakki, Mäkiniemi, Hakoköngäs, & Pirttilä-Backman, 2014). In prior research, various approaches – such as rhetorical approaches (Billig, 1988, 1993; Hakoköngäs, 2017; Sakki & Pettersson, 2018), discursive psychology (Kilby, 2017; Sakki & Pettersson, 2018), semiotics (Hakoköngäs, 2017; Veltri, 2015), and cultural studies (Howarth, 2011a) – have been applied in social representations research. Nevertheless, there is a clear gap in the theorizations of visuality within social representations approach. Drawing on person perception approaches (e.g., Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2001; McArdle & Baron, 1983) and visual rhetoric (e.g., Danesi, 2017; Foss, 2004, 2005), this dissertation endeavors to contribute to this underexplored field by elaborating the visuals together with social representations in sense-making and communication.

This chapter is structured as follows: In Section 3.1, the theory of social representations will be presented first. In the following Sections 3.2 and 3.3, the contribution of visual images in the processes of anchoring, objectification, and naturalization will be presented and reflected upon. Finally, in Section 3.4, the theoretical considerations will be summarized both in terms of the overall model comprising the relation between the object of the study, visual representations, and social representations and in terms of specifying the processes of anchoring, objectification, and naturalization related to visual materials.

3.1 THEORY OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS

Roots and epistemology of social representations theory

In his seminal work on the theory of social representations, *La psychomanalyse, son image et son public* (1961/2008), Serge Moscovici introduced the theory of social representations as a theory of social knowledge. It focused on exploring the origins, content, forms, processes, and functions of common-sense knowledge in mundane communication and social practices (Moscovici, 1961/2008, 1984; Wagner, 1996). Studying everyday communication provided the means to examine and detect social representations – namely, socially constructed and shared lay theories people use in making sense of diverse social encounters (Moscovici, 1961/2008). Despite the commonness of social representations, Moscovici (1994) stated that they are not completely shared; rather, every person lacks some part of the knowledge that other people in the social context have (see also Wagner & Hayes, 2005). This he regarded as a central motivation for communication (Moscovici, 1994).

According to Moscovici (1998) and Moscovici and Marková (1998), two traditions played a particularly important role in the formation of social representations theory;
while the Durkheim–Piagetian tradition offered the concept of representation, the Lévy-Bruhl–Vygotskian tradition served as the basis for the interconnectedness of culture and the individual in Moscovici’s thinking (see also Sakki, 2010). In addition, Piaget’s ideas of creativity and learning through interaction as well as Lévy-Bruhl’s emphasis on common-sense knowledge and the notion that people may simultaneously apply multiple ways of understanding the same phenomenon influenced Moscovici’s thinking. Furthermore, Vygotsky’s conception of context and change, according to which changes in the social environment bring about changes in the way people understand that environment, formed a central precondition for Moscovici’s conception of social representations being dynamic (Sakki, Menard, & Pirtilä-Backman, 2017).

To emphasize the mutuality and the interdependence of the individual and the social as well as underpin the co-creative nature of social representations, Moscovici (1972, 1984) introduced the idea of a semiotic triangle in which the Ego (self), the Alter (other), and the Object (of representation) are interconnected. The central idea of the semiotic triangle is that an individual’s (Ego) understanding of the target of representation (Object) is constructed in interaction with other people (Alter) (Marková, 2000; Moscovici, 1972, 1984; Sakki et al., 2017). Marková (e.g., 2003, 2006, 2012, 2017) has discussed the interdependence and interconnectedness of the Ego and Alter in terms of dialogicality, stating that the Ego and Alter co-constitute one another and that neither can exist without the other. Diverse Ego-Alter-Object triads do not exist in isolation but, instead, cluster together to form networks of Ego-Alter-Object relations that provide people with means of constructing and sharing their understanding of social reality (Marková, 2012; Sakki et al., 2017). Moscovici’s idea of a semiotic triangle is regarded as forming the epistemological basis of social representations theory congruent with social constructionism (Sakki et al., 2014; Sammut, 2015; Wagner & Hayes, 2005).

Defining social representations

When studying people’s understanding of psychoanalysis in mid-20th-century France, Moscovici (1961/2008) showed an example of how the processes of social representation were used to adapt a novel scientific phenomenon to everyday communication and transform it to common-sense knowledge. Thus, the social representations approach was originally designed to explore how unfamiliar, scientific knowledge and phenomena were made familiar and understandable to the public through communication (Moscovici, 1961/2008). Later, however, its scope was widened to include a variety of familiar and naturalized social and cultural phenomena and objects as well (Hakoköngäs, 2017; Hakoköngäs & Sakki, 2016a; Sakki & Menard, 2014).

Moscovici (1973, p. xiii) defined social representations as a socially shared “system of values, ideas and practices” that create social order and help people orientate themselves in the material and social worlds and communicate about them with one another. Hence, social representations are not mere opinions, conceptions, or attitudes but rather socially constructed and shared lay theories that provide people with a common matrix of meanings necessary for communication and interaction (Moscovici, 1961/2008, 1973, 1984; Wagner, 2015). On the one hand, they form the basis for expressing meanings in various symbolic forms; on the other, they provide keys for interpreting the meanings carried by a variety of symbolic representations (Jodelet, 2008; Marková, 2008). Despite their adaptive function, social representations do not
determine the ways people think and behave – but are also challenged, opposed, and modified in everyday social interaction when people use them in the reconstruction of social reality (Marková, 2008; Moscovici, 1984; Sakki, 2016). As for the present study, social representations of teachership (mediated through images) are considered to provide people with the means of reconstructing their understanding of teachers as well as their relation to teachers.

Social representation refers to both an activity and an outcome (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999). On the one hand, people make sense of diverse phenomena by using social representations as codes for understanding; on the other hand, they construct social representations by articulating the outcomes of sense-making as well as expressing diverse communicative contents (Sammut, Andreouli, Gaskell, & Valsiner, 2015). The navigation between social and cultural objects and phenomena, on the one hand, and meanings attached to them, on the other, is accomplished through three key processes of social representation, namely, anchoring, objectification, and naturalization (Moscovici, 1961/2008, 1984). These processes are responsible for generating, maintaining, and modifying social representations (Sakki & Menard, 2014). Even though the three processes can be seen as interconnected, this study regards them as distinguishable for analytic purposes, similar to Hakoköngäs and Sakki (2016a).

Processes of social representation: anchoring, objectification, and naturalization

Anchoring refers to the act of giving meanings to social encounters using existing social representations as the resource of sense-making (Kalampalikis & Haas, 2008; Moscovici, 1961/2008, 1984; Sakki, 2016). Since social objects are multifaceted, people employ several social representations simultaneously in order to make sense of them (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999; Moscovici, 1994; Wagner, 2003). For Moscovici (1984), anchoring means classifying and naming new and unfamiliar social encounters by comparing them to the prototype. Thus, basically, anchoring is a process of categorization in which social objects are anchored to and understood through culturally available categories used in everyday communication (Augoustinos, Walker, & Donaghue, 1995/2014). Thus, anchoring is a social process since the selection of categories is rooted in particular cultural traditions and the social life of groups (Billig, 1987; Joffe, 2003). Kalampalikis and Haas (2008) differentiate between static and dynamic anchoring; while static anchoring refers to the adaptation of the social object to the existing category, dynamic anchoring exemplifies the change in the category caused by the social object. Recently, Kalampalikis and Haas (2008) have introduced a novel interpretation of anchoring: instead of making the unfamiliar familiar, anchoring can stigmatize social phenomena which “guarantees, orchestrates or institutes a difference” (p. 456) and locates the phenomena in the realm of otherness.

The second process of social representation, namely, objectification, conceptualizes the act in which formless social representations are expressed through symbolic forms (Moscovici, 1961/2008, 1984; Philogène & Deaux, 2001). For Moscovici (1984, p. 38), “to objectify is to discover the iconic quality of an imprecise idea or being, to reproduce a concept in an image.” Thus, objectification is a process of concretization and externalization through which social representations become observable (Sammut et al., 2015). Through objectification, shapeless thoughts and experiences gain a tangible and perceivable form in a three-phase process consisting of information selection,
schematization, and symbolic expression (Jodelet, 2008; Sakki, 2010). In this process, an idea or concept is furnished with a (mental) image and finally articulated by a symbolic – e.g., visual or verbal – form. According to Marková (2000) and Moscovici (1984), objectification, wherein the figurative nucleus of an abstract idea is identified and expressed symbolically, is a more active and dynamic process than anchoring, and, as Marková (2000) points out, it entails the creation of new content and meanings.

Naturalization, for its part, refers to the process in which social representations become so widely shared – as a result of repetitive cycles of anchoring and objectification – that their constructed nature becomes obscured and eventually forgotten (Höijer, 2011; Moscovici, 1961/2008). These kinds of naturalized social representations may become taken for granted to the extent that they appear as “the reality” itself (Flick & Foster, 2010; Moscovici, 1984). Some scholars – e.g., Phioléne (1999) and Jodelet (2008) – regard naturalization as the final stage of objectification. Deviating from them and similar to Sakki (2010), this study considers naturalization as a distinct process of social representation characterized by its taken-for-granted nature. Because “social representation is not a quiet thing,” and “there is a kind of ideological battle, a battle of ideas” (Moscovici & Marková, 1998, p. 403), social representations are neither neutral nor disinterested in relation to reality but actively involved in the formation of ideas (Howarth, 2006; Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). Naturalized social representations may establish and maintain power relations and ideologies that people are not aware of. For this reason, research on naturalized social representations is needed in order to deconstruct their taken-for-granted status and re-evaluate their appropriateness. Hence, a number of researchers have adopted a critical approach to studying social representations, focusing their attention on the functions of social representations in social interaction and treating them as vehicles of power that legitimize and marginalize social groups, issues, and phenomena (e.g., Howarth, 2011a; Howarth & Andreouli, 2015; Howarth, Andreouli, & Kessi, 2014; Liu & Hilton, 2005; Lozada, 2014; Sarrica, Mazzara, & Brondi, 2016).

Dynamic and polyphasic nature of social representations

Social representations constitute a socially and culturally constructed and shared stock of knowledge that people use as a resource for communication (Moscovici, 1961/2008; Sammut et al., 2015). Moscovici (1972, 1984) posited social representations at the crossroads between the individual and the social/cultural, emphasizing their interconnectedness, on the one hand, and their social origin, on the other. Through the processes of anchoring and objectification, people navigate between encounters of social life and their stock of cultural knowledge (Moscovici, 1984). In contrast to more stable Durkheimian “collective representations,” social representations are regarded as dynamic and in the process of constant reconstruction (Moscovici, 1961/2008, 1984, 1998). When people make sense of versatile social encounters by leaning on shared social representations, these representations undergo modification (Bauer & Gaskell, 2008). Even though encounters in the social world tend to be assimilated into prevalent social representations, encounters deviating from the habitual and expectable may change social representation, paving the way for social change (Moscovici, 1984). Hence, changes in the social environment – including its visual aspects and manifestations – contribute to changes in social representations. In addition, critical approaches to studying social representations in terms of deconstructing, questioning, challenging,
and opposing naturalized social representations may set them open to reconstruction (Howarth, 2006). In this sense, social representations appear as dynamic, and the theory of social representations as a theory of social change (Howarth et al., 2013; Sakki et al., 2017).

In addition to social representations being dynamic, Moscovici (1998) and Moscovici and Marková (1998) characterized them as polyphasic (see also Jovchelovitch, 2008; Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernández, 2015). The concept of cognitive polyphasia refers to the multiple ways of thinking and understanding that co-exist within individuals as well as communities and societies (Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernández, 2015). Already, Moscovici’s (1961/2008) study on the social representations of psychoanalysis revealed that not only different communities but also members of one community or group can use a variety of different and even contradictory social representations regarding the same target. Plurality of thinking may also be the outcome of social representations having a different status. While hegemonic social representations are widely shared and have the dominant status in a society, emancipated and polemical representations compete with hegemonic social representations, thus providing an alternative perspective on social phenomena (Ben-Asher, 2003; Höijer, 2011; Liu & Hilton, 2005; Moscovici, 1988). Because different social representations may become activated in different situations and contexts, and because diverse groups of people, communities, and cultures might have different social representations, it is important that social representation researchers develop an understanding of the context, inform themselves about the context-related issues, and discuss their potential contribution to the findings (Howarth & Andreouli, 2015; Howarth et al., 2013).

**Structure of social representations**

From the structural perspective, social representations have been considered as being composed of central and peripheral elements (Abric, 2001; Moscovici, 2001). The structuralist view on social representations, as represented by the School of Aix-en-Provence, conceptualizes the central element as a remarkably stable central core developed over a long period of time (Abric, 1996, 2001; Moliner & Abric, 2015). According to Abric (1996, 2001), the central core encompasses the values and norms widely shared in the community and contributes to the community members’ relation to the phenomenon in question. Peripheral elements, for their part, are regarded as a less consensual and varying set of beliefs that mediate between the core and the reality (Abric, 2001; Moliner & Abric, 2015). Moscovici (2001, p. 30) considers that “the patterned structure [of social representations] rests on an initial string of a few themata” embodying knowledge and beliefs that are widely shared – and largely taken for granted – in the society (see also Marková, 2000, 2003). Themata, in turn, generate core notions, namely, beliefs and notions related to the object of the social representation (Moscovici, 2001; Moscovici & Vignaux, 1994/2001). Even though the concepts of “central core” (Abric, 1996) and “themata” (Moscovici, 2001; Moscovici & Vignaux, 1994/2001) can be seen as interrelated, Sakki (2010) regards themata as more flexible and context specific. According to Moscovici (2001) and Moscovici and Vignaux (1994/2001), the abstract themata of social representations cannot be studied directly but rather through their symbolic – for instance, visual and verbal – manifestations.
Visual dimension of social representation

The theory of social representations is not exclusively interested in verbal forms of communication but also in visual means of communication since images and other visual materials form an essential part of and make an important contribution to the common-sense understanding of social reality (Sakki et al., 2014). According to Moscovici (1984), the core of social representations is figurative, comprising a cluster of images capable of capturing profound – and often taken-for-granted – cultural meanings (see also Moscovici & Vignaux, 1994/2001). However, despite the fact that social representations theory acknowledged the contribution of the visual in the formation of social representations from the very beginning (Moscovici, 1961/2008, 1984) and influential contributions on the topic have been made (e.g., Milgram & Jodelet, 1976; de Rosa, 1987, 2001; de Rosa & Farr, 2001; Räty et al., 2011, 2012), research on the visual dimensions of social representation is still scarce (de Rosa, 2014). That being said, recent research has shown ever-increasing interest in studying social representations based on visual materials as well (Hakoköngäs, 2017; Hakoköngäs & Sakki, 2016a; Hedenus, 2016; Howarth, 2007, 2011b; Moloney, 2007; de Rosa, 2014; Sakki, 2010; Stocchetti, 2017). Recently, for instance, de Rosa (2014), Räty and his colleagues (2012), and Sakki with her colleagues (2014) have argued for the potential of visual materials and approaches to produce information pertaining to naturalized, unconscious, and socially undesired social representations. By capturing aspects of social representation that are difficult to articulate verbally, visual approaches to social representations may enrich the research on social representations (Räty et al., 2012; Sakki et al., 2014).

De Rosa (2014) states that images offer significant potential to social representations research since they can both shape social representations and provide means for investigating them. In fact, de Rosa (2014) and de Rosa and Farr (2001) have pointed out three functions that images can have in terms of social representation: images can serve as bases for activating social representations, as visual articulations of social representations, and as a means of circulating social representations. This study integrates all three of these functions of images and applies them to the processes of anchoring (Sub-study 1), objectification (Sub-study 2), and naturalization (Sub-study 3).

Criticism of social representations theory

Even though the theory of social representations has been criticized by many scholars – for example, for being vague and using complex terminology (Jahoda, 1988; Potter & Edwards, 1999; Potter & Litton, 1985), differentiating between scientific knowledge and common-sense knowledge (Bauer & Gaskell, 2008; Jovchelovitch, 2008), involving controversies (Jahoda, 1988; Potter & Wetherell, 1987), lacking a critical stance (Ibañez, 1992; Jahoda, 1988; Parker, 1987), being too cognitive (Parker, 1987; Potter & Edwards, 1999; Potter & Wetherell, 1987), and paying scant attention to emotions (Höijer, 2011; Joffe, 2002) – it provides a theoretical frame for studying endless facets of common understanding (for more detailed discussion on criticism, see Sakki, 2010; Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). Despite the criticism, social representations theory has proven itself to be a flexible theoretical approach capable of addressing contemporary social issues (Jodelet, 2008). The recently increased interest in enlarging its scope to encompass means of communication other than verbal ones may open new horizons for social
representations research. For this particular study, social representations theory provides a theoretical basis for exploring the visual construction, communication, and distribution of socially shared understandings of teachership, on the one hand, and their social functions and implications, on the other.

3.2 VISUAL IMAGES IN RELATION TO ANCHORING

Despite the fact that observation has been commonly used as a research method in social representations research, the nature of visual perception has been elaborated inadequately within the theory. The same shortcoming can be identified in Moscovici’s (e.g., 1961/2008, 1984, 1994, 2001) oeuvre. Even though he recognized and acknowledged the contribution of the visual in the formation and circulation of social representations as well as the importance of observation in the study of social representations from the very beginning (Moscovici, 1961/2008, 1984, 2001), his own studies are mainly based on language (Lahlou, 2015). Perhaps for this reason, Moscovici neither paid attention to the specific quality of visual objects as carriers of meaning nor differentiated between the processes of anchoring in verbal and visual communication. Anchoring based on visual images is related to perception, and the conceptualization of perception that holds that social representations frame or determine people’s response to stimuli (Moscovici, 1984, 2001) seems to take the visual nature of the objects of perception inadequately into account. The study at hand attempts to address this shortcoming. More specifically, it asks how the perceiver can use an appropriate social representation as a resource for interpreting an image or social object s/he encounters. Figure 2 illustrates the problematics through an example: having social representations of diverse emotions (a, b, c), how is the perceiver able to associate the smiling face with social representations of happiness?

![Figure 2. Problematics of using an appropriate social representation in anchoring](image)

The theory of social representations advocates the primacy of social representations in perception. Moscovici (1984, p. 61) argues that “social representations determine both the character of the stimulus and the response it elicits,” claiming that social objects become meaningful when seen “with our mind’s eyes” (Moscovici, 2001, p. 18). When writing about person perception in specific, Moscovici claims that “before seeing and hearing a person we have already judged him, classified him and created an image of him, so that all the enquiries we make and our efforts to obtain information only serve to confirm this image” (Moscovici, 1984, p. 27).

The afore-cited conceptualizations of perception of Moscovici (1984, 2001) indicate that in his view, social representations determine perception. To some extent, the
supremacy of social representations over the qualities of the object of perception may appear contradictory to Moscovici’s (1961/2008, 1984) emphasis on observation as a method of studying social representations. Similarly, the dominance of social representations seems to challenge the entire tenet of social representations being dynamic (Moscovici, 1984), which implicitly argues for the potential of perceivable objects not only to adapt to existing social representations but also to modify and challenge them. Actually, this idea is implied by the interconnectedness of the Ego, Alter, and Object in the semiotic triangle itself (Moscovici, 1972, 1984), suggesting that the change in the object could reshape the relationship between the Ego and Alter, thereby contributing to a change of social representation.

Even though Moscovici (1961/2008, 1984) acknowledged the contribution of the visual in the formation of social representations, he also emphasized the importance of language and based his research on verbal accounts (Jodelet, 2008; Lahlou, 2015). However, verbal and visual signs mostly communicate their meanings in different ways. Whereas language mainly makes use of symbols whose relation to their referent is based on cultural convention, and the material form of the word does not communicate the characteristics of its referent (Ragsdale, 2011; de Saussure, 1985), visual signs communicate their meanings through their material, visual form (Peirce, 1985; Ragsdale, 2011; de Rosa & Farr, 2001). Thus, verbally communicated social representations operate more at the level of meanings and the mental imagery connected with them. In fact, de Rosa and Farr (2001) argue that Moscovici’s frequent mentioning of “images” mainly referred to mental imagery generated by linguistic expressions instead of concrete visual products. Perhaps his emphasis on language was one reason that Moscovici (1984) regarded social representations as dominating perception and that questions regarding the specific nature of visual objects and a visual communication system were not actualized in his work.

In contrast to words, representational visual images, being mainly icons whose relation to their referent is based on perceived similarity, communicate their meanings through concrete, visual forms (Peirce, 1985; Ragsdale, 2011; de Rosa & Farr, 2001). For instance, Schember, Galli, and Fasanelli (2017) and Ullán (1995) point out that in the case of visual images, the object of perception is not a mental image but a material image. Naturally, this does not mean that mental images would not be generated by or attached to visual images (Kjeldens, 2018). In contrast to words that refer to a general “concept” (e.g., teacher), visual images specify the referent through their visual elements (e.g., a certain kind of teacher) (Kjeldens, 2018). For this reason, it seems justifiable to think that the anchoring of verbally mediated social objects, on the one hand, and the anchoring of visually perceivable objects, on the other, might construct the relation of the object and social representations in different ways. Even though the meaning of the image is not a feature of the image itself but rather the result of linking the image to the matrix of culturally shared meanings (Stocchetti, 2017), visual features are carriers of meanings and through their visual qualities — e.g., type of facial expression and color of attire — direct the process of perception and meaning construction (Kjeldens, 2018; Mitchell, 2005).

In his article, “Social Representations and Pragmatic Communication,” Moscovici (1994) associated social representations with culturally available presuppositions floating across people’s minds and defined anchoring as a process in which words and other linguistic expressions trigger contextually relevant social representations used in sense-making. By conceptualizing the words communicating the target of anchoring as “triggers” and anchoring as a relationship between “linguistic triggers”
and “presuppositions,” Moscovici (1994, p. 169) seems to loosen the hegemony of social representations in meaning construction by allotting verbal expression a more active role in directing the course of meaning construction. In the very same text, Moscovici (1994, p. 165) states that social representations research has overly privileged questions of meaning to the detriment of other aspects at play in situations of communication and states that “it is getting more and more difficult to maintain linguistic communication and its several discursive aspects as a model of communication in general.” With this notion, he suggests that research on social representations should not focus on mere linguistically expressed meaning but that attention should also be paid to more “pragmatic communication” (Moscovici, 1994, p. 165) as well in terms of context-based inferences and incidents activating social representations. Based on Moscovici’s (1994) reflections on words and incidents functioning as triggers activating social representations, one could assume that a similar triggering process might also occur when operating with visual images. It would be logical to think that visual images and their specific visual qualities would also act as “visual triggers” that contribute to the selection of certain social representations, rather than others, to be used as resources in anchoring. In social representation theorizing and research, for instance, Mamali (2006), Sen and Wagner (2005), and Smith and Joffe (2013) have earlier used the word trigger when referring to the capability of visual objects and encounters to activate and evoke social representations. However, the “mechanism” of “visual triggering” has not been explicated in detail. This study does not use the verb trigger in terms of a mechanical and automatic reaction to visual stimuli. Instead, triggering refers to the potential of visual encounters to address particular, contextually relevant, culturally shared social representations available to the perceiver that are used as a basis for constructing meaning for the visual encounter. Thus, visual perception appears as a discursive practice using social representations and the qualities of visual encounters as a resource for sense-making.

With regard to person perception, social psychological studies show that people make interpretations of each other’s thoughts, feelings, characters, traits, motivations, and behavioral intentions based on visual cues, such as facial expressions, gestures, and clothing (Hess, Adams, & Kleck, 2008; León & Hernández, 2015; Macrae & Quaddieg, 2010; Trébický et al., 2019). In person perception, categorization is regarded as a fundamental process (Bodenhausen, Kang, & Peery, 2012; Zebrowitz & Montepare, 2008). Already, Bartlett (1932), Allport (1954), and Tajfel (1969) have argued that categorical conceptions based on prior knowledge and experiences about the social world dominate the processes of perception. Later, this view was challenged by theories of person perception that regard perceivers as capable of moving from category-based (theory-driven/top-down) observations to more individuated and piecemeal constructed impressions (data-driven/bottom-up), depending on their motives, attitudes, and goals toward the target (Gawronski & Creighton, 2013; Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2001; Mason, Cloutier, & Macrae, 2006). One such approach is provided by the ecological theory of social perception introduced by McArthur and Baron (1983). It regards person perception as a joint contribution of affordances – namely, the external attributes of the target person and environment – and attunement – namely, the perceiver’s mood, expectations, goals, perceptual learning, prior experiences, and cultural background (McArthur & Baron, 1983; Zebrowitz, 1990).

On the one hand, McArthur and Baron’s (1983) conceptualization of “attunement” as including perceivers’ prior experiences with their social and cultural knowledge modifying and mediating perception is reminiscent of a representation-based approach
to perception. On the other hand, “affordance,” in terms of visual characteristics of the object being capable of directing the perception and contributing to meaning construction, seems to take the nature of visual communication systems into account. However, social representations theory cannot be regarded as a bottom-up approach to perception but rather as a top-down approach based on the guidance of social representations (Moscovici, 1984; Moscovici & Marková, 1998; Wagner & Hayes, 2005). In addition, McArthur and Baron (1983) regard the target of perception as more autonomous in relation to the perceiver than does social representations theory, which, for its part, regards the target of perception and perceivers’ culturally and socially constructed understanding of it as inseparable (Moscovici, 1984, 2001; Purkhardt, 1993). Similarly, the ecological theory of social perception does not conceptualize the perceiver as embedded in the social as does the theory of social representations. Furthermore, even though McArthur and Baron (1983) and Zebrowitz (1990) emphasize the constructivist aspect of the theory, its rooting in the realistic epistemology of ecological theory (Gibson, 1979) makes the compatibility of the ecological theory of social perception and the theory of social representations, with its social constructionist epistemology, questionable. Despite its differences and even controversies in comparison with social representations theory, the ecological theory of social perception helped me to first separate the object of perception from the perceivers’ socially constructed understanding and, then, reconnect them in a manner that adheres to social representational relations to the social world but, simultaneously, takes the nature of the visual communication system into account. Interestingly, Lahlou’s (2015, 2018) installation theory combines aspects of ecological theory and social representations theory to address a similar problematic on the relation between the material object and its representation stating that “material objects and representations co-evolve by trial and error as they re-construct each other” (Lahlou, 2015, p. 208).

To sum up, this study understands anchoring based on visual materials as a joint contribution of social representations and the object of perception; however, social representations have predominance. On the one hand, social representations provide people with a matrix of culturally shared meanings through which they perceive visual encounters. Social representations enable the perceivers not only to register diverse visual forms without content but to recognize them and furnish them with social meanings. On the other hand, visual features of objects serve as triggers that contribute to the selection of relevant social representations to serve as the frame of anchoring. Applied to this particular study, this would mean that when students were asked to observe and reflect on portrait paintings as images of teachers, the assignment activated several social representations of teachership from which the visual cues of the images triggered one or more social representations of teachership to be used as a resource for sense-making.

The idea presented above that visual objects and images might be capable of directing which social representations are used in making sense of them finds some support in prior research on social representations. Joffé (2003, p. 63), for example, argues that even though images are seen through socially shared representations, they can “steer the direction in which members come to terms with the unfamiliar” and refers to Corner, Richardson, and Fenton (1990), according to whom images “can exert a ‘positioning’ power on viewer’s imagination.” Mamali (2006), for his part, argues for a more active contribution of images in perception based on their evocative and associative potential to enable social change. Wagner and Hayes (2005,
pp. 198–199), in turn, discuss the identification of stimuli as a process of testing the congruence between the stimuli and the category, stating that the anomaly in terms of incongruence between stimulus and representations may lead to “accommodating or altering the representation.” Similarly, de Rosa and Farr’s (2001) conception of images as sources, products, and distributors of social representations seems to assign images a more prominent role than does Moscovici’s (1984, 2001) theorizing. A similar tendency to give the physical and visual a more active agency in meaning construction of social encounters can be identified in Sakki’s (2010) research on representations of European integration, Hakoköngäs’s (2017) and Hakoköngäs and Sakki’s (2016a) studies on the naturalized social representation of history, as well as in Lahlou’s (2015, 2018) recent installation theory.

3.3 VISUAL IMAGES IN RELATION TO OBJECTIFICATION AND NATURALIZATION

In objectification, social representations are made tangible through symbolic forms of expression (Moscovici, 1961/2008, 1984; Philogène & Deaux, 2001). Visual images provide one means of objectifying and materializing social representations (Hakökongäs & Sakki, 2016a; Sakki, 2010). When certain visually objectified social representations are repeated in media, or in other social forums and practices, they fashion people’s perceptions, thoughts, emotions, and actions, and finally – due to frequent repetition – they may become naturalized and taken as realities as such (Moscovici, 1961/2008, 1984).

Social representations are shapeless and devoid of material form (Moscovici, 1984). In order to render them graspable, they must be materialized. However, the process of materialization cannot be understood as a straightforward externalization of a pre-existing social representation into visual material. In contrast, the act of materialization – for instance, making an image – is an act of construction based on the choice of subject matter and elements of visual expression such as composition, color, texture, and viewing angle, guided by social representations (e.g., Hakoköngäs & Sakki, 2019), on the one hand, and by the medium of visual expression, on the other (e.g., Sonesson, 2013). In this process, the social representation does not remain unaltered but becomes modified. As Moscovici (1961/2008, p. xxxii) states: “Communication is never reducible to the transmission of the original messages, or the transfer of data that remains unchanged. Communication differentiates, translates and combines.”

Whether the image-maker is conscious of it or not, the visual choices s/he makes contribute to the perception of the image (Kjeldsen, 2018; Lefsrud, Graves, & Phillips, 2015; Mamali, 2006). In social representational terms, the way social representations are objectified in the image contributes to the way these objectifications are anchored (Sakki & Menard, 2014). Hence, this research attempts to understand how this influence is accomplished and carried out. More specifically, this research asks how image-makers construct the image to communicate their intentions or otherwise influence perceivers (see Figure 3). To address the problematics, this study draws on the theorizing of visual rhetoric.
The present study addresses the call for strengthening the critical stance of social representations research (Voelklein & Howarth, 2005) by exploring visually communicated social representations of teachership from the visual rhetoric point of view. Because social representations theory does not provide tools for exploring the visual construction of images per se, this study complements it with a visual rhetoric approach that provides means of elucidating the contribution of visual representations of teachership in constructing, circulating, and advancing certain kinds of social representations of teachership. Thus, the visual rhetoric approach in this study relates to the content, forms, and functions of visual images in social representation (Pettersson & Sakki, 2017). Most directly, this visual rhetoric approach applies to Sub-study 3, in which cover images of Teacher magazine are scrutinized as visual objectifications of the social representations of teachership. However, it also applies to Sub-studies 1 and 2 as well as to image-related research on social representations in general since, according to Mitchell (2002, p. 170), “visual culture is the visual construction of the social, not just the social construction of vision.”

Earlier, for instance, Billig (1988, 1993) has used a rhetorical approach to study social representations, which Moscovici (1998) considered to be closely related and supplementary to social representations theory. According to Billig (1988, 1993), the emphasis on communication within the theory of social representations implies rhetorical practices since construction and interpretation of messages – i.e., the processes of anchoring and objectification – are based on selection between opposing views. Rhetoric is closely related to semiotics. The way people construct their verbal or visual messages influences which cultural and social meanings readers and perceivers use to interpret them (Jewitt & Oyma, 2004; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). In the field of social representations research, Hakoköngäs and Sakki (2019) have formulated the relationship between social representations and rhetoric in terms of associating social representations with content and rhetoric with their symbolic expression (form). As they suggest, this distinction may be too straightforward; nevertheless, it provides a tool for analyzing rhetorical aspects of social representation.

A rhetorical approach to social representations research has mainly been applied to verbal communication (Billig, 1988, 1993; Byford, 2002; Luyt, 2003), but its systematic application to visually communicated social representations has been sporadic (Finn, 1997; Hakoköngäs, 2017; Hakoköngäs & Sakki, 2019; Kugelmann, Watson, & Frisby, 2019). Epistemologically, visual rhetoric is compatible with the social constructionist premises of social representations theory since a rhetorical approach considers discourse as socially constructed (Pettersson & Sakki, 2017), which applies to visual rhetoric and visual discourse as well (Greenberg, 2002; Robles, 2012; Traue, Blanc, & Cambre, 2019).
Rhetoric refers to the argumentative character of communication with the aim of advocating communicators’ interests among audiences (Pettersson & Sakki, 2017). The study of rhetoric in terms of the communicative and persuasive use of speech originated in classical Greece (Foss, 2005; Sonesson, 2013). Since then, Aristotle’s (1991) conceptions of rhetoric, based on three notions – namely, ethos, logos, and pathos – have provided inspiration for rhetorical studies. While ethos referred to the reliability of an argument and logos to its rational evidence, pathos conceptualized the argument’s potential to generate feelings and emotions (Aristotle, 1991; Sakki & Pettersson, 2018). Toward the end of the 20th century, the scope of rhetoric extended from verbal to visual means of communication (Foss, 2005; Olson, Finnegan, & Hope, 2008), and at the beginning of this century, visual rhetoric established its position as an autonomous field of study (Danesi, 2017; DiBari & Simpson, 2018). In its present orientation, visual rhetoric is a broad approach to visual communication (Danesi, 2017; Foss, 2005). It is interested in all visual media, studying how visual entities are used and act rhetorically to affect people’s reasoning and emotions (Christiansen, 2018; Danesi, 2017). According to Danesi (2017) and Kjeldsen (2018), images offer a powerful medium for rhetorical purposes because of their ability to appeal to emotions and embodied experiences. Because visual rhetoric not only deals with forms of visual expression but also meanings communicated through them, it is closely linked to visual semiotics (Barthes, 1977; Kjeldsen, 2018).

According to Foss (2004), visual rhetoric refers to both visual artifacts and an approach to studying visual artifacts and communication based on them. In the latter meaning, Foss (2004, 2005) conceptualizes visual rhetoric as part of rhetorical theory, with characteristics of its own (see also Blair, 2004). Visual rhetoric encompasses a variety of approaches to the study of visual communication (Danesi, 2017; Forceville, 2008; Greenwood, Jack, & Haylock, 2019; Kjeldsen, 2012, 2018). This study adopts a structural approach to visual rhetoric (Danesi, 2017; Morris, 1993; Phillips & McQuarrie, 2004) to explore the structure and composition of visual elements as constituents of visual rhetoric that Lehtonen (2011, p. 85) conceptualizes as “rhetorical operations.” This choice is regarded as relevant since it provides means for both scrutinizing how visual objectifications of social representations of teachership are constructed visually and exploring how the visual construction of images frames teachership and influences the perception of teacher images.

A visual image with its specific visual form is, on the one hand, a visual outcome of objectification, while on the other hand, it is a source for anchoring (de Rosa & Farr, 2001). Through their visual rhetoric, images participate in the construction of social representations. Visual rhetoric is based on the potential of images to influence recipients and modify their thoughts, emotions, and actions – whether or not deliberately intended by the image-maker (Sonesson, 2013). In reality, however, the process is not so straightforward, since stocks of images circulate in societies, influencing each other, and “circulation multiplies rhetors and objects to the point where origin and motivation become uncertain” (Jenkins, 2014, p. 445).

Danesi (2017) and DiBari and Simpson (2018), among others, regard visual rhetoric as a critical approach to studying visual communication. In the critical analysis of images, a visual rhetoric approach aims to reveal mechanisms of visual persuasion and show the social, political, and ideological functions of images (Danesi, 2017). This is considered to be a pivotal task in present-day societies, in which visual images form a “rhetorical environment” (Foss, 2005, p. 142) capable of influencing and persuading people efficiently through their emotional appeal (Kjeldsen, 2018; Lefsrud et al., 2015; Olson et al., 2008).
Thus, from the perspective of visual rhetoric, visual images are neither neutral records nor transparent representations of reality but rather vehicles of intentional communication and visual arguments in which visual elements are harnessed to mediate more or less deliberate meanings (Howarth, 2006; Kjeldsen, 2018; Lefsrud et al., 2015). Since visual rhetoric is interested in the visual quality of images and meanings conveyed by them as well as the ways images are used in visual communication for persuasive purposes (Danesi, 2017; Foss, 2005; Sonesson, 2015), it provides a tool for the critical exploration of the structure and social function of visual images.

The potential of visual images to communicate denotative (literal) and connotative (emotional, experiential, and contextual) meanings simultaneously serves as the basis for visual rhetoric (Barthes, 1977; Sonesson, 1989). Barthes (1977, p. 154) described the denotative meaning of an image as a “non-coded iconic message” based on the identification of the referent of the image and the connotative meaning as a “coded iconic message” based on the emotional, experiential, and contextual associations attached to the referent. Sonesson (1989) conceptualized this dual communication of images as the contribution of “iconic language” (denotation) and “plastic language” (connotation) of images. The operations at the concrete level of making images – such as the composition, cropping, choice of color scheme, and viewing angle – construct the image-makers’ connoted point of view to the denotated subject matter. A central aim of visual rhetoric research is to unravel the common-sense understanding of an image as a neutral depiction of reality and increase awareness of the constructed nature of images (Danesi, 2017).

Thus, the visual rhetoric of images is constructed by including certain subject matter and elements of visual expression – and excluding others. The included elements of visual expression materialize certain social representations while marginalizing or excluding others. In this sense, the visual rhetoric approach is also relevant in terms of the three types of social representations, namely, hegemonic, polemical, and emancipated (Moscovici, 1961/2008). Rhetoric devices can be used not only to advance hegemonic social representations but also to object to them and advance emancipated social representations (Billig, 1987), for example, through reclaiming the identities of marginalized groups of people (DiBari & Simpson, 2018).

Moscovici (1961/2008) differentiated between various communicative styles related to social representation with characteristics and goals of their own. Three of them – namely, diffusion, propagation, and propaganda – appear relatable to visual rhetoric. When talking about diffusion, propagation, and propaganda related to visual images, the term communicative style might not be appropriate; however, they might instead exemplify strategies of visual rhetoric (Feuerstein, 2015). Whereas diffusion could be associated with less obvious persuasion, propagation and propaganda might be associated with overt and direct means of persuasion.

Diffusion refers to communication with people at large (mass communication) that uses ordinary expressions familiar to them and discontinuous messages that include diverse points of view from which the audiences can draw their own conclusions (Moscovici, 1961/2008). From the visual rhetoric perspective, this communicative style might correspond to indirect ways of persuasion using seemingly unbiased, commonplace imagery that provides people with alternative perspectives on the phenomenon (Kjeldsen, 2018; Marshall, 2018). Despite the apparent freedom of choice, this “rhetorical circulation” of images (Jenkins, 2014, p. 444) designs thinking by offering certain alternatives. As Kjeldsen (2018, p. 72) puts it, the function of rhetoric is “to stir the emotions unnoticed, without drawing attention to the language
According to Massey (2017), the verisimilitude of visual images such as photographs makes it difficult to detect rhetorical mechanisms. In this view, visual rhetoric appears as a hidden visual strategy of persuasion that legitimizes certain views and power relations (Feuerstein, 2015). However, it is important to bear two matters in mind. First, all image-makers and deliverers of images may not be conscious of the rhetorical functions of the images with which they operate but, for instance, simply remake and repeat imagery that is common or trendy in a society. Second, images do not necessarily influence audiences in line with the image-makers’ aim since images are polysemous, “evoking many different meanings or identifications depending upon context” (Jenkins, 2014, p. 444).

Unlike diffusion, propagation constitutes targeted communication with the aim of fostering the conceptions and values of a specific community (Moscovici, 1961/2008). As Sakki (2010) states, the goal of propagation is to integrate the social object into the existing frame of reference and foster the unity of the community. Propaganda refers to communication that proclaims a desired way of thinking and acting by creating dichotomies and introducing strong positive and negative stereotypes (Moscovici, 1961/2008). Propagation and propaganda seem to be associated with strategies of visual rhetoric that, through deliberate construction of the structure of visual messages, strive to make the desired outcome as obvious as possible with the aim of triggering preferred social representations as the frame of sense-making in a particular context (Kjeldsen, 2018; Maes & Schilperoord, 2008; Pettersson & Sakki, 2017). Visual propaganda might be constructed using caricatures, stereotypes, and familiar symbols in order to communicate a preferred understanding of the image, or by constructing a positive or negative stance toward depicted objects and phenomena through the choice of visual means of expression, such as color, light, and size. In this rhetorical strategy, the visual form of the image strives to limit the polysemy of the image and, thus, the scope of potential interpretations.

This study uses images (paintings, drawings, and photographs) as visual representations of teachership, through which social representations of teachership are studied. In addition to images, this study understands teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior in the classroom as the visual representation of teachership (Rowlands, 2006) and as behavior/action-based visual objectification of the social representation of teachership (Wagner, 2015, 2017). As Wagoner (2015, p. 150), referring to Jodelet (1991), states, the “body is the vehicle through which representations are performed in social practices.” As for visual rhetoric, this study understands it not only as a strategy of image-making but also as an embodied performance – a phenomenon and strategy of everyday visual nonverbal behavior and social interaction in which meanings are communicated through facial expressions, gestures, clothing, and other similar means, both deliberately and not (Penney, 2012; Reyes Garcia, 2018). This kind of understanding that both visual images and everyday nonverbal visual behavior act as a means of visually representing, objectifying, and rhetorizing teachership is an important precondition for the practical contribution of this study. Even though this study does not directly examine teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior in live situations, it makes inferences about it based on studying depictions of it in images and responses generated by them.
3.4 SUMMARY

The theory of social representations serves as the main theoretical approach in this study. It provides the frame in which the processes of the social representation of teachership are explored through making sense of images (anchoring), producing images (objectification), and circulating images in media until they become taken for granted (naturalization). In these three processes of social representation, the relationship between visual and social representations of teachership is actualized in different ways and, in addition, visual representations serve different functions. These relationships and functions can be summarized as follows: 1) in anchoring, visual representations of teachership trigger certain social representations of teachership that are used in making sense of “teacher” images (Sub-study 1), 2) in objectification, visual representations concretize social representations of teachership (Sub-study 2), and 3) in naturalization, visual representations construct, spread, and normalize social representations of teachership (Sub-study 3). Figure 4 roughly summarizes the relation/interconnectedness between the object of the study (teachership), visual representations of teachership, and social representations of teachership.

![Figure 4. Relation between visual and social representations and the object of the study](image)

The processes of anchoring, objectification, and naturalization are illustrated in more detail in Figures 5, 6, and 7 (pp. 55–56). Even though the study design of each sub-study is predominantly based on one process of social representation, in reality, all of the processes are intertwined, at least indirectly, in all of the sub-studies. For instance, Sub-study 3 focuses on naturalization, but in practice, cover images of Teacher magazine serve as objectifications of social representations of teachership, and through making sense of them in the process of anchoring, I draw conclusions related to the naturalization of certain social representations of teachership.

**Anchoring based on perception of visual images (Sub-study 1)**

Figure 5 illustrates the process of anchoring based on visual images. Oriented by social representations of teachership (SRT1–SRT5), the student on the right observes a teacher image whose visual characteristics (facial expressions, gestures, posture, clothes, etc.) trigger certain social representations of teachership (SRT5) to be used...
as the main resources of sense-making, while other social representations remain in the background or make a minor contribution. Another teacher image might activate a different social representation of teachership. In the process of anchoring, people may employ several social representations simultaneously (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999; Moscovici, 1994; Wagner, 2003). The overlapping circles labeled as SRT1–STR5 exemplify the diverse social representations of teachership available to the student. The figure that illustrates anchoring draws on Bauer and Gaskell’s “Toblerone model” (1999) and “wind rose model” (2008), which elaborate the integration of several social representations in the interpretation of a social object. In addition, Moscovici’s (1972, 1984) semiotic triangle, which emphasizes that an individual’s (Ego) relationship to an object is constructed in interaction with other people (Alter), serves as the basis for illustrating the perceiving person surrounded by social representations.

![Figure 5. Anchoring based on visual image](image)

**Objectification through making images (Sub-study 2)**

In Sub-study 2, drawings made by students and teachers are considered as objectifications of social representations of teachership. Figure 6 depicts the process of objectifying social representations of teachership through drawing. As a member of the Finnish culture and having experiences and knowledge of teachers and teaching, the student/teacher in the middle is furnished with certain social representations of teachership (SRT1–SRT5). In the context of drawing, a certain social representation (SRT5) is expressed visually. The overlapping circles (SRT1–SRT5) illustrate the diverse social representations of teachership available to the student/teacher when drawing the image of the teacher.
Naturalization through circulation of media images (Sub-study 3)

Naturalization is understood in this study as a process in which certain kinds of visual representations of teachers circulate in media, influencing people’s social representations of teachership. Figure 7 illustrates how media images contribute to the naturalization of social representations of teachership. The person depicted near the lower-left corner is surrounded by similar-looking teacher images circulated by media that contribute to his/her understanding of teachership, as illustrated through the identical teacher image in the person’s thought bubble. Images of teachers delivered through media constitute a tool of visual rhetoric that influences people’s social representations of teachership to the extent that some of them might achieve a self-evident status.
Even though this study focuses on the contribution of the visual in the processes of social representation, it recognizes that different modes of representation – verbal, visual, and auditive – intertwine and influence each other in social interaction. However, in the scope of this study, it is not possible to delve into other media of communication.
METHODS

This chapter presents the methodological design of the study. Section 4.1 justifies the choice of qualitative research methods, and Section 4.2 discusses visual materials in qualitative social representations research, in general, and in this study, in particular. Because the methods of analysis were targeted to meet the aim of each sub-study as well as the process of social representation applied, each sub-study employs a different method of analysis. Due to this diversity, the details of data collection and analysis are presented sub-study by sub-study for the sake of clarity in Section 4.3. Finally, ethical issues regarding this study will be addressed in Section 4.4.

4.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS RESEARCH

With regard to methodological guidelines for research on social representations, Moscovici (1984, pp. 62–65) introduced four “common methodological themes.” First, researchers should “obtain material from samples of conversations normally exchanged in a society.” Second, social representation should be understood as “means of re-creating reality.” Third, “the character of social representations is revealed especially in times of crisis and upheaval.” And fourth, people elaborating social representations should be seen “as something akin to amateur ‘scientists.’” Since Moscovici’s conceptualization, social representations research has witnessed a number of different methodological approaches and, thus, the initial guidelines have been diversified (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999; Flick, Foster, & Caillaud, 2015; Sakki, 2010). In the following, the methodological design of this study will be discussed within the frame of prior research on social representations.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods have been used in social representations research from its early days. However, for instance, Flick and Foster (2010) and Flick, Foster, and Caillaud (2015) regard qualitative methods as especially suitable to the study of social representations. Qualitative methods are considered compatible with the theory of social representations since they can be used to study the social construction of reality, people’s mundane understanding of social issues as well as the content, forms, and functions of social phenomena (Sakki et al., 2014). Hence, diverse qualitative methods, such as content analysis, thematic analysis, discourse analysis, narrative analysis, and semiotic analysis, have been commonly used in social representations research (Flick & Foster, 2010; Sakki et al., 2014).

This study explores the nature of the social representations of teachership as well as the contribution of visual representations of teachership in communicating and constructing social representations of teachership. In addition, this study attempts to understand the ways in which visual representations and social representations of teachership are related to teacher-student interaction and teachers’ professional identity. When using participant-created data and media images to develop understanding of the aforementioned topics, qualitative research methods seem suitable (Daher et al., 2017; Flick et al., 2015; Knapik, 2006).

From the point of view of social representations theory, the aim of qualitative research is to understand social representations as products and processes (Bauer &
In other words, it aims at understanding the content and characteristics of social representations people use as well as how people make sense of social phenomena and interact with each other based on social representations (Flick & Foster, 2010). In order to obtain such understanding, it is important that research participants have the chance to express their thoughts and experiences in their own words, images, and other forms of symbolic expression. As Flick, Foster, and Caillaud (2015, p. 66) state, “if we value lay understanding about the topic, then it makes sense to ask an individual, or a group, what they think about that topic.”

To diminish the researcher’s influence on the data production, this study did not use questionnaires or strictly structured visual assignments in data collection; instead, the participants were invited to draw and write based on their experiences. According to Bauer and Gaskell (1999), social representations research is primarily interested in common sense knowledge of “natural groups,” namely, groups of people to whom the phenomenon examined in the study is meaningful. For this reason, it was a natural choice to recruit students and teachers as participants of the study.

In addition to participant-created data, this study examines social representations of teachership through media images. Deviating from Moscovici’s (1984) initial recommendation to use everyday conversation as research data, Bauer and Gaskell (1999) consider it important that social representations research also make use of more formal forms of communication, such as media. In fact, Moscovici (1961/2008) himself already utilized newspaper writings when studying social representations of psychoanalysis. Media provide a rapid and effective means of disseminating scientific and other information to the public and creating homogenous images reflecting such information (Rouquette, 1996). Hence, media may make important contributions to the naturalization of social representations (Hakoköngäs & Sakki, 2016a). By including participant-created materials (social representations activated at the level of individual persons) and media images (social representations that exert influence closer to the societal level) in the analysis, this study attempts to examine visual and social representations of teachership at the individual (ontogenesis), interactional (microgenesis), and societal (sociogenesis) levels (Duveen & Lloyd, 1990; Flick et al., 2015; Psaltis, 2015). This arrangement is designed to permit the examination of the micro- and macro-dynamics of the processes of social representation (Abreu Lopes & Gaskell, 2015; Wagner & Hayes, 2005).

Since individuals are regarded as embedded in the social and their understanding of social matters is regarded as constructed in social interaction, individuals’ accounts are considered to provide the means to grasp socially shared understandings of social phenomena (Flick et al., 2015; Marková, 2017; Moloney, 2007; Sammut, 2015). As Sammut (2015, p. 97) states, “social representations exist across rather than inside individual minds.” However, two important issues must be taken into consideration. First, studying people’s social representations of social phenomena does not, per se, inform us about the social phenomena themselves but rather about people’s social representations of them (Sammut, 2015). That being said, social representations research may serve as the basis for making inferences about social phenomena. Second, research on social representations does not present or unfold participants’ social representations as such. In analyzing participant-created data, researchers employ their scientific knowledge and social representations as resources for sense-making, which inevitably adds an interpretative layer to participants’ accounts. For this reason, research findings are not duplications or descriptions but constructions (Moloney & Walker, 2007). Hence, despite the attempt to analyze the data as inductively as
possible, the analysis remains distinct from a genuinely inductive process and can best be characterized as critically abductive in terms of meaning construction that questions and critically reflects on my prior conceptions (Reichertz, 2010, 2014).

The method of analysis contributes to the kind of information the research can produce regarding the phenomenon. For this reason, Flick, Foster, and Caillaud (2015) urge researchers to choose the most appropriate method of research. Sakki and her colleagues (2014), in turn, suggest that in order to get a more diversified and deeper understanding of the phenomenon, it is often useful to apply several methods of analysis. In a similar vein, Flick, Foster, and Caillaud (2015) suggest that triangulation in terms of multiple researchers, various sorts of data, and different theories or research methods might diversify the understanding of the research topic. This particular study applies triangulation in terms of three different data sources and three different methods of analysis that were targeted to suit the topic and aim of each sub-study as well as to elaborate the processes of anchoring, objectification, and naturalization based on visual images.

4.2 VISUAL MATERIALS IN QUALITATIVE SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS RESEARCH

Qualitative research has witnessed a rapid increase of visual research methods (Leavy, 2018; McNiff, 2018). In qualitative research, visual research methods have been extensively used as participatory methods in which participants either produce visual materials themselves or verbally reflect on visual objects and images (Coemans & Hannes, 2017; Leavy, 2018). For this purpose, visual research methods are regarded as especially suitable since they have been found to facilitate and encourage participation and motivate participants to reflect on the research topic (Goopy & Kassan, 2019; Leavy, 2018). Several researchers argue that participant-created visual materials lower the hierarchical distance in the researcher-participant relationship, diminish the influence of the researcher and concepts used by her/him, and give the participants more control over their role and contribution in the research situation (Goopy & Kassan, 2019; Leavy, 2018; Mannay, 2010). In addition, a common perception is that visual materials may provide participants with means of expressing emotions, tacit experiences, and other experiences that are difficult to put into words (McNiff, 2018; Rose, 2014; van der Vaart, van Hoven, & Huigen, 2018). Finally, visual materials may offer participants a novel way and perspective from which to observe and reflect on everyday matters (Mannay, 2010). This kind of novel perspective may help the participants notice previously unnoticed ways of thinking and acting as well as hidden mechanisms of influence and power, thus increasing critical reflection (Bagley & Castro-Salazar, 2019; Leavy, 2018). For these reasons, visual methodologies may have empowering potential (Goopy & Kassan, 2019).

In the field of qualitative social representations research, similar notions about the potential of visual materials and methods have been raised. For instance, Arruda (2015, p. 140) argues that drawing can provide more in-depth information about social representations than verbal accounts displaying “traces of archaic, utopian, mythical, fantastical and affective elements.” In addition, drawing has been found to allow the participants more spontaneity and freedom to communicate their experiences as well as control over the content they want to express (Arruda, 2015; Howarth, 2007). In her study using photovoice, Howarth (2011b) identified the empowering potential
of visual methods. According to de Rosa (2014) and Sakki and her colleagues (2014), visual materials can inform the researcher about such aspects of social representations that are unconscious or whose expression is socially undesired. The aforementioned notions suggest that visual methods may contribute to fostering the nature of social representations theory as a theory of social change (Howarth et al., 2013; Sakki et al., 2017).

In our everyday lives, we encounter people, objects, and situations and make sense of them by leaning on the social representations that are available to us (Moscovici, 1984). When studying such material and visible encounters from the point of view of social representations theory, mere language-driven means seem inadequate. Since verbal and visual signs carry their meanings and refer to their target in different ways (Peirce, 1985; de Saussure, 1985), people’s responses to concrete visual images and objects, on the one hand, and verbal descriptions of them, on the other, can be assumed to differ from each other. For this reason, research on social representations using visual materials may diversify our understanding of social representations both as products and processes. However, in order to understand images from the image-makers’ point of view, it is necessary that they elucidate their drawings verbally (Arruda, 2015). Since meaning is not a feature of the image itself but rather the outcome of anchoring (Stocchetti, 2017), and since images are polysemous in terms of allowing multiple interpretations (Barthes, 1977), perceivers may make sense of images using different social representations than did the image-makers. For this reason, it is customary for visual materials to be accompanied by their creators’ verbal comments informing viewers about their communicative intentions (Arruda, 2015).

Previously, diverse visual materials have been used in social representations research to study a number of topics. Participant-created drawings have served as the basis for studying, for instance, social representations of mental illness (de Rosa, 1987), intelligence (Räty et al., 2011, 2012), racism (Howarth, 2007), teacher gender (Fischman, 2000), and representations of Paris (Milgram & Jodelet, 1976). Participant-created photographs have been used by Howarth (2011b) to study identity, by Sarrica and Brondi (2018) to study sustainable energy, and by Kessi (2011) to study social solidarity. Several researchers have also utilized images provided by books, the press, and other forms of media. Book illustrations served for Hakokönöäs (2017) and Hakokönöäs and Sakki (2016a, 2016b) as sources for studying collective memory and social representations of history, and for Sakki (2010, 2016) as a means of studying social representations of European integration and European identities. Moloney (2007), for her part, analyzed political cartoons in her research on refugee and asylum-seeker identities, whereas Stocchetti (2017) used digital media images to study social representations related to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and rebellions of the “Arab Spring.” Advertisements, too, have been used to examine, for instance, fashion (de Rosa, 2001; Salesses & Romain, 2014) and collective memories (Hakokönöäs, 2016). Moreover, in addition to still images, videos, TV programs, and films have provided data for social representations research. Among others, Hakokönöäs and Sakki (2019) used video advertisements to study political persuasion, Hedenus (2016) analyzed video recordings to explore social representations of occupations, and Rose (1995) used TV programs as a means of studying social representations of madness. In addition to serving as research materials, participants have also produced verbal data based on perceptions of visual images. This kind of study design was used, for example, by Sen and Wagner (2005) to study Hindu-Muslim relations in India and by Devenney (2004) to study social representations of disability.
As Sakki and her colleagues (2014) point out, social science research using images should not be limited to studying images but should be oriented to study social reality through images. Studies have demonstrated that research based on images can produce information that is relevant in terms of real-life social interaction (Steier et al., 2015). When interpreting images, perceivers are thought to anticipate and complete depicted gestures and actions based on their experience and knowledge of social life (Steier et al., 2015; Yang, 2015). From the point of view of the theory of social representations, people use culturally shared social representations to make sense of images, and images, in turn, may contribute to the reconstruction of social reality via the modification of social representations. Hence, even though the situations of perceiving people in social interaction and in visual images depicting people differ from each other, this study presumes that studying how students make sense of and reflect on teacher images can engender relevant information regarding how students make sense of teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior in reality.

Visual materials can be researcher-generated, participant-created or found/naturally occurring materials (Rose, 2014). This study utilizes all three types of visual materials and uses them in three main processes of social representation. Consequently, Sub-study 1 is associated with anchoring in which students perceive and make sense of images (portrait paintings) selected by the researcher. Sub-study 2 is associated with objectification in which participating students and teachers themselves draw images of a typical teacher. Sub-study 3, in turn, is associated with naturalization in which cover images of Teacher magazine (photographs, found images) are examined as a means of circulating and eventually establishing social representations of teachersh. Sub-studies 1 and 2 apply visual materials in a participatory study-design in which students and teachers operate with images, whereas the analysis of images in Sub-study 3 is researcher-driven. Numerous prior studies have used participant-created visual images related to the process of objectification (e.g., Howarth, 2007, 2011b; Räty et al., 2011, 2012) and found images related to process of objectification and naturalization (e.g., Hakoköngäs, 2017; Hakoköngäs & Sakki, 2016a, 2016b; Sakki, 2010, 2016). In contrast, there seems to be less research using images related to the participant-driven process of anchoring (however, see, e.g., Devenney’s (2004) study on social representations of disability and Sen and Wagner’s (2005) study on Hindu-Muslim relations in India.)

As a summary of the aforementioned details of the methodological design of this study and as an orientation to the details of the collection and analysis of data presented in the following chapters, Table 1 summarizes the research questions, processes of social representation, and methodological choices of all three sub-studies included in this dissertation.
Table 1. Methodological Design of Each Sub-study Related to the Process of Social Representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-study 1</th>
<th>Sub-study 2</th>
<th>Sub-study 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>research question</strong></td>
<td>What kinds of categories of teachers do students construct when perceiving “teacher” images?</td>
<td>What kinds of social representations of teachership are suggested by students’ and teachers’ drawings of a typical teacher?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>process of social representation</strong></td>
<td>anchoring</td>
<td>objectification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>data</strong></td>
<td>verbal (based on reflection on images)</td>
<td>visual and verbal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>participants</strong></td>
<td>students: total (N=65) female (n=51) male (n=14)</td>
<td>students: total (N=59) female (n=46) male (n=13) teachers: total (N=39) female (n=26) male (n=13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>method of analysis</strong></td>
<td>membership categorization analysis</td>
<td>content analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>context</strong></td>
<td>upper secondary vocational college in Finland</td>
<td>upper secondary education in Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>interpreter of images</strong></td>
<td>participants</td>
<td>participants and researcher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 COLLECTING AND ANALYZING DATA

In the following three chapters, the details regarding participants and data, as well as the collection and analysis of data summarized in Table 1, will be presented sub-study by sub-study. Methods of analysis will be elaborated in relation to the processes of social representation.

4.3.1 Sub-study 1 (membership categorization analysis)

The aim of Sub-study 1 was to discover the kinds of categories of teachers that the students construct when perceiving “teacher” images. Students produced verbal data based on their perceptions of portrait paintings. The design of the study was based on anchoring. The data were analyzed by membership categorization analysis. This sub-study examined social representation at the level of ontogenesis by studying how social representations become active at the level of individual students (Flick et al., 2015; Sakki et al., 2017).
Participants, data collection, and data

The group of participants consisted of 65 students (51 female and 14 male) at a vocational upper secondary college for culture studies in Finland. The group of participants included 25 students majoring in visual arts, 20 students majoring in photography, seven students majoring in textile and garment design, seven students majoring in carpentry, and six students majoring in audio-visual communication. Except for one student, all the participants were Finnish. The students’ ages varied between 15 and 42 years, such that 53 students were between 15 and 20 years, eight students between 21 and 30 years, three students between 31 and 40 years, and one student between 41 and 50 years. I worked as a teacher of visual culture studies at the college in question, and the students participated in three courses on visual culture studies taught by me. The distribution of the participants in terms of age, gender, and study program was typical of study groups at this college.

The data were collected in autumn 2015. Students were invited to observe portrait paintings selected by the researcher and describe in writing the kinds of teachers the persons depicted in the paintings would be. In reality, the persons depicted in the paintings were not teachers, and for this reason, the word teacher is written in quotation marks when referring to the persons depicted in the paintings. The students were informed that the people were not teachers in reality. The choice of using images of people other than teachers was justified by two reasons. The first reason was ethical. Scrutinizing teacher characteristics of real teachers and eventually publishing the judgments with details of the images was considered potentially harmful for the teachers depicted in the images. Making judgments about fake and imaginary teachers met the purposes of the study without the risk of potentially casting aspersions on anyone’s professional identity.

Secondly, showing the students paintings of non-teachers instead of photographs of real teachers was justified by the fact that teacher images – for instance, photographs of teachers found in Google images and used in newspapers – tend to be stereotypical (Bergman, 2017; Cohen, 2010; Goldstein, 2011). In order to activate reflection and challenge students’ social representations of teachership, more diverse and also atypical teacher imagery was regarded as necessary. Hence, the “teacher” imagery chosen for this study included various types of people in terms of age, gender, ethnic background, and sexual orientation. In addition, compared to photographs of teachers in media, the “teacher” imagery was less homogeneous in terms of facial expressions, gestures, postures, clothes, actions, and location in the picture space as well as in terms of visual expression, such as colors, viewing angle, and composition. Because teachers and teachership are often regarded as very familiar “matters” furnished with customary notions (Kestere & Kalke, 2015; Weber & Mitchell, 1995), this kind of more diverse and partly atypical “teacher” imagery was considered as a means of “defamiliarizing” teachers and teachership and challenging the normalized and taken-for-granted conceptions related to them. In addition, images deviating from stereotypical teacher images were thought to generate ruptures in habitual ways of thinking, rendering social representations of teachership visible (Gillespie, 2008; Sammut et al., 2015).

The instructions for the assignment read as follows: “Observe the paintings as pictures of teachers. What kinds of teachers would the persons in the paintings be? Write down your answers and justify your views using visual elements in the pictures.” Writing, instead of individual or group interviews, was chosen as the
method of data collection because this was thought to minimize the influence of other
students’ opinions or guidance by the researcher. Color prints of seventeen paintings
in numerical order were handed out to students, but they were free to decide in which
order to observe the paintings. Two hours were reserved for the assignment. The
students wrote their comments about the images in Finnish, which were translated
into English later on.

In total, the data included 116 typewritten pages. The length of the answers per
painting varied between three and 152 words, with the average answer being 50 to 60
words and naming a couple of visual cues and teacher characteristics related to them.
A number of students also elaborated on emotions generated by the “teacher” images.

**Membership categorization analysis**

The data in Sub-study 1 were analyzed using membership categorization analysis.
Earlier, for instance, Rapley, McCarthy, and McHoul (2003) combined a social
representations approach and membership categorization analysis in studying how
a mass murderer was categorized in professional and lay accounts. They regarded
both social representation and categorization as processes of identification in terms of
categorizing people and their actions using cultural knowledge. Tileagă (2009) used
membership categorization analysis to study social representations of history in the
*Tismăneanu Report* condemning communism in Romania. He regarded categorizations
as constitutive of particular social representations of history. Kilby (2017), in turn,
applied membership categorization analysis in her study on social representations
of peace in terrorism talk. She conceptualized the relation between membership
categorizations and social representations in terms of mutual contributions in which
social representations serve as the basis for membership categorizations, on the
one hand, and membership categorizations contribute to the construction of social
representations, on the other. However, there seem to be very few studies on social
representations using membership categorization analysis, and none of them seem
to employ visual materials.

From the theory of social representations point of view, the design of Sub-study
1 was related to anchoring in which students made sense of “teacher” images using
their social representations of teachership as the resource of sense-making. On the
one hand, the advance information given to students that the paintings represented
“teachers” was thought to activate social representations of teachership; on the other,
the visual characteristics of the “teachers” were thought to direct the act of sense-
making by triggering certain social representations of teachership as the frame of
interpretation. Thus, the perception of and reflection on each painting formed a “case”
in which students navigated between social representations of teachership and the
visual characteristics of the “teacher” image. Since, according to Moscovici (1984, p.
29), anchoring “strives to anchor strange ideas, to reduce them to ordinary categories,”
membership categorization analysis was considered to provide a tool for exploring
and understanding how students made sense of “teacher” images based on social
representations of teachership.

When Harvey Sacks developed membership categorization analysis in the 1960s, it
was targeted to investigate how people categorize each other based on their common-
sense understanding (Sacks, 1992; see also Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015). Sacks (1992)
considered membership categories as culturally constructed “social types” that,
besides clustering social and moral norms, are capable of predicting, facilitating and regulating social interaction as well as creating sense of social order (Fitzgerald, 2015; Hester & Eglin, 1997; Jayyusi, 1984; Sacks, 1992). In addition to principles and methods of categorization, Sacks (1972, 1992) was also interested in its consequences for interaction. He understood categorization of others and self-categorization as interdependent acts: when categorizing other people, a person simultaneously categorizes him/herself in relation to them, which might have interactional implications (Fitzgerald, 2015; Sacks, 1992). Similar to Sacks (1992), Moscovici (1984) regarded categorization as a key operation in sense-making and acknowledged its impact on social interaction and reconstruction of social reality.

Housley and Fitzgerald (2015) argue that Sacks’s interest did not focus so much on the explication of culturally available membership categories themselves but rather on the ways people combined categories with predicates and attributes in particular situations in order to specify the categories contextually. This approach to membership categorization suggests that “general categories” often appear too vague and abstract for the purposes of everyday interaction and must be refined with descriptions that characterize members’ situational actions more adequately in a particular category (Cuff, 1993; Hester & Eglin, 1997; Watson, 1997). Thus, in addition to Sacks’s category-bound activities that refer to typical actions for an incumbent in a particular category, attention has also been paid to other kinds of category-related qualifications, norms, and expectations termed, for instance, as “features” (Jayyusi, 1984), “predicates” (Watson, 1997), or “attributes” (Fitzgerald, 2015; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015). In this view, categorization is seen as an activity in which culturally available “general” membership categories (such as “teacher”) are used as resources for constructing “more specified” membership categorizations situationally (such as “strict teacher”).

Membership categorization can be understood as a kind of navigation between socially constructed and culturally shared membership categories, on the one hand, and the situational membership categorizations, on the other, when making sense of social encounters (Jayyusi, 1984). In this sense, membership categorization seems to conceptualize a similar type of process as anchoring in social representations theory, where social phenomena, objects, and people are made sense of by drawing on culturally shared social representations. For this reason, membership categorization analysis has been thought to provide a methodological tool that is compatible with the social constructionist epistemology of social representations and, in addition, resonates with the process of anchoring in terms of explaining situational encounters through more encompassing social and cultural resources constructed by members of society over a long period of time. However, neither culturally available membership categories nor social representations are thought to be stable but rather subject to modification and change in social interaction (Moscovici, 1984, 1998; Sacks, 1992).

Membership categorization analysis has mostly been applied to verbal means of communication (Francis & Hart, 1997). However, drawing on the ethnomethodological tradition, Sacks (1972, 1992) devoted attention to the role of observation as well, stating that people’s visual features may serve as a basis for categorization. Hence, diverse visual material – such as photographs, paintings, videos, and media images – have supplied material for membership categorization analysis (Ball & Smith, 2011; Francis & Hart, 1997; Lepper, 2000; Martikainen & Hujala, 2017; Watson, 2005). Following Sacks’ (1972, 1992) observation that people categorize each other based on visual features, students in Sub-study 1 were invited to observe people depicted in the paintings and write what kind of teachers those people would be.
Analysis in practice

As to the analysis in practice, participants’ comments were analyzed painting by painting. First, the analysis focused on examining “perceptually available category features” (Jayyusi, 1984, p. 73): in other words, which visual cues of “teachers” the students mentioned in each painting (e.g., “serious facial expression,” “stiff posture,” “formal clothes”). Then, it was examined how students specified or defined the “teachers” based on the visual cues with adjectives (e.g., “strict,” “demanding,” “mean,” “frightening”) or descriptive expressions (e.g., “keeps strict discipline”). The characterizations with similar or related meanings formed a group that was labeled based on the common denominator of the characterizations in the group (e.g., “strict teacher”). This procedure is understood as membership categorization based on visual cues (Sacks, 1972; see also Martikainen & Hujala, 2017). The names of membership categorizations follow Jayyusi’s (1984, p. 20) “adjective-plus-a-category” model, in which culturally available membership category (“teacher”) is situationally modified by an adjective referring to a teacher characteristic (e.g., “strict teacher”). Finally, different membership categorizations of each “teacher” image were quantified in order to find out whether certain ways of categorizing each painting prevailed.

The membership categorizations formed the results of the analysis. Simultaneously, they served as a basis for making inferences about the core notions and themata of social representations of teacherness.

4.3.2 Sub-study 2 (content analysis)

The aim of Sub-study 2 was to reveal the kinds of social representations of teacherness that are suggested by students’ and teachers’ drawings of a typical teacher. The design of the study was based on objectification using visual means of expression. In addition to drawing, the participants commented on their drawings verbally. The data were analyzed using content analysis. This sub-study examined social representation at the level of ontogenesis by studying how social representations became active at the level of individual students and teachers (Flick et al., 2015). However, the findings also made certain inferences possible regarding the implications of social representations for interaction between students and teachers. In this sense, this sub-study included elements of analysis at the level of microgenesis as well (Flick et al., 2015; Psaltis, 2015).

Participants, data collection, and data

The group of participants consisted of students and teachers at the upper secondary level of education. These groups of participants were understood as “natural groups” that are related to the target of the study in reality (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999). Fifty-nine students (46 female, 13 male) in three courses on visual culture studies at a Finnish vocational upper secondary college for culture studies took part in the study. I acted as the teacher in the courses. The group of participating students was the same as in Sub-study 1, with the exception that six of them were absent on the days of data collection for Sub-study 2. Roughly, half of the students were first-year students who had just entered the college, and half of them had just started their third and last study year. By including freshmen in the sample, this study attempted to diminish the potential
influence of the observation of teachers in the current college on the drawings of a typical teacher.

Furthermore, 39 teachers (26 female, 13 male) of various subjects from several upper secondary institutions of education from Eastern and Southern Finland took part in the study. Their ages varied between 28 and 60 years old. All the teachers were Finnish. I sent an inquiry about the willingness to participate in the study to teachers in these institutions of education via the Internet, including the college where I was employed. The research materials were sent to those who volunteered.

The data were collected in autumn 2015. Both students and teachers were invited to draw a picture of a typical teacher and write a short comment on their drawings. The instruction read as follows: “Draw a picture of a typical teacher and write briefly what makes it a picture of a typical teacher. You may use colors if you wish.” Students were given paper, pencils, and colored pencils and crayons. A period of 45 minutes was reserved for the assignment, but all students finished it in less than 30 minutes. The same assignment and instructions were sent to the teachers via e-mail. They were asked to return the assignment via e-mail within a month.

The data for Sub-study 2 included 59 students’ and 39 teachers’ drawings of a typical teacher with brief verbal comments. The comments were written in Finnish and translated into English afterward. Whereas the length of students’ writings varied between a few words and a maximum of 10 sentences, teachers commented on their drawing with 2 to 15 sentences. Participant-created drawings were the primary data, and the role of the verbal data was to elucidate the drawers’ intentions.

Content analysis

In Sub-study 2, content analysis was used to analyze both visual and verbal data, as it has been commonly used before (Rose, 2016; Schreier, 2012, 2014). Content analysis has also extensively served as a method of analysis in qualitative research on social representations (Sakki et al., 2014). Examples include Sakki (2010) in her study on social representations of European integration and Hakoköngäs (2017) in his study on visual collective memory, who both used content analysis to analyze both verbal and visual data. However, both combined content analysis with semiotic analysis in order to address the problematics of meaning construction in greater depth. Additionally, for instance, Rose (1995) used content analysis to study social representations of madness in British television, as did Räty with his colleagues (2012) to study social representations of intelligence through children’s drawings.

Research on social representations studies the content, forms, and functions of social representations (Sakki et al., 2014). This sub-study focused on the content of social representation as expressed through students’ and teachers’ drawings and accompanying verbal comments. Drawings were regarded as objectifications of social representations of teachership that gave them a tangible form (Hakoköngäs & Sakki, 2016a; Sakki & Menard, 2014). Through the examination of the visual form, on the one hand, and intended communicative meanings provided by the verbal comments, on the other, this study attempted to understand the characteristics of social representations of teachership the participants used. For the above purposes, content analysis provided a practical tool and simultaneously resonated with the idea of objectification. Whereas visual objectification makes formless social representations (meanings) tangible through the visual form, visual content analysis proceeds in the
opposite direction; by analyzing the visual form, it strives to understand the social representations (meanings) expressed through it.

Content analysis is often regarded as a basic method of analysis that is applied in order to develop an understanding of data and its characteristics as well as summarize the data (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Mayring, 2014; Schreier, 2014). Usually, such understanding is achieved by classifying the data systematically (Krippendorff, 2004; Schreier, 2014). (For elaboration of the systematic employment of content analysis, see Krippendorff [2004, pp. 97–146] and Cohen, Manion, and Morrison [2007, pp. 475–491]). Even though the way content analysis is applied can vary depending on the aim of the study (Schreier, 2012), qualitative content analysis typically focuses on meanings and content (Cohen et al., 2007; Mayring, 2014; Schreier, 2012). For content analysis, meanings are neither ahistorical nor acontextual but instead “relative to particular contexts, discourses, or purposes” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 24). In addition, Krippendorff (2004, p. 22) emphasizes that from a content analysis point of view, “texts have no objective – that is, no reader-independent – qualities.” Hence, meanings are not given but rather contextually constructed by research participants and, similarly, contextually interpreted by the researcher (Schreier, 2012). Based on this conception of meaning as the results of construction, qualitative content analysis can be related to social constructionism that is compatible with the epistemological foundations of social representations theory.

According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), content analysis not only reports manifest characteristics of communication as expressed in the data but also makes inferences about the purposes and consequences of communication. In this way, as Krippendorff (2004) states, the meanings expressed in the data serve as the basis for making inferences about social interaction and public behavior, which aptly met the aim of this sub-study. Qualitative content analysis may occasionally use quantification of some aspects of the data in order to increase the transparency of the analysis or provide an overview of the thematic landscape and tendencies in the data (Krippendorff, 2004; Moser & Korstjens, 2018; Neale, Miller, & West, 2014).

Visual content analysis focuses on examining what is visible in the image. The identification of the visual elements in the image forms the basis of the analysis (Johnson & Christensen, 2013). Similar to content analysis based on textual materials, content analysis is an applicable tool for classifying images systematically based on their visual characteristics (Bell, 2012; Hughes et al., 2016). According to Sakki and her colleagues (2014), qualitative content analysis may both provide a general idea about the visual data and act as a methodological tool to reveal central themes. In this study, the analysis of the visual characteristics of the drawings served as a means of detecting the types of teachers students and teachers expressed through their drawings.

According to Rose (2016), performing visual content analysis might be challenging since it is often based on subjective judgments. For this reason, conducting visual content analysis requires constant critical reflection in terms of attempting to control the influence of the analysts’ habitual ways of perceiving images. To increase the transparency of visual content analysis, the visual elements detected from the data are often quantified (Bock, Isermann, & Knieper, 2011). Hedenus (2016) also finds such quantification problematic because, by focusing on “atomic” visual elements, it simplifies the image and cannot take the interaction and mutual influence of visual elements into account. On the other hand, quantification may provide the readers with an overall impression of the visual spectrum of the data (Bock et al., 2011). This particular study quantified the frequency of the teacher types identified in the data.
Analysis in practice

At the first stage of the analysis, I analyzed students’ and teachers’ drawings without reading the participants’ verbal comments in advance. This procedure was designed to limit the influence of participants’ verbally expressed intentions when examining the visual characteristics of the drawings and detecting the types of teachers from the visual data. Facial expressions, gestures, postures, clothes, backgrounds, and environments served as the bases for classifying the drawings of a typical teacher. Based on these visually perceivable characteristics, certain teacher types could be identified (e.g., serious, formal, relaxed, friendly, and bored/tired-looking teachers).

After focusing on visual materials, content analysis was applied to the verbal data with the aim of detecting the types of teachers explicated verbally. More concretely, attention was paid to word choices and larger verbal units communicating teacher characteristics. As for sampling units (Krippendorff, 2004, pp. 103–108), this particular study used thematic sampling units in terms of different types of teachers. From the types of descriptive codes (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 478), the ways of characterizing people served as the descriptive codes for this study. In practice, this meant the characterization of teachers as “bored” or “friendly,” for example.

At the final stage of analysis, the analyses of visual and verbal data were observed in relation to each other drawing by drawing. At this stage of analysis, the types of teachers characterized on the basis of visual characteristics were furnished with meanings derived from participants’ verbal comments. In addition, it was cross-checked whether the types of teachers identified in the images were, in fact, meant as distinct types of teachers by the participants – and whether verbal comments suggested additional “visual types” not identified when analyzing the drawings alone. Finally, the frequencies of teacher types were counted in order to confirm whether some types of teachers were more common than others. In addition, quantification served the purpose of making inferences about the themata of social representations of teachership.

Separating the analysis of visual and verbal data, on the one hand, and the researcher-driven analysis of drawings from the analysis of drawings in the light of participants’ verbal comments, on the other, made it possible to explore whether the teacher types each participant expressed visually and verbally were consistent. This methodological design also made it possible to both separate and examine all three sites of visual materials, namely, the production of pictures (participant), the pictures themselves, and the interpretation of pictures (researcher) (Clark & Morriss, 2017; Mitchell et al., 2011; Riessman, 2008). In addition, the design of first separating visual and textual analysis was thought to provide an affordance to trace tacit dimensions of social representations of teachership that visual materials are supposed to bring forth (de Rosa, 2014; Sakki et al., 2014).

4.3.3 Sub-study 3 (analysis of visual rhetoric: content analysis and semiotic analysis)

The aim of this sub-study was to determine the kinds of social representations of teachership the Trade Union of Education in Finland communicates through the cover images of Teacher magazine. This study was primarily associated with naturalization based on visual images. However, cover images can also be understood
as objectifications of social representations of teachership and their analysis by the researcher as the process of anchoring. The data were analyzed using content analysis and semiotic analysis that together focused on analyzing the visual rhetoric of the cover images. Sub-study 3 examined social representations at the level of sociogenesis with a focus on the influence of social representations at a more societal level than Sub-studies 1 and 2 (Flick et al., 2015).

**Data collection and data**

Cover images of the Finnish *Teacher* magazine between the years 2013 and 2017 comprised the data of the study. *Teacher* magazine is published by the Trade Union of Education in Finland, which is an independent labor market organization not linked to any political party. It promotes and protects the interests of educational professionals and actively influences educational policies in Finland. About 90% of teachers in Finland are members of the Trade Union. In addition, student teachers and retired teachers are eligible for membership. Overall, the Trade Union of Education occupies an influential position among teachers in Finland. (Trade Union of Education in Finland, 2018.)

The Trade Union of Education in Finland is closely related to teachership yet not directly involved in everyday practices at school. The inclusion of the voice of a societal and political agent (the Trade Union) and media images in the research was hoped to contribute to the understanding of teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior as a multifaceted matter of which the scope extends beyond classroom walls. Having a wide readership among teachers and student teachers in Finland, visual representations of teachership in the cover images of *Teacher* magazine might contribute in a significant way to its readers’ conceptions of teachership.

From the total of 147 cover pages during the 2013–2017 period, 138 cover pages were photographs of people. The remaining nine cover pages included two photographs of objects, three graphs, and four graphic works of art with metaphorical representations of people. These nine cover pages were excluded from the data due to their different subject matter and media of expression.

The data were collected in autumn/winter 2017. The period 2013–2017 was chosen for two reasons. Firstly, the study focused on current imagery of teachership. Secondly, *Teacher* magazine introduced a new cover layout at the beginning of 2013. The layout of the cover pages before and after 2013 differed so much from each other that their comparison would have been impossible. While the cover pages since 2013 feature a large photograph depicting one or more teachers in various environments, the previous layout consisted of a large photograph on versatile subject matters, with small photographs of teachers’ faces.

The cover images of *Teacher* magazine between the years 2013 and 2017 are archived in electronic format on the homepage of *Teacher* magazine and were easily accessible. For the sake of the analysis, the cover images were copy-pasted to a Word document and scaled smaller so that 12 cover images fit in one sheet. The Word documents were printed in color. The prints made it easier to classify the images because a larger number of images could be observed and compared to each other at the same time.

The cover images forming the data were photographs. Despite their apparent realism, photographs are not transparent recordings of reality but rather constructed through diverse choices of visual expression (Barthes, 1977; Hook & Glâveanu, 2013;
Rose, 2016). While the subject matter of the photograph (i.e., what is depicted) is constructed through images of persons, objects, and environments, the elements of visual expression, such as cropping, viewing angle, color, and lightning, construct the standpoint to the subject matter (i.e., how it is depicted) (Hook & Glăveanu, 2013). In this study, these two levels of a visual image are considered to construct its visual rhetoric, communicating certain social representations of teachership.

In addition to photographs of teachers, the cover pages of Teacher magazine include the name of the magazine as well as a brief caption related to the cover photograph. However, the cover images were analyzed without paying attention to the caption. Since this study focused on visually communicated meanings, verbal accounts might have influenced the analysis and the interpretation of the image (Barthes, 1977; Lefsrud et al., 2015).

Analysis of visual rhetoric: content analysis and semiotic analysis

This sub-study applied content analysis and semiotic analysis to study the visual rhetoric of cover images of Teacher magazine. Previously, for instance, Finn (1997), Hakoköngäs (2017), Hakoköngäs and Sakki (2019), and Kugelmann, Watson, and Frisby (2019) have applied a rhetorical approach to study visually communicated social representations. However, the use of a visual rhetoric approach in social representations research has been sporadic.

The study was associated with the process of naturalization in terms of cover images of Teacher magazine visually objectifying and circulating social representations of teachership. Potentially, cover images might contribute to the normalization of certain kinds of teacher images – and, consequently, the naturalization of certain social representations of teachership. Since naturalization is based on influencing people’s perceptions and conceptions through repeating certain imagery, in practical terms, it means that visual images are constructed in a manner that activates the same or similar social representations over and over again until anchoring becomes a highly habitual process. In order to elaborate the mechanism of visual rhetoric, this study deconstructed images into form and meaning. The component of form was approached through content analysis and the component of meaning through semiotic analysis. Actually, this is congruent with Foss’s (2005) recommendation that the analysis of visual rhetoric should pay attention to the elements both presented in the image and suggested by it. In addition to persons, objects, and environments depicted in the image, the presented elements include means of visual expression, such as composition, shape, color, and space. Suggested elements, in turn, encompass the meanings constructed based on visually presented elements (Foss, 2005).

Since content analysis was already discussed in Sub-study 2 (pp. 68–70), it suffices here to discuss the additional characteristics of content analysis relevant to this particular sub-study. Visual content analysis is normally used to classify people, objects, and environments in images (Bell, 2012). When it is applied to depictions of people, a common procedure is to classify them based on age, gender, facial expressions, gestures, and attire (Bell, 2012). In addition, this study was also interested in the choices of visual expression, such as colors, light, viewing angle, and composition. To include them in the analysis as well, content analysis was complemented with features of compositional analysis (Rose, 2016) and formal analysis (Schroeder, 2006). This type of “extended” content analysis made it possible to examine the underlying “rhetorical
operations” (Lehtonen, 2011, p. 85), including both the selection of people, objects, and environments depicted and the means of visual expression used in depicting people, objects, and environments (Bell, 2012; Hook & Glâveanu, 2013).

Visual rhetoric is regarded as closely related to visual semiotics, according to which a combination of visual forms and meanings constitute a meaning system (Peirce, 1985). In addition, they both focus on examining cultural meanings of visual elements and images (Danesi, 2017; Foss, 2005; Lefsrud et al., 2015). The denotative and connotative meanings are central to both of them. While the denotative meaning refers to the literal meaning, the connotative meaning conceptualizes associative, experiential, and affective layers of meaning as well as culturally specific meanings (Barthes, 1977; Danesi, 2017; Veltri, 2015). Sonesson (1989) refers to these two levels of meaning through the concepts of “iconic language” and “plastic language” simultaneously present in the image. The iconic language refers to the denotation (what is depicted), and the plastic language refers to the connotation (how the denotation is depicted) (Sonesson, 1989). Visual rhetoric is constructed at both levels.

In its analysis of the cultural and social meanings of the visual elements, this study drew on social semiotics (Jewitt & Oyama, 2004; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). This stage of analysis constituted the process of making sense of the visual images by attaching elements of iconic and plastic language to their cultural meanings. As Hook and Glâveanu (2013) and Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) claim, the meaning of the image is not to be found in the visual components themselves; rather, perceivers construct the meaning by anchoring the visual elements to the culturally constructed matrix of meanings. Despite the existence of culturally preferred readings of visual images suggested by social semiotics (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), people with diverse motivations, experiences, and knowledge may and do interpret the same image in different ways (Sturken & Cartwright, 2017).

Analysis in practice

In terms of concrete operations, the data were analyzed first using content analysis. After having sorted the cover images intuitively based on their visual characteristics at the level of iconic language focusing on depictions of teachers (gender, age, facial expression, gestures, clothing), the images were observed carefully in detail, and the findings at the level of iconic language were quantified. At this stage, the classes of teachers started to emerge (e.g., serious/formal, funny, and relaxed teachers). In the next phase, features of compositional and formal analysis were combined with content analysis to scrutinize composition, viewing angle, color, lighting, and location in the picture space at the level of plastic language. Finally, the findings of the iconic language and plastic language were set into dialogue. It became evident that, for example, images of serious/formal-looking teachers were often full-length or half-length photographs taken from low angle, whereas images of funny-looking teachers were often close-ups taken from an eye-level angle.

The findings provided by the content analysis were interpreted by semiotic analysis. Practically, this was constituted by a process of meaning construction wherein the visual elements were furnished with their denotative and connotative meanings and interpreted in relation to each other (Jewitt & Oyama, 2004; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). For instance, serious/formal-looking teachers in full-length photographs taken from a low angle were interpreted as communicating expertise, knowledge, and
authority, whereas funny-looking teachers in close-ups taken from eye-level angle were understood as communicating playfulness and approachability. At this point, classes of teachers were established and labeled by anchoring them to a cultural matrix of meanings and, finally, quantified. After having established the classes of teachers included in the cover images, critical attention was also paid to classes of teachers excluded from the cover images. Since visual rhetoric is based on choices at the level of iconic and plastic language, the choices encompass both inclusion and exclusion.

The analysis of the cover images of Teacher magazine was researcher-driven. Therefore, it must be noted that despite the critical reflection and self-reflection included in the process of analysis, my background, prior experience, and knowledge position me in relation to the topic of the study (as explicated in the introduction, pp. 21). This starting point, combined with the polysemous quality of images (Barthes, 1977), on the one hand, and the polyphasic quality of social representations (Moscovici, 1998; Moscovici and Marková, 1998), on the other, mean that instead of objective statements, this study attempts to produce justified contextual interpretations of the topic.

4.4 RESEARCH ETHICS

Research ethics relate to principles of good scientific practice in terms of care and truthfulness in all stages of the research (Kuula, 2011; Ryan, 2007). Among ethical guidelines, respecting participants’ autonomy and privacy, avoiding harm, and protecting data occupy central roles (Creswell, 2014; Kuula, 2011; Larson, 2009). In this study, the data from students were collected in an upper secondary vocational college for culture studies in autumn 2015 when I worked there as the teacher of visual culture studies. Before collecting the material, permission to collect data from the students was obtained from the principal of the college. Following Cresswell’s (2014) guidelines, the students were informed about the research and its purposes in advance. The participating students were students in three courses taught by me, which might be challenging in terms of research ethics since I acted both as the teacher and the researcher. Since the assignments for collecting the data were suitable for exercises in visual expression related to the topic of the courses, I considered it pedagogically justified to conduct the assignments/data collection during the lessons. Furthermore, because the data were collected during the lessons, I regarded my role as the teacher as primary. However, at the same time, I took care that the data collection was conducted duly in terms of scientific research. All students were expected to complete the assignment. However, they were free to decide whether they would give permission to use their assignment for research purposes or not. This free choice was emphasized, and it was made clear that the decision not to participate in the research would not influence course evaluations, for instance. Because the assignments were part of their studies, I gave the students feedback on the assignments and discussed the visual expressiveness of the images with them.

Except for one, all students gave permission to use their assignments for research purposes. An informed consent was obtained from all those students. In addition, an informed consent was obtained from the parents/guardians of those students who were under 18 years old, which is a milestone of legal adulthood in Finland. Even though Kuula (2011) states that consent from parents/guardians is not necessary when studies conducted in schools do not deal with sensitive matters, other scholars refer to varying practices in this matter (Nieminen, 2010). The anonymity of students was
secured throughout the research process. The students did not include their names in the visual and verbal data. Instead, they gave the following information: gender, age, study program, and study year. In addition, they drew on the reverse side of the assignment a symbol based on which they could identify their assignment when feedback was given. The data quotations used in the research articles were selected so that the author cannot be recognized.

The students wrote and drew by hand. I typed the answers and scanned the drawings and saved them in files on my personal computer. Individual students’ data were identified by numbering them (e.g., student 1, student 2). No one else knows the login code and usernames; thus, no one else can gain access to the data. Backup copies are stored in a memory stick, which is kept in a secure place. Similarly, the handwritten papers and drawings are kept in a secure place at home. Similar ethical measures were taken with data produced by the participating teachers. When I received the data from the teachers through e-mail, I had the opportunity to recognize the sender based on the e-mail address. However, all data were copy-pasted to Word documents without the names of the teachers and including only their gender and age. Similar to students’ data, individual teachers’ data were identified through numbers (e.g., teacher 1, teacher 2). The research did not deal with sensitive issues; for this reason, no precautions in terms of providing counseling, for instance, were arranged. The research follows the national guidelines for ethical principles of research in Finland (Finnish National Board of Research Integrity TENK, 2019; National Advisory Board on Research Ethics, 2009); hence, no ethical review statement from the ethical committee was needed.

The choice to use paintings of non-teachers instead of photographs of real teachers in Sub-study 1 was justified ethically. It was regarded as unethical to make judgments of real teachers and eventually publish the results with details of the photographs. In order to prevent this potential harm, paintings of non-teachers were preferred to photographs of real teachers. As for the photographs of teachers in the cover images of Teacher magazine, two ethical concerns are worth mentioning. First, permission to include the images in the research article and this summary was obtained from the chief editor of the magazine and from the photographers themselves. Before granting this permission, they were informed about the topic of the dissertation. In addition, when this study examines the cover images, it does not make any claims about the teachers depicted in the cover images. Instead, the cover images are examined as a means of communicating the Trade Union of Education’s social representations of teachership.

In terms of research ethics, the study was conducted with care following the guidelines of good scientific practice (Kuula, 2011, pp. 34–35). The data analysis was conducted first before writing the other parts of the study. After completing the draft of the whole sub-study, the analysis was conducted again in order to cross-check its validity. In addition, some parts of the data were quantified in order to increase the transparency of the analysis. In terms of writing the summary, prior research was cited appropriately, and the theoretical framework and methodology were elaborated in detail. The quotations from the data concretized the participants’ voices in Sub-studies 1 and 2. Similarly, the list of the paintings in Sub-study 1 and image examples in Sub-studies 2 and 3 concretized the visual basis of the studies. In addition to procedures of collecting, anonymizing, and storing the data, these measures were taken to ensure that the research was duly conducted and reported.

Finally, the findings of the study and the inferences made based on them relate to ethics in terms of their influence on readers (Alldred & Gillies, 2005). The categories
and types of teachers as well as social representations of teachership identified and discussed in this study may contribute to the formation of social representations of teachership among the readers, thereby influencing their conceptions of and relation to teachers. Being aware of this ethical dimension of this research, I have attempted to provide the readers with tools to evaluate the study and form their own views by informing them of the choices related to the topic, theoretical framework, and methods as well as showing how the findings are rooted in the data and justifying the inferences herein made.
5 FINDINGS

This chapter first summarizes the central findings of the three sub-studies included in the dissertation. Each sub-study focuses on a different process of social representation, as exemplified in Table 2. The summary of the findings of the sub-studies is followed by the presentation of the overarching findings that can be related to teacher-student interaction, teachers’ professional identity, visual and social representations of teachership, and research methodology. These overarching findings will serve as the basis for discussion in Chapter 6.

Table 2. Research Questions and Processes of Social Representation in the Sub-studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sub-studies</th>
<th>Sub-study 1</th>
<th>Sub-study 2</th>
<th>Sub-study 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>research question</td>
<td>What kinds of categories of teachers do students construct when perceiving “teacher” images?</td>
<td>What kinds of social representations of teachership are suggested by students’ and teachers’ drawings of a typical teacher?</td>
<td>What kinds of social representations of teachership does the Trade Union of Education in Finland communicate through the cover images of Teacher magazine?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>process of social representation</td>
<td>anchoring (making sense of social phenomena based on social representations; here, interpreting “teacher” images based on social representations of teachership)</td>
<td>objectification (making social representations related to social phenomena tangible; here, visualizing social representations of teachership by drawing images of a typical teacher)</td>
<td>naturalization (disseminating social representations through symbolical expressions until they become self-evident; here, the circulation of certain kinds of teacher images through the cover images of Teacher magazine)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1 FINDINGS OF SUB-STUDIES

The following sections present the central findings of each sub-study. At the end of each section, there is a table summarizing 1) the categories, types, or classes of teachers detected from the data, 2) visual features based on which those categories, types, or classes of teachers were formed, and 3) core notions of social representations of teachership suggested by the findings.

5.1.1 Sub-study 1: How students categorize teachers based on visual cues: Implications of nonverbal communication for classroom management

Sub-study 1 had one research question aimed at discovering how students categorize teachers based on visual cues. The findings of the study served as the basis for suggesting implications for classroom management. Sixty-five students in an upper secondary vocational college for culture studies in Finland observed paintings of people (other than teachers) as if they were depictions of teachers. They were asked
to reflect in writing on what kinds of teachers the people depicted in the paintings would be based on visual cues. (Pictures of the paintings are provided in Appendix 1, pp. 127-128). From the point of view of social representations theory, this sub-study focused on the process of anchoring, in which categorization is a key process. The categories served as the basis for making inferences about the core notions of social representations of teachership among the participating students.

Students associated the “teacher” images and the visual features of the “teachers” with different kinds of teachership. Visual cues were regarded as expressions of the “teachers’” attitudes toward students, skills and knowledge, ways of communicating, and personality. In the data, students explicated which visual cues served as the bases of categorization. Among the visual cues, “teachers’” age, facial expressions, gestures, posture, clothes, hairstyle, make-up, colors in the image, and location in the picture space served as bases for categorizing the “teachers.” In contrast, the “teachers’” gender, ethnic background, or sexual orientation could not be identified as criteria for categorization in this study.

Five categories of teachers emerged from the data: strict teacher, friendly teacher, distant teacher, communicative teacher, and indifferent teacher. The category of strict teacher was based on a strict facial expression, a judging gaze, formal attire in dark or strong colors, and stiff body language. “Teachers” in this category aroused fear among students and were associated with teacher-centered teaching methods. The category of friendly teacher was constructed on the basis of a smile, relaxed body language, and casual clothes in warm colors. These characteristics communicated approachability and closeness to students and generated feelings of trust. A serious facial expression, formal attire in dark colors, stiff posture connected with expressions of withdrawal, such as looking past and turning away, signaled avoidance and formality in the category of distant teacher. These “teachers” were perceived as distant and difficult to approach, problematizing teacher-student interaction. A smile, the use of welcoming gestures, casual attire, relaxed body language, and location at the same level as the spectator served as bases for the category of a communicative teacher. These features communicated immediacy and enthusiasm, which made the “teachers” appear approachable, supportive, and understanding. “Teachers” in this category were assumed to use participatory and student-centered teaching methods. Finally, the category of indifferent teacher included, on the one hand, uncommunicative “teachers” expressed through turned-away poses, shut eyes, and headphones and, on the other hand, tired “teachers” expressed through old age, bored facial expressions, as well as untidy and slack overall appearance. In addition, “teachers” whose striking appearance violated the norms of appropriateness were categorized as indifferent. Indifferent “teachers” were associated with lack of interest in and commitment to counseling students and supporting their learning, which aroused feelings of unimportance among students.

In summary, the categories of friendly teacher and communicative teacher captured the preferred types of “teachers,” who were perceived as welcoming and trustworthy as well as eager to interact with students and support their learning. Visual expressiveness associated with friendly teacher and communicative teacher implied successful conditions for classroom management. The categories of strict teacher, distant teacher, and indifferent teacher, in turn, were associated with disfavored types of “teachers” who either maintain strict discipline or neglect teaching and counseling. These “teachers” were perceived as frightening, distant, irresponsible, or reluctant to communicate with students, which made students assume that they and their learning are not primary
concerns of these “teachers.” Thus, the visual expressiveness associated with these categories of teachers implied unfavorable and problematic conditions for classroom management.

From the perspective of the theory of social representations, “teacher” images with specific visual characteristics seemed to trigger social representations of teachership that anchored the “teacher” images in the cultural knowledge and prior experiences of teachers available for the students. Certain characteristics of “teachers’” visual expressiveness in the images seemed to act as triggers that activated certain social representations of teachership rather than others, as shown by the categories of teachers elaborated above. Some students’ written accounts revealed that teacher characters in films and literature contributed to their perceptions of “teacher” images. The level of teachers’ authority and involvement in communication with students emerged as the key anchors used in categorizing “teachers” based on their visual cues. Thus, these two aspects can be identified as the core notions of social representations of teachership among the participating students. The findings of Sub-study 1 are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of the Findings of Sub-study 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>category of teachers</th>
<th>visual triggers</th>
<th>core notions of social representations of teachership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strict teacher</td>
<td>-strict facial expression</td>
<td>-level of authority</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-judging gaze</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-stiff body language</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-formal attire</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-dark/strong colors</td>
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<tr>
<td>friendly teacher</td>
<td>-smile</td>
<td>-involvement in communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-relaxed body language</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-casual clothes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-warm colors</td>
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<tr>
<td>distant teacher</td>
<td>-serious facial expression</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-stiff posture</td>
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<td>-formal attire</td>
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<td>-dark colors</td>
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<td>-turns away</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-stands far away</td>
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<tr>
<td>communicative</td>
<td>-smile</td>
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<td>teacher</td>
<td>-use of welcoming gestures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-casual attire</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-relaxed body language</td>
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<td>-location at the same level</td>
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<td>indifferent teacher</td>
<td>-shut eyes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-tired/bored facial expression</td>
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<td>-turned-away pose</td>
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<td>-headphones</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-untidy/slack appearance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-inappropriate appearance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5.1.2 Sub-study 2: Social representations of teachership based on students’ and teachers’ drawings of a typical teacher

Sub-study two had two research questions: 1) What kinds of social representations of teachership are suggested by students’ and teachers’ drawings of a typical teacher? and 2) How do students’ and teachers’ drawings and social representations of teachership suggested by them relate to each other? Unlike Sub-study 1, this study did not use images as targets of observation; instead, participants were asked to draw a picture of a typical teacher themselves. In addition, the participants were asked to elaborate on their drawings in writing. The group of participants included 59 students from a Finnish upper secondary vocational college for culture studies and 39 teachers from upper secondary schools in Eastern and Southern Finland. From the perspective of the theory of social representations, the study design was associated with objectification in which the participants expressed and constructed their social representations of teachership in a visually tangible form. Including both students and teachers in the group of participants made it possible to compare their respective social representations of teachership.

Forty-two students drew a picture of a female teacher, 14 students of a male teacher, and three students of an androgynous teacher. Thus, for the majority of students, a typical teacher was female. In the drawings in which gender could be identified as male or female, all the male students drew a picture of a man, and, apart from two, all the female students drew a picture of a woman. With the exception of a few notably young- or old-looking teachers, a typical teacher was depicted as a middle-aged person. No students were depicted in students’ drawings.

Three types of teachers emerged from students’ data, namely, a formal and authoritarian teacher (n=35), a bored and indifferent teacher (n=13), and a friendly and communicative teacher (n=8). (Examples of the students’ drawings are provided in Appendix 2, p. 129.) Three drawings could not be identified with any of these classes. By and large, the same types of teachers could be detected in female and male students’ drawings; however, male students pictured the formal and authoritarian teacher as stricter, the bored and indifferent teacher as more exhausted, and the friendly and communicative teacher as more funny than did female students. The same types of teachers could be identified in visual and verbal data, and, in their verbal comments, students explicated how the teachers’ visual features communicated the teachership characteristics. Nine students noticed that teachers in their previous schools influenced their conception of a typical teacher, and two students identified the influence of movies.

A formal and authoritarian teacher was pictured as a neatly dressed, serious- or strict-looking person standing alone in an upright, stiff position and holding books, folders, or papers. No signs of activity or communication were visible. The aforementioned features were explained as communicating formality and authority. A bored and indifferent teacher, in turn, featured a markedly bored or tired-looking person having a slack physical appearance and standing or sitting in a slumped posture. These features were explained as expressing both lack of interest and energy as well as unwillingness to communicate. A friendly and communicative teacher was depicted as a smiling, casually dressed person sitting or standing in a relaxed but alert position and gesturing toward the spectator. With these visual cues, students wanted to express friendliness and fluent communication. Thus, all three types of teachers – authoritarian, indifferent, and friendly – expressed a distinctive style of interacting with students that can be
identified as the core notions of the social representations of teachership among the participating students.

As to the pictures drawn by the teachers, 23 teachers depicted a typical teacher as female, eight as male, and eight as androgynous. Both female and male teachers depicted a typical teacher as a woman and as a man. The majority of teachers looked middle-aged. Eight teachers included depictions of children in their drawings. In these depictions, children sat at their desks, turning toward the teacher, who stood in the front of the classroom. Three types of teachers emerged from teachers’ visual data as well, namely, an expert teacher (n=22), a social and multitasking teacher (n=10), and a friendly and communicative teacher (n=5). (Examples of the teachers’ drawings are provided in Appendix 2, p. 130.) In addition, two drawings could not be identified with any of the three classes. The same classes were also identifiable in the verbal data. However, in several cases, the verbal characterization seemed to be incongruent with the drawing, for instance, when an overtly serious-looking teacher was verbally characterized as friendly, or when a drawing depicted a teacher wearing relaxed clothes and standing still with no hint to activity and its verbal comment referred to multitasking. In addition and differing from students, a number of teachers did not mention teachers’ visual features at all or, conversely, listed visual characteristics but did not explain their meanings. The inconsistency between drawings and written comments, as well as the ignorance of the visual aspects in the verbal data, generated the impression that teachers did not pay serious attention to the meanings of visual cues in their drawings or did not relate visual features to certain teacher characteristics.

In the teachers’ data, an expert teacher was pictured either as a serious-looking man or woman wearing appropriate and slightly formal attire and standing still in the middle of an otherwise empty paper or a traditional primary school teacher teaching by the chalkboard. Verbally, this type of teacher was described as an educated and pedagogically competent expert that continuously updates his/her knowledge. The dimension of authority identifiable in the drawings was not explicated verbally. The type of a social and multitasking teacher emerged from drawings in which teachers were literally depicted as performing many tasks simultaneously or having multiple hands and legs. In verbal accounts, this type of teacher was described as social and efficient but, at the same time, feeling exhausted when attempting to meet the requirements of the profession. Friendly and communicative teachers, in turn, were identifiable by their smiling face and greeting gestures in the drawings. These teachers typically wore more casual clothes. Verbal comments characterized this type of teacher as a warm and caring, student-centered pedagogue.

Three core notions of social representations of teachership could be identified from teachers’ data, namely, expertise based on education, a challenging profession, and pedagogy. In terms of pedagogy, drawings and verbal accounts referred to controversial approaches: while verbal comments supported student-centered pedagogy, drawings visualized teacher-centered classroom situations. The key core notion of social representations of teachership identified in students’ data – namely, pedagogic interaction with students – can be associated with the core notion of pedagogy detected from teachers’ data. However, the high frequency of expert teachers (referring to the core notion of “expertise”) and low frequency of friendly and communicative teachers (referring to the core notion of “pedagogy”) in the teachers’ data may suggest that for contemporary teachers, being a teacher does not primarily mean pedagogical interaction with students. Table 4 summarizes the findings of Substudy 2.
The emergence of three distinct types of teachers in both students' and teachers' data can be understood as a sign of the existence of culturally shared understandings of teachership that the drawings objectified visually. At the same time, this finding refers to the polyphasic nature of social representations in terms of the existence of diverse social representations among students and teachers. The findings showed three types of discontinuities: 1) discontinuity between students' and teachers' explications of the visual expressiveness of teachers in the drawings, 2) discontinuity in teachers' data between teacher-centered pedagogy (drawings) and student-centered pedagogy (written comments), and 3) partial discontinuity between students' and teachers' social representations of teachership.

Table 4. Summary of the Findings of Sub-study 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>group of participants</th>
<th>types of teachers identified (in order of frequency)*</th>
<th>key features of visual objectifications</th>
<th>core notions of social representations of teachership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>students</td>
<td>1. formal and authoritarian teacher (n=35)</td>
<td>serious/strict facial expression</td>
<td>interaction with students/relation to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>upright posture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>neat/formal attire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>holds books/folders/papers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. bored and indifferent teacher (n=13)</td>
<td>bored/tired facial expression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>slumped posture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>slack appearance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. friendly and communicative teacher (n=8)</td>
<td>smile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>use of gestures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>casually dressed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>relaxed but alert posture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers</td>
<td>1. expert teacher (n=22)</td>
<td>serious facial expression</td>
<td>expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>appropriate/formal attire</td>
<td>-challenging profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>stands still in the middle of the paper</td>
<td>-pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>stands by the chalkboard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. social and multitasking teacher (n=10)</td>
<td>teacher does many things simultaneously</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>has many hands/legs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>looks energetic or exhausted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. friendly and communicative teacher (n=5)</td>
<td>smile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>greeting gesture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>casual clothing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Three drawings of the students could not be identified with any of the three classes. Two drawings of the teachers could not be identified with any of the three classes.

5.1.3 Sub-study 3: Social representations of teachership based on cover images of the Finnish Teacher magazine: A visual rhetoric approach

The main research question of Sub-study 3 was this: What kinds of social representations of teachership does the Trade Union of Education in Finland communicate through the cover images of Teacher magazine? In addition, the aim of the study was to critically discuss the implications of the imagery for teachers and teachership. The data consisted of 138 photographic images of teachers between 2013–2017.
Among the 138 cover images, 85 images depicted one teacher alone, 11 images one teacher with pupils, and 42 images depicted two or more teachers. As to teachers’ gender, 80 images depicted female teachers, 33 images male teachers, and 23 images both female and male teachers. Four classes of teachers could be identified in the cover images of Teacher magazine – namely, experts \((n=59)\), pranksters \((n=31)\), recreationists \((n=27)\), and educators \((n=11)\). (Examples of the cover images are provided in Appendix 3, p. 131–132.) Ten images could not be included in these classes, but they did not form any additional class either since a common denominator could not be identified. The classes must not be regarded as mutually exclusive types of teachers but, instead, as aspects of teachership activated in different situations.

*Experts* were depicted as middle-aged, knowledgeable professionals, suggesting that in addition to education, expertise develops through experience. Both men and women were included in the imagery of *experts*; however, traditional male and female areas of expertise were identifiable (e.g., machinery and a nursery). *Experts* were mostly depicted with symbols of knowledge – such as books and laptops – but without colleagues or students and, thus, without references to teamwork or teaching. Expert images communicated formality, control, and distance in terms of restrained facial expression, tidy and slightly formal clothing, controlled pose, coldish color tones, and half-length or full-length photographs framing the experts further away from the spectator. Positioning in the middle of the picture accentuated teachers’ status.

Young and middle-aged teachers playing the fool and having fun were classified as *pranksters*. They were pictured alone or with colleagues, but no students were depicted. In addition to playful actions, the air of informality and spontaneity was created through smiling faces, vivid gestures, more casual clothes, and the preference for close-ups and half-length shots. A gender-specific tendency to depict male *pranksters* as more adventurous than their female counterparts could be identified.

The class of *recreationists* included teachers depicted outdoors relaxing in – mostly – summer nature scenes in the sunshine. The feeling of leisure was communicated through smiling teachers wearing casual clothes and lying on the grass or in a hammock. Warm colors and earth tones increased the atmosphere of coziness. Another type of *recreationists* took the shape of serious-looking female teachers who appeared to be deep in thought and seeking recovery in a natural setting. In these photographs, grayish colors contributed to the feeling of slight exhaustion. With the exception of a few photographs depicting two or more teachers, *recreationists* were typically depicted alone, which formed an impression of recreation being a private matter. In general, recreation was depicted as a predominantly female pursuit. While the few male teachers included in the class of *recreationists* were mostly depicted in action, for female teachers, recreation seemed to equate to rest and recovery.

Of the total of 138 cover pages, 11 cover photographs depicted teachers with pupils. These teachers formed the class of *educators*. Except for one male teacher, all of these *educators* were women suggesting that care is a gender-specific (female) aspect of teachership. Judging by the young age of the pupils, *educators* could be identified as primary or comprehensive school teachers. In addition to the composition, in which teachers were surrounded by students, smiling faces and casual clothes in warm colors added to the feeling of coziness. Depictions of teachers as lower than pupils might be associated with consultative and student-centered teachership. However, the fact that pupils were arranged more or less symmetrically around the teacher in the middle might also communicate control and discipline.
### Table 5. Summary of the Findings of Sub-study 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>classes of teachers (in order of frequency)*</th>
<th>visual triggers</th>
<th>core notions of social representations of teachership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. experts (n=59)                           | - restrained facial expression  
- middle-aged  
- male and female  
- tidy/formal clothing  
- controlled pose (sit/stand)  
- coldish colors  
- symbols of knowledge  
- half-length/full-length shots  
- positioned in the middle of the composition  
- mostly alone | - expertise  
- pedagogy  
- playfulness  
- recreation  
- female profession  
- traditional gender-based roles  
- happiness  
- individualism  
- fit, slim and healthy  
- middle-aged  
- neutral appearance  
- white  
- gender: male or female  
- heterosexuality  
- homogeneity |
| 2. pranksters (n=31)                         | - smile  
- vivid gestures  
- casual clothes  
- playful actions  
- men more adventurous  
- close-ups/half-length shots  
- mostly alone | |
| 3. recreationists (n=27)                     | - smile  
- casual clothes  
- lying on the grass/walking  
- sunshine  
- warm or moody colors  
- mostly women  
- men more active/women in their own thoughts  
- mostly alone | |
| 4. pedagogues (n=11)                         | - smile  
- casual clothes  
- warm colors  
- teachers surrounded by symmetrical group of pupils  
- teachers lower than pupils  
- mostly women | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>included/main type of teacher (including visual determinants)</th>
<th>excluded type of teacher (including visual determinants)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- white, heterosexual, healthy, good-tempered, neutral looking, appropriately dressed, slim, and fit woman or man who is between 30-50 years old</td>
<td>- people of color, LGBTQ, disabled, tattooed, pierced, eye-catchingly dressed, fat, old person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For 10 cover images, no common “class” could be identified.

In terms of social representations of teachership, several core notions could be inferred from the data. These included expertise, playfulness, recreation, and pedagogy as related to the classes of teachers identified. In addition, happiness, individualism, a predominantly female profession, and traditional gender-based roles were identified as further core notions. Furthermore, it was possible to recognize one main type of teacher across the imagery – namely, a white, heterosexual, healthy, good-tempered, neutral looking, appropriately dressed, slim, and fit woman or man between 30 and 50 years old. This type of teacher seemed to form the teacher prototype that was
harnessed to express the four classes of teachers identified above. The lack of diversity in terms of ethnic background, gender, and sexual orientation of photographed teachers, for instance, is symptomatic throughout the imagery. Thus, homogeneity – in general – and whiteness, heterosexuality, male or female gender – in particular – could be identified as further core notions of social representations of teachership as represented by Teacher magazine. Over the five-year period, no change in terms of the classes of teachers or the main type of teacher could be identified. Cover images of Teacher magazine appeared to be vehicles of inclusion and exclusion that promoted through their visual choices a certain kind of teachership. The findings of Sub-study 3 are summarized in Table 5.

5.2 OVERARCHING FINDINGS

All the three sub-studies presented above examined social representations of teachership via visual representations of teachership. They all took a different angle to the topic. However, themes that can be related to teacher-student interaction and teachers’ professional identity emerged across the sub-studies. Hence, this chapter transgresses the scope of individual sub-studies and proceeds to more overarching findings. The section will focus on four overarching themes: 1) teacher-student interaction, 2) teachers’ professional identity, 3) the relationship between visual and social representations of teachership, and 4) research methods related to the processes of social representation.

5.2.1 Teacher-student interaction

The findings of the sub-studies showed that students found teachers’ visual expressiveness in images meaningful. As such, this is not a major finding since the assignments of the sub-studies specifically asked students to consider teachers’ visual cues as meaningful. However, the assignments could not predict the rich content and wide scope of students’ answers. Hence, the richness of the answers was evidence of students’ high level of ability and skills in noticing diverse cues in “teachers” visual expressiveness and making sense of them. This can be considered an important finding.

Facial expressions, gestures, posture, clothes, colors, and location in the picture space served as bases for making judgments about the “teachers” in the images and expressing different teacher types. These judgments concerned “teachers’” personality, authority, style of interaction, professional competence, classroom management skills, motivation toward teaching, teaching style, responsibility and commitment to counseling, as well as attitude toward students and relation to them. The findings of this research show that the quality and mode of “teachers’” visual expressiveness were meaningful for students, influencing the way students perceived “teachers” and related to them. Whereas positively perceived visual expressiveness attuned students positively toward “teachers”, their teaching style, and interaction with them, negatively perceived visual expressiveness created negative expectations about “teachers”, their teaching style, and interaction with them. Thus, it can be concluded that perceiving different types of visual expressiveness in “teacher” images formed different – positive or negative – expectations of teacher-student interaction.
Even though students’ judgments based on the visual cues of “teacher” images explicitly related to teachers and their teaching, implicitly, they also related to students themselves. For instance, students’ perception of “teachers” being distant or approachable, or their assumption that “teachers” use teacher-centered or student-centered teaching methods, implies a conception of students’ role or agency in the teaching-learning process. Similarly, the perception of “teachers” as being strict, friendly, distant, or communicative not only communicates certain ways in which teachers relate to students but also implies certain kinds of student behavior and interaction with teachers. In addition, students reported that “teachers’” visual cues in images generated emotional reactions. It is important to note that these emotional responses are no longer assumptions about teachers but, instead, properties of students’ own reactions: how they feel. “Teachers” who were perceived as strict generated emotions of fear; “teachers” who were perceived as friendly generated feelings of trust; and “teachers” who were perceived as indifferent generated feelings of unimportance among students. Thus, it seemed that for students, “teachers’” visual expressiveness in images not only positioned “teachers” in relation to students but also students in relation to “teachers”.

Teachers’ visual expressiveness in images seemed to matter more to students than to teachers. Whereas students elaborated their interpretations of teachers’ visual nonverbal cues, a number of teachers neither mentioned the visual characteristics of teachers in their drawings at all nor explicated their intended meanings or relevance in terms of teaching when commenting on the drawings verbally. Based on the data, it is not possible to conclude for sure whether teachers took the visual messages of the drawings as being so evident that they did not feel it necessary to explicate the meanings verbally or whether they did not pay conscious attention to the meanings of the visual elements. However, the incongruencies detected between teachers’ drawings and verbal comments about them as well as the metaphorical images where drawings rendered abstract conceptions in a visual form seem to suggest that a number of teachers neither paid conscious attention to the meanings of the visual cues nor considered them as communicating deliberate meanings. If it is the case in real-life classroom situations that teachers do not pay conscious attention to the messages of their visual nonverbal behavior when teaching, problems may arise since students interpret teachers’ visual expressiveness as communicating both teachers’ involvement in teaching and relationship toward students, as shown by this study.

### 5.2.2 Teachers’ professional identity

Even though teachers’ professional identity is not per se examined in this study, the findings of the sub-studies brought up issues related to this topic. When drawing images of a typical teacher, the majority of participating teachers depicted a typical teacher as either an expert with items referring to knowledge or a multitasker taking care of multiple tasks simultaneously. Based on the drawings, it seemed that these two aspects of teachership prevailed in participating teachers’ conceptions of their profession. In contrast, the aspect of consultative interaction with students emerged as a minor constituent of teachership. Thus, a typical teacher was an expert and multitasker rather than an interactional communicator with students.
Another finding that can be related to teachers’ professional identity was the way the cover images of *Teacher* magazine depicted teachers and teachership. As this study showed, cover images of the Finnish *Teacher* magazine represented various aspects of teachership – experts, pranksters, recreationists, and pedagogues – but, at the same time, suggested a primary type of teacher across the imagery. The four aspects of teachership mentioned above might provide a reassuring message for many teachers in terms of balance between work and recreation as well as between rational expertise and lighthearted playfulness. In addition, they convey an understanding that teachership has many dimensions; what it means to be a teacher may acquire new shades from situation to situation. However, similar to teachers’ drawings, the majority of the cover images of *Teacher* magazine depicted teachers as experts, whereas the interaction with students occupied a minor role.

Most of the teachers in the cover images of *Teacher* magazine were women. The majority of Finnish teachers are also women in reality (Kumpulainen, 2014); thus, the cover images seem to reflect the situation in the work field. At the same time, however, these images communicated a gendered conception of teaching as a predominantly female profession, which might lead hesitant male teacher candidates to reconsider their career choice. Another recurrent characteristic in the images is the fact that most of the teachers were depicted alone. Where were students and fellow teachers? Where were other professionals needed when dealing with challenging circumstances and problems? Images of teachers posing alone in empty classrooms and schoolyards presented teachers as individual and autonomous professionals whose expertise is not collaborative or based on networking but rather individualistic. One may ask whether these types of depictions might add to teachers’ pressure in handling their responsibilities on their own. On the other hand, such pressure may be allayed through images of smiling teachers in the cover images of *Teacher* magazine. These images communicate a positive attitude and spirit, which may cheer teachers up, foster optimism, and create a message of friendly and positive professionals meeting with heads high the joys and challenges of the profession. However, these cheerful images might have a contrary influence as well. The absence of visible problems might communicate to some teachers that it is not professional or acceptable for teachers to display negative reactions in public.

The main type of teacher detected in cover images of *Teacher* magazine was identified as a white, heterosexual, healthy, good-tempered, neutral looking, appropriately dressed, slim, and fit woman or man between 30 and 50 years old. The absence of individuals representative of the LGBTQ community, the disabled, people of color, or even sad, tattooed, pierced, overweight, or old teachers attracts attention. Even though sexual orientation and condition of health, for instance, are not necessarily visually perceivable matters, they could be expressed visually if desired. Overall, the teacher imagery communicated by the Trade Union of Education in Finland through the cover images of *Teacher* magazine turned out to be stereotypical and highly homogeneous, which may be problematic in terms of professional identity for those teachers who cannot identify themselves with the imagery.

### 5.2.3 Relationship between visual and social representations of teachership

From students’ perceptions of “teacher” images in Sub-study 1, there emerged five distinct categories of teachership. Similarly, it was possible to identify three types of
teachers in both students’ and teachers’ drawings in Sub-study 2. In Sub-study 3, four classes of teachers and one main type of teacher were identified. These findings suggest that in the Finnish society, there are social representations of teachership that, on the one hand, influence students’ perception of teachers and, on the other, direct the way students and teachers visualize their conceptions of teachership. Furthermore, these social representations also seem to include visual orders influencing the conceptions of how teachers are supposed to look and behave.

The emergence of a limited number of teacher types in students’ and teachers’ drawings suggests that social representations of teachership guided the participants to draw certain kinds of teacher images. Thus, it may be argued that their drawings visually expressed – or objectified – social representations of teachership. The drawings suggested the existence of partly different social representations of teachership among students and teachers. In addition, visualizing social representations of teachership provided the means for identifying students’ and teachers’ different relationships to teachers’ visual expressiveness. It can be concluded that objectifying social representations of teachership visually made students’ and teachers’ social representations of teachership tangible and indicated matters that might complicate teacher-student interaction.

When students observed “teacher” images in Sub-study 1, the “teachers”’ visual features seemed to trigger certain social representations of teachership available to them. Students explained that they associated visual cues of “teacher” images with experiences of prior teachers as well as teacher characters in movies and literature. It seemed this kind of experience and knowledge constructed in social encounters during their life course provided students with a stock of socially shared images, experiences, and knowledge of teachers that they used when making sense of “teacher” images. In other words, “teacher” images were anchored in shared social representations of teachership. The existence of such multimodal social representations of teachership seemed to be a central precondition of the visual literacy that enabled students to make sense of the images. However, it also seemed that some visual characteristics of “teachers” – for instance, revealing clothing – challenged and opposed students’ social representations of teachership. These incongruent features seemed to test the explanatory power of social representations of teachership. Failing to adapt these incongruent features to social representations of teachership, students categorized them as inappropriate for a teacher.

Similar mechanisms of “triggering” seemed to operate when I perceived and analyzed the cover images of Teacher magazine. The visual characteristics of the images seemed to direct my operations of anchoring, where I attempted to detect the social representations of teachership objectified through the cover images. The process of anchoring activated diverse social representations of teachership accessible to me based on my education, teaching experience, personal interests, and social knowledge, which led me to identify the homogeneity of the teacher images as well as aspects of social representations of teachership that were not visually objectified through the cover images. Hence, the visual tangibility of images seemed able to concretize not only the presence but also the absence of certain imagery and social representations of teachership related to them. On the one hand, visual representations of teachership provided me with the means of detecting social representations of teachership that were either included in or excluded from the cover images – while on the other hand, social representations of teachership available to me provided me with the means
of making sense of the visual representations of teachership and observing them critically.

When proposing that features of visual expressiveness in teacher images acted as triggers that activated certain social representations of teachership, four things have to be taken into consideration. First, triggering is not meant as a mechanical and automatic reaction to visual stimuli. Instead, triggering refers to the process whereby the visual qualities of teacher images activate certain contextually relevant social representations of teachership to be used as resources for sense-making. Second, representations are not understood as individual constructions existing solely in individual people’s minds but rather as social representations constructed in interaction and shared with other members of the society. Third, in the assignment of Sub-study 1, students were told to observe the people in the paintings as teachers. In other words, the assignment itself already activated social representations of teachership. It seemed this advance knowledge made it possible that different visual cues in “teacher” images could trigger more specific social representations of teachership. Fourth, the way of listing separate features of visual nonverbal behavior as triggers activating diverse social representations of teachership serves the purposes of analysis. Even though certain visual cues seemed to exert a stronger influence than others in terms of activating specific social representations of teachership, it is probable that various visual cues acted together and formed an overall impression that, in turn, was associated with certain social representations of teachership. That being said, for some students, one single visual feature sufficed to act as the basis for categorization.

When core notions of social representations of teachership detected among students, teachers, and in the cover images of Teacher magazine are compared to each other, both similarities and differences can be identified. For students, teachers’ relation to students emerged as the key core notion in both Sub-study 1 and Sub-study 2. Thus, the triangulation in terms of different types of data and methods of analysis applied in these studies provided the same result. The way teachers meet, treat, and value students was the key concern for students across the data. For teachers, knowledge-based competence, multiple duties, and pedagogy (in terms of interacting with students) could be recognized as the core notions of teachership. However, the first two surmounted pedagogy. This finding could indicate that pedagogical interaction with students might not be teachers’ primary concern when taking care of the multiple duties required by their profession. Perhaps students’ visual representations of tired and bored teachers speak for this interpretation as well, namely, by showing that teachers cannot invest sufficient resources in teaching and put their full energy and enthusiasm into the pedagogical interaction with students when simultaneously exhausted by other duties of the profession. From the students’ point of view, this is regrettable since the quality of teacher-student interaction seemed to matter the most for them.

Based on the findings, one cannot say whether the cover images of Teacher magazine – which teachers participating in this research most probably get delivered to their homes – had influenced the participating teachers’ social representations of teachership. However, several similarities can be found. Expertise based on knowledge is well represented in both of them. Recreation identified in the cover images of Teacher magazine is not, as such, expressed in the teachers’ data. However, the core notion of a challenging profession, identified in the visual representations of multitasking teachers, might imply teachers’ lack of or longing for recreation. Female teachers are in the majority in both data. In addition, teachers’ visual representations of teachership,
which lacked diversity in terms of ethnic background, gender, and sexual orientation, are highly compatible with the main type of teacher identified in the cover images of Teacher magazine.

Content necessitates form to become tangible, and form necessitates content to become graspable. Categorizing “teacher” paintings based on visual cues, drawing images of a typical teacher, and classifying the cover images of Teacher magazine emerged as fluctuation between visual representations of teachership (form) and social representations of teachership (content). In all of these cases, visual representations of teachership were perceived as or acted as expressions of social representations of teachership. Social representations of teachership, in turn, furnished the visual representations with meanings.

5.2.4 Membership categorization analysis, content analysis, and analysis of visual rhetoric related to anchoring, objectification, and naturalization

This study used different research methods to study social representations of teachership in the processes of anchoring, objectification, and naturalization based on visual images. It seemed the methods of analysis used in this study were able to tackle the connectedness between visual and social representations of teachership, thereby enhancing understanding of the content, forms, and functions of social representations of teachership. In addition, they succeeded in methodologically capturing the nature and function of the three processes of social representation and illuminating the contribution of images to them.

Membership categorization analysis resonated with the process of anchoring in terms of examining the way the participants categorized “teacher” images using visual cues and cultural understanding of teachership as the basis of categorization. In this study, anchoring based on visual images was understood as a process by which people furnished with social representations of teachership perceive images of teachers and the visual cues trigger/activate certain social representations of teachership to be used as resources of sense-making. Using membership categorization analysis enabled the identification of which visual cues acted as triggers and which teacher categories the participants constructed in the process of anchoring.

Content analysis, in turn, was capable of capturing the process of visual objectification, which was regarded as a process by which participants concretized their social representations of teachership through images. In visual objectification, participants proceeded from abstract content related to teachership to a visual form depicting a teacher. Content analysis provided tools to examine the form of visual objectification in order to gain an understanding of the content of the social representations related to the form. In addition to participant-created drawings, the data also included participants’ verbal comments about the drawings, which served as the basis for evaluating the findings based on visual data.

Finally, the analysis of visual rhetoric was congruent with the process of naturalization in terms of examining the images as a means of disseminating and constructing certain social representations of teachership. Analysis of visual rhetoric combining content analysis and semiotic analysis made it possible to deconstruct images into form and content. The division into form and content, for its part, enabled me to elaborate how the images were constructed at the level of visual choices directing perception and interpretation. Since visual rhetoric is constructed through
visual choices, the analysis in this study was directed to “matters” both included in and excluded from the cover images. Based on the analysis of visual rhetoric, the cover images of *Teacher* magazine emerged as making visual claims that strengthened certain social representations of teachership while marginalizing others. Analysis of visual rhetoric provided an applicable tool to critically reflect the content, forms, and functions of teacher images and social representations of teachership related to them.

In addition to the applicability of the aforementioned methods to study social representations in the processes of anchoring, objectification, and naturalization, they provided the means of studying social representations at the levels of ontogenesis, microgenesis, and sociogenesis. Whereas membership categorization analysis was capable of examining how social representations of teachership were activated at a more individual level, content analysis of students’ and teachers’ data provided the means of examining and comparing their social representations of teachership. This comparison provided information related to teacher-student interaction. Lastly, the analysis of visual rhetoric provided the means of examining social representations of teachership at a more societal level through media images.
6 DISCUSSION

This concluding chapter discusses the findings of the study, reflects on their contribution, and evaluates the process and the outcomes of the study. Sections 6.1 and 6.2 discuss the findings in relation to research on teacher-student interaction and teachers’ professional identity. These sections are followed by reflections on the themata of social representations of teachership in Section 6.3 and on the relation between visual and social representations of teachership in Section 6.4. Thereafter, Section 6.5 discusses the practical, theoretical, and methodological contributions of the study, and Section 6.6 presents an evaluation of the study, noting its strengths, limitations, and reliability. Finally, in Section 6.7, suggestions for future research are offered.

6.1 VISUAL AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF TEACHERSHIP AND TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION

The findings of this study suggest that teachers’ visual expressiveness is significant in terms of positioning students in relation to teachers as well as generating expectations about teachers’ ways of teaching and interacting with students. In this study, teachers’ friendly, smiling facial expressions, use of welcoming and enthusiastic gestures, relaxed posture, and appropriate but casual clothing were perceived as indicators of a student-centered approach to teaching, teachers’ commitment to counseling, willingness to communicate, and warm relationship to students, which positioned students positively with regard to teachers. This finding is compatible with a number of prior studies (Kalat et al., 2018; Roberts & Friedman, 2013; Slepian et al., 2015).

The visual features mentioned above can be associated with teacher immediacy and enthusiasm, which have been shown to impact student motivation, involvement in studying, as well as study outcomes positively (Burroughs, 2007; Lazarides et al., 2018). In prior research, this positive influence is related to the fact that this kind of visual expressiveness on the part of teachers encourages students to participate as well as take more initiative and a more active role in learning (Matsumoto & Mueller Dobs, 2017; Pladevall Ballester, 2015; Roberts & Friedman, 2013). Similarly, this kind of teacher expressiveness has been found to diminish the asymmetrical power relations between teacher and students and contribute to a more democratic teacher-student relation that fosters students’ agency and self-determination (Richmond, 2002; Roberts & Friedman, 2013). However, prior research has also indicated a contradictory outcome – namely, teachers’ visual cues related to friendliness, immediacy, and care may signal a lack of authority to some students, thus increasing the possibility of student negligence and misbehavior (Dunbar & Segrin, 2012; Roach, 1997; Shoulders & Smith, 2018).

This study also indicated that teachers’ strict facial expressions, stiff posture, formal attire, and withdrawn or distanced visual expressiveness in images were perceived as communicating a teacher-centered approach to teaching, distance from students in terms of formal interaction, or a lack of commitment and genuine interest in counseling students. This kind of visual expressiveness positioned students negatively with respect to teachers, which is compatible with the findings of prior research (Gulec
& Temel, 2015; Hale et al., 2017; Yang, 2017). In addition, previous studies have shown that the negatively perceived visual expressiveness of teachers may lower student motivation and decrease participation and involvement, which, in turn, might have a negative impact on study performance and outcomes (Armstrong & Hope, 2016; Okon, 2011; Zeki, 2009).

When we relate the findings of the study at hand to prior studies on teachers’ visual expressiveness, it can be concluded that the negatively perceived visual expressiveness of teachers seems to contribute to unfavorable conditions for teacher-student interaction, whereas when the visual expressiveness of teacher is positively perceived, it seems to create favorable conditions for teacher-student interaction. In addition, prior research has shown that perceptions of teachers’ visual expressiveness not only contribute to the conditions of teacher-student interaction but also influence actual study performance and achievement (Burroughs, 2007; Lazarides et al., 2018; Split et al., 2011). Thus, teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior may contribute to learning and study achievement positively or negatively (Riniolo, Johnson, Sherman, & Misso, 2006). For this reason, “how teachers are present in practice” is a significant concern of present and future research on classroom management (Postholm, 2013, p. 399) – even more so in multicultural classrooms since cultural background influences the way teachers’ visual expressiveness is interpreted. However, the findings of this research suggest that teachers might not be aware of or might not pay sufficient attention to the visual dimension of classroom management, which is in line with the findings of prior research (Babad, 2009a; Pan, 2014; Quigley, 2016).

Emotions are closely connected with nonverbal visual behavior: nonverbal behavior both expresses emotions and appeals to them (Barsade, 2002). For this reason, nonverbal behavior is also indispensable in terms of teacher-student interaction. The finding of this study that the visual expressiveness of “teacher” images generated emotional responses ranging from fear to trust among students is significant. Whereas positive classroom emotions may promote learning (Fried, Mansfield, & Dobozy, 2015; Sutton & Wheatleau, 2003), Stefanucci (2010), and Veletsianos (2010), among others, argue that anxiety, fear, and other negative emotions may narrow the focus of attention and increase cognitive load, thereby hindering learning. Thus, when pedagogy is understood as conduct and practices promoting learning (Atjonen et al., 2008), teachers’ skills in managing their emotions and emotional expressions in the classroom can be regarded as a relevant part of their pedagogical competence (Fried, 2011; Prosen et al., 2011).

The body of research showing the positive influence of teachers’ enthusiastic nonverbal behavior on learning and study performance (e.g., Burroughs, 2007; Lazarides et al., 2018) has set the standard of understanding the management of teachers’ emotions as skills of upgrading the aspects of enthusiasm and immediacy, on the one hand, and downgrading the aspects of authority, distance, and listlessness, on the other (Sutton et al., 2009). Accordingly, many teachers’ have felt obliged to show themselves as enthusiastic, even if it contradicts their true feelings (Taxer & Frenzel, 2018). In recent research, critical voices against inauthentic teacher enthusiasm have been raised for two reasons. Firstly, maintaining a continuous pretense has been found to be devastating for teachers (Taxer & Frenzel, 2018). Secondly, the intended positive impact on students’ learning and study achievement has been questioned since having developed expertise in “reading” teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior (Babad, 2009a), students can often differentiate between authentic and inauthentic teacher nonverbal expressiveness (Taxer & Frenzel, 2018; Yang, 2017). Recent research has suggested
that teachers’ inauthentic enthusiastic expressiveness may not promote learning but, instead, generate mistrust toward teachers among students, thereby problematizing teacher-student interaction (Taxer & Frenzel, 2018).

In addition, prior research has shown that teachers’ visual expressiveness may “leak” in terms of communicating unintended messages (Babad, 2007, 2009a; Stutton & Wheatly, 2003). Managing emotions may succeed better at the level of verbal expression, but at the level of nonverbal expression, undesired emotions may “leak out,” communicating to students inadvertent and even destructive messages (Armstrong & Hope, 2016; Babad, 2009a; Hale et al., 2017). If students’ drawings depicting strict and bored teachers (in Sub-study 2) were based on classroom experiences, the findings of this study might speak for a similar kind of leakage in teachers’ visual expressiveness. Teachers’ anger, boredom, and indifference do not count as emotional expressions that promote learning, and, in addition, they deviate from official guidelines of Finnish educational policy that considers teachers as consultative pedagogues who support students’ personal growth (Kumpulainen, 2014; Malinen et al., 2012; Räty et al., 2012). Research has also identified another kind of leakage in teacher visual nonverbal behavior – namely, teachers’ differential visual expressiveness communicating more positive messages to high-achieving students than to low-achieving students (Ambady et al., 2000; Babad, 2009a). Low-achieving students tend to be particularly sensitive to noticing such differential nonverbal behavior (Babad, 2009a). Thus, teachers’ nonverbal visual behavior, in general, and differential nonverbal visual behavior, in particular, may contribute to students’ conceptions of how able as students their teachers regard them.

The findings of this study suggest that teachers’ visual expressiveness activated social representations of teachership among students. The style of teachers’ visual expressiveness seems to be capable of triggering diverse – positive or negative – social representations that, in turn, position students positively or negatively with regard to teachers, teaching, and teacher-student interaction. Prior research on social representations has examined the power of social representations to position people in relation to each other (Phoenix, Howarth, & Philogène, 2017). Since positioning is relational, it means that when they perceive teachers based on social representations of teachership, students construct an understanding of who teachers are in relation to them as well as who they are in relation to teachers. Students’ written comments about feelings of fear, trust, and unimportance generated by their perceptions of “teacher” images seemed to refer to such processes of self-positioning and construction of student identity. Since the “body is the vehicle through which social representations are performed in social practices” (Wagoner, 2015), it is relevant to think that similar processes of self-positioning and identity-construction may also happen when students perceive teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior in classroom situations.

Even though teachers are urged to be aware of the pedagogical implications of their visual nonverbal behavior, all its aspects cannot be maintained under deliberate control or monitored continuously when teaching (Alibali et al., 2013; Matsumoto & Mueller Dobs, 2017; Smotrova, 2017). Similarly, not all of the nuances of teachers’ visual expressiveness are conscious or intended as communicators of deliberate messages (Alibali et al., 2013). Nevertheless, students may understand them as such, which might cause misunderstandings. Thus, from the perception point of view, there is always an aspect of potential ambiguity and unpredictability inherent in teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior, which teachers should be aware of.
Another kind of ambiguity can be recognized when teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior is observed from the perspective of social representations theory. Even though the results of this study show that students interpreted teachers’ visual cues in images in a highly consistent manner, the polyphasic quality of social representations (Jovchelovitch, 2008; Moscovici, 1998) suggests that students from different social backgrounds and cultural contexts, for instance, might use different social representations of teachership in the process of making sense of teachers’ visual expressiveness. Which social representations of teachership students bring with them to the classroom is beyond teachers’ control (Chaib, 2015). However, since diverse social representations of teachership might be available to students, the style of teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior in the classroom is of importance since it may trigger positively or negatively valenced social representations of teachership, as the findings of this study indicate. In fact, Wagner (2015, p. 3) states that “actors must have some general representation of perceptions, judgments and the courses of action open to potential co-actors.” Hence, the ability to form a general idea of what kinds of social representations of teachership students have, on the one hand, and what kinds of social representations of teachership teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior might trigger among students, on the other, might be regarded as part of teachers’ competence. The study design of this research might provide, for instance, teacher education with the means of improving student teachers’ awareness of this aspect of teachership.

The emergence of authoritarian teacher images in contemporary students’ and teachers’ data attracts attention, since Finland is supposed to be the “model country” of democratic and student-centered pedagogy (Malinen et al., 2012; Räty et al., 2012). In this sense, visual materials were able to reveal politically undesired or incorrect aspects of teachership, which is often regarded as one contribution of visual methodologies (de Rosa, 2014; Sakki et al., 2014). A structural approach to social representations might provide an explanation for the emergence of authoritarian teacher images. In Finland, there is a long tradition of teacher-centered school education in which the authoritarian position of teachers was taken for granted (Räty et al., 2012). The conception of the teacher as an authoritarian instructor has step-by-step been replaced by a more consultative and democratic conception of the teacher (Malinen et al., 2012). However, images and stories of the authoritarian type of teacher have been – and still are – widely circulated in media, art, and literature; thus, they are not unfamiliar to contemporary teachers and students either. In the present study, the drawings depicting authoritarian teachers might suggest this teacher type is deeply rooted in Finnish culture and still holds its position among the core notions of social representations of teachership in Finland. However, since everyday experiences also contribute to the formation of social representations (Moscovici, 1961/2008, 1984), the findings of this study might also suggest that a teacher-centered and authoritarian approach to instruction is still practiced in Finnish schools. It seemed that drawings served as a channel for the – perhaps unintentional – expressions of pedagogically undesired approaches to teachership that were not explicated verbally.

In addition to authoritarian teacher images, the emergence of bored- and tired-looking teacher images in students’ data attracts attention. A recent survey on teachers’ work conditions and work-related well-being conducted by the Finnish Trade Union of Education (Länssikallio, Kinnunen, & Ilves, 2018) reports that enthusiasm and work-related satisfaction have decreased among teachers. There is also further research evidence that a large proportion of the teaching workforce in Finland suffers from work-related stress, exhaustion, and burnout (Collie, Perry, & Martin, 2017; Hakanen,
Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Pyhältö, Pietarinen, & Salmela-Aro, 2011). In addition to work overload, lack of self-determination and uncontrollable changes – steered by economic and political factors rather than by pedagogical principles – have been identified as the main causes of work-related stress and exhaustion among Finnish teachers (Länsikallio et al., 2018; Santavirta, Solonieva, & Theorell, 2007). It seems possible that these conditions and experiences have furnished social representations of teachership with dimensions of stress and exhaustion, which ultimately became objectified as images of tired- and bored-looking teachers in this study. From the teacher-student interaction point of view, teachers’ drawings of multitasking teachers together with students’ drawings of tired-looking teachers might suggest that being fatigued by the multiple tasks and chores demanded by their profession, teachers might not be able to put sufficient effort into interaction with students, including its visual dimension.

6.2 VISUAL AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF TEACHERSHIP AND TEACHERS’ PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Images make important contributions to people’s identities (Howarth, 2007, 2011a, 2011b). A host of prior studies on teacher depictions in films, printed media, and social media suggest those depictions influence the way teachers perceive their profession and themselves as teachers (Cap & Black, 2014; Kirby, 2016; Shine & O’Donoghue, 2013; Vandermeersche et al., 2013). Hence, for instance, stereotypical heroic teacher characters in movies capable of motivating students to achieve their goals and effortlessly mastering most challenging situations alone may contribute to feelings of incompetence and inadequacy among real-life teachers (McGrail & McGrail, 2016; Mitchell & Weber, 2005; Vandermeersche et al., 2013). When comparing oneself to these super teachers in fiction, real teachers’ sense of professionalism may be shaken – regardless of the understanding that films are fictional (Breault, 2009). For students, these kinds of super teachers function as a basis of comparison as well, and real teachers may appear relatively helpless and dull (Breault, 2009; Gregory, 2007; Sellers, 2012). The stereotypical imagery raises a critical question of the responsibility of the media. How aware are media professionals of the messages conveyed by media images?

With regard to media images of teachers, this study found that the majority of the cover images of *Teacher* magazine depict smiling teachers acting in a carefree manner sitting or standing alone in a school environment. Depictions of collaboration are few in number. Based on such imagery, one might construct a conception of teachers as individualistic professionals who are supposed to fulfill their duties alone and hide hardships and failures behind a smiling façade. In fact, Huusko, Pietarinen, Pyhältö, and Soini (2007) found that even in contemporary times, teachers are customarily considered to be autonomous actors in Finland who deal with their responsibilities alone (see also Webb et al., 2009). The controversy between multifaceted educational matters requiring multi-professional intervention and collaboration (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Webb et al., 2009), on the one hand, and the imagery of teachers as smiling “private entrepreneurs,” on the other, attracts attention. One might ask whether such imagery, for its part, might contribute to teachers’ understanding that they are expected to deal with their professional responsibilities on their own and hide
negative feelings – even more so because *Teacher* magazine is published by the Trade Union of Education in Finland, which occupies an influential role both in national educational politics and among Finnish teachers, of whom approximately 90% are its members (Trade Union of Education in Finland, 2018).

In terms of gender, the notably high number of cover images of *Teacher* magazine depicting female teachers suggests that, at the core of social representations of teachership, there is a conception of teaching as a predominantly female profession. Statistics reveal that there are more female than male teachers in pre-school, comprehensive, vocational, and upper secondary education (Kumpulainen, 2017; Trade Union of Education in Finland, 2018). In addition, gender-based teacher roles could be identified in this study. While female teachers were profiled as teachers of domestic science, textile work, and nursing, male teachers were profiled as teachers of forestry, engineering, and sports. Furthermore, female teachers were depicted with pupils in a manner that evoked feelings of motherly care. In prior research, Keskiölä (2012), Nygren (2007), and Wall (2008), for instance, have identified gendered teacher representations in media. Lahelma (2011), in turn, has noticed that Finnish student teachers are inclined to select their fields of specialization following a traditional division between female and male subjects and finds it as regrettable that “unquestioned cultural gender assumptions are reproduced in teacher education (p. 226).” It seems possible media images might contribute to the persistence of gender-based divisions in social representations of teachership.

Even though different aspects of teachership were depicted in the cover images of *Teacher* magazine, it was possible to identify the primary type of teacher throughout the data. This type of teacher was identified as a white, heterosexual, healthy, good-tempered, neutral looking, appropriately dressed, slim, and fit woman or man between 30 and 50 years old. This result resonates with prior research on teachers’ gender and sexuality (Lahelma, 2011; Valkonen, 2002), ethnic background (Lefever et al., 2014), age (Kumpulainen, 2017), and attire and appearance (Hankaniemi, 2014; Kamila, 2012) in Finland. In contrast to contemporary educational policies in Finland that officially appreciate diversity (Kimanen, 2018; Lähdemäki, 2019; Zilliacus, Holm, & Sahlström, 2017), the series of 138 cover images of the Finnish *Teacher* magazine featuring a more or less homogenous type of teacher seems to depict a counter-narrative that overlooks not only the official education policy but also its diverse readers. Even though the Trade Union of Education explains on its homepage that “there is no such thing as the right type of teacher” (www.oaj.fi/en/, retrieved 13.6.2019), the cover images of *Teacher* magazine, which it publishes, seem to communicate a different message.

In 2014, Miettunen and Derwin (2014, p. 22) wrote about Finnish teachership that “it is a well-known fact that the diversity of the teaching body in the Nordic country is far from diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, and language.” Based on Brylla’s (2018) and Parsons, Reichl, and Pedersen’s (2016) argument that stereotypical media images may narrow people’s conceptions of the target of representation, it may be argued that by repeating the homogeneous imagery of teachers, *Teacher* magazine, published by the Trade Union of Education, participates in maintaining the homogeneity of the teaching professionals in Finland as well as its normalcy. The homogeneous teaching body is not problematic in terms of teachers and student teachers alone but also in terms of students coming from diverse backgrounds or students searching for their gender and sexual identity, for example. For them, it might be reassuring and encouraging to have role models among teachers related to the aforementioned matters (McCarthy, 2003).
According to Phoenix, Howarth, and Philogène (2017), social representations – as systems of values, ideas, and practices – establish social order and participate in the construction of social identities (see also Howarth, 2002). By circulating highly homogeneous teacher imagery without any notable change in terms of the main type and classes of teachers depicted between 2013 and 2017, the cover images of Teacher magazine may be perceived as vehicles of inclusion and exclusion, naturalizing and making visual claims for certain kinds of teachership and, simultaneously, marginalizing other kinds of teachership. Barreiro and Castorina (2017) regard repressing, silencing, and denying as operations of social representations. Visually communicated exclusion by hegemonic social representations of teachership positions those excluded as “others,” which may have destructive consequences not only in terms of their professional identity and work-related matters but also in terms of their life in general. Social representations linked to visual representations fashion our thoughts, emotions, and actions (Moscovici, 1961/2008); thus, they can be regarded as processes of social positioning reminiscent of social positioning theory (Phoenix et al., 2017). In the future, it might be fruitful to examine such positioning functions of social representations in the frame of ableism (Campbell, 2008; Hutcheon & Wolbring, 2013; Wolbring, 2008), meaning beliefs, processes, and practices through which conceptions of whom we regard as able and unable teachers are constructed.

In order to challenge and interrupt the circulation of naturalized social representations, the process of objectification plays a key role (Moscovici, 1984; de Rosa & Farr, 2001). Since changes in images can lead to changes in social representations (de Rosa & Farr, 2001), more diverse teacher images could act as objectifications of anticipatory social representations (Philogène, 1999) that will foster more diverse teachership in Finland in the future. This is the promise of social representations theory as a theory of social change (Howarth, 2011a; Howarth et al., 2013).

6.3 THEMATA OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF TEACHERSHIP

When the findings of the sub-studies are observed through the lens of the structural approach to social representations (e.g., Abric, 2001), a few core elements of social representations of teachership can be identified. In terms of core elements, Moscovici (2001) makes a distinction between themata and core notions. According to him, themata embody a few widely shared values and conceptions and form the foundation from which core notions – namely, beliefs and notions related to the object of social representation – are generated (Moscovici, 2001; Moscovici & Vignaux, 1994/2001). Forming the basis for social representations, themata direct our thoughts and actions in significant ways, even though we might not be aware of them (Moscovici & Vignaux, 1994/2001). The core notions identified in the sub-studies served as the bases for making inferences about the themata of the social representations of teachership.

Among the participating students, the core notions of social representations of teachership identified in this study were the level of authority (friendly/strict) and the involvement in communication (communicative/non-communicative) in Sub-study 1 and interaction with students/relation to students in Sub-study 2. Ultimately, all three of these core notions express various kinds of relationships teachers have with students or various modes of teacher-student interaction. Thus, teachers’ relationships to students might be identifiable as the themata of social representations of teachership.
among students that form the most important aspect of teachership for them. This finding is partly congruent with studies conducted among South American students that identified teachers’ knowledge of the subject and way of pedagogic interaction as the key aspects of social representations of teachership (Cândido, de Assis, Ferreira, and de Souza, 2014; Martinez-Sierra, 2014).

On the other hand, from the teachers’ data, expertise based on education, a challenging profession/multitasking, and pedagogy (in order of frequency) were identified as the core notions of social representations of teachership. In the structural approach to social representations, the high frequency of notions can be regarded as a sign of their centrality (Sakki et al., 2014). Following this logic, expertise in terms of knowledge and education might be regarded as forming the principle themata of social representations of teachership among teachers. Professionalism of teachers and teacher education have been and are highly valued in Finland (Malinen et al., 2012; Sahlberg, 2007, 2011; Tirri & Puolimatka, 2000) – and the high ratio of qualified, academically educated teachers in the teaching workforce has been a matter of pride in Finnish education. Pedagogical interaction with students is part of teachers’ expertise, but the data of this study mostly presented them separately. Even though “pedagogy” was included among the core notions in the teachers’ data, its low frequency suggests that its position in the social representations of teachership among teachers might not be as central as that of “expertise based on knowledge.” Research on social representations of teachership conducted among South American teachers also identified expertise and knowledge as the major constituents of social representations of teachership (da Silva et al., 2014; Velloso & Lannes, 2017).

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that teachers’ relatedness to students and the quality of pedagogic interaction form the key themata of social representations of teachership among students, whereas expertise in terms of knowledge and education act as the key themata of social representations of teachership among teachers. This finding suggests that to be a teacher does not predominantly mean pedagogical interaction with students. This conclusion might also – at least partly – explain the finding of this study that teachers paid less attention to the visual expressiveness of their drawings depicting teachers. The different themata identified in this research may create different expectations and standards for teaching among students and teachers and problematize classroom interaction.

6.4 VISUAL AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF TEACHERSHIP

In this study, visual representations of teachership provided the means of studying social representations of teachership. Images were used in the three main processes of social representation, namely, anchoring, objectification, and naturalization. In the process of anchoring, visual representations of teachership seemed to trigger certain social representations of teachership that were used in making sense of “teacher” images. In the design of the study related to objectification, students and teachers visualized social representations of teachership through their drawings of a typical teacher. Finally, cover images of Teacher magazine were understood as objectifying and naturalizing social representations of teachership. Thus, images in this study served the three functions identified by de Rosa and Farr (2001) and de Rosa (2014), acting as sources that activate social representations, products that express social
representations, and tools that spread social representations. The emergence of a limited number of types of teachers, as well as the higher frequency of certain types of teachers in all the sub-studies, suggest that visual materials could provide access to culturally shared social representations of teacherhood (Räty et al., 2012).

Differing from Moscovici’s (1961/2008) initial conception, this study did not apply a social representation approach to make sense of an unfamiliar but rather a familiar social phenomenon (Weber & Mitchell, 1995). However, as argued by Hakoköngäs (2017) and Sakki and Menard (2014), a social representation approach can be used to study phenomena already naturalized in a culture that people take for granted. Naturalized social representations consist of mundane knowledge taken for granted, which may influence people tacitly in everyday social interaction (Moscovici, 1984). Visual research methods and materials might be particularly suitable for social representations research on naturalized social phenomena since – according to Mannay (2010, 2015) – visual materials may provide people with an unusual way and perspective to observe familiar everyday social phenomena that make them appear unfamiliar again. For this reason, visual research methods and materials may motivate reflection and enforce critical thinking (Leavy, 2018; Pain, 2012). In addition, images may serve as a means of becoming aware of naturalized social representations, testing their explanatory power and critically evaluating their validity in contemporary times.

Part of common-sense knowledge is visual (Hakoköngäs & Sakki, 2016a; Moscovici, 1984). Even though visual materials have been increasingly used in recent social representations research (Hakoköngäs, 2017; Hakoköngäs & Sakki, 2016a, 2016b; Hedenus, 2016; de Rosa, 2014; Sakki, 2010), there seems to be less research in which visual materials have been used to study how participants make sense of visual encounters in the process of anchoring (Mamali, 2006; Sen & Wagner, 2005). The findings of this study suggest that the target of visual perception might more actively contribute to the process of anchoring than in Moscovici’s conceptualizations, in which social representations are understood to determine perception (1984, 2001). In fact, this kind of more “active” influence from the side of the target of visual perception – in terms of not only selecting but also challenging social representations – is a necessary precondition for the dynamic quality of social representations that Moscovici (1961/2008) defined as one basic premise of the theory of social representations.

Whereas prior research on social representations has scarcely used visual images as a source of participant-driven anchoring, they have more commonly served as objectifications of social representations illuminating either people’s conceptions of social phenomena or the contribution of images in naturalizing social representations (Hakoköngäs, 2017; Hakoköngäs & Sakki, 2016a; de Rosa, 2014; Sakki, 2010). In these processes, visual images function as a medium of symbolic expression that makes social representations tangible and observable, similar to verbal comments. However, whereas representational visual images communicate their meanings through their visual form, the material form of verbal accounts is devoid of such communicative potential. Instead, the meaning of verbal accounts is based on cultural convention. (Peirce, 1985; de Saussure, 1985.) Hence, when perceiving images, people are confronted with material, visual images instead of mental images communicated through verbal accounts (Schemmer, Galli, & Fasanelli, 2017; Ullán, 1995). For this reason, this study suggests that visual images might direct the process of sense-making in the process of anchoring more actively than do mental images provided by verbal accounts. In addition, representational visual images – in most cases and unlike words – do not refer to general concepts but specify their referent by selecting a subtype through
the elements of visual expression (Peirce, 1985; Ragsdale, 2011; de Rosa & Farr, 2001; de Saussure, 1985). For this reason, visual images may make social representations even more tangible than verbal accounts in the process of objectification. On the one hand, the tangibility of visual images may concretize social representations and promote their critical reflection. However, on the other hand, the very tangibility of images makes them powerful tools to naturalize social representations and strengthen stereotypical conceptions. For the aforementioned reasons, studying the relationship between visual representations and social representations, as well as the contribution of visual representations in the processes of social representation, is an important part of social representations research.

Social representations influence people’s behavior toward one another (Moscovici, 1984), including the aspect of attitudes (Sakki et al., 2014). As Moscovici (1984, p. 13) claimed, “people become fashioned in relation to social representations.” Visual materials may provide means of making these “fashioning influences” more tangible than mere verbal means. In this research, participant-created drawings as objectifications of social representations of teachship brought up matters that might problematize teacher-student interaction. Perhaps participant-driven visual objectifications of social representations might prove a useful approach when attempting to spot causes of problematic relations between other groups of people as well. Since social representations consist of mundane knowledge taken for granted, people are not usually aware of their tacit influence in everyday social interaction (Moscovici, 1984). The potential of visual methodologies to provide access to tacit layers of knowledge and experience (Mannay, 2010, 2015) might offer a possibility to become aware of such tacit social representations and their subconscious impact on social life.

Social representations of a specific phenomenon are constructed in relation to other social representations (Sakki et al., 2014). Accordingly, social representations of teachship may imply social representations of studentship. When teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior in the classroom is understood as the visual representation of teachership objectifying social representations of teachship, it is worth noticing that this representation may be influenced by teachers’ social representations of studentship as well. In addition, teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior in the classroom cannot be isolated from the situational interaction with students. Thus, teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior not only influences the classroom interaction but is also modified by it. Moreover, teachership, as it is performed in the classroom, may be understood as a co-creation or co-construction of teachers and students, their interaction with each other, as well as teachers’ and students’ social representations of teachship and studentship with their social and cultural dimensions. That being said, it is part of teachers’ pedagogical competence and professional responsibility that they can regulate and control their responses to student behavior – also in terms of visual expressiveness – in a manner that promotes learning (Fried, 2011; Prosen et al., 2011; Sutton et al., 2009).

To conclude, the theory of social representations makes it possible to explore visual representations of teachship in relation to their cultural and social contexts. The processes of anchoring, objectification, and naturalization help in understanding and critically reflecting on the social roots, functions, and consequences of visual representations of teachship. In addition, a social representation approach constructs an understanding of social encounters as micro- and macro-level phenomena that intertwine with situational, social, and cultural factors. Thus, teachship and its
visual dimension are not matters of teachers, classrooms, and schools alone (micro-
level) but also linked to economic, political, social, and cultural ideas, values, and
practices (macro-level) (Jodelet, 2011). Whereas social representations of teachership
influence the way we understand visual representations of teachership, visual
representations of teachership, in turn, are capable of contributing to the formation
of social representations (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Relation and dynamics of visual and social representations of teachership

Visual representations, for their part, as a means of studying social representations of
teachership, provide the exploration of the topic with the visual tangibility typical of
images, which may illuminate the topic more concretely and render it more accessible.
This kind of visual elucidation may concretize people’s different – and often tacit –
understandings about the same social matter, which might be important in order to
promote fluent social interaction. In addition, visual representations not only reflect
social representations but also construct them. Unfolding the constructed nature of
visual representations and disclosing their persuasive mechanisms and functions may
contribute to the development of critical visual literacy. Such literacy is also relevant
in matters related to teachership. It might help us deconstruct and challenge teacher
stereotypes and the social representations of teachership that maintain them and,
ultimately, reconstruct them to permit more diverse teachership in the future.

6.5 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

The contributions of this study are practical, methodological, and theoretical. Beginning
with practical contributions, the study increases awareness of the importance of
teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior in terms of teacher-student interaction. The
findings showed that the quality of the teacher-student relationship was the most
important aspect of teachership for students and that teachers’ visual expressiveness
served as a basis for them to make inferences about it. The study also showed that
teachers’ visual expressiveness might contribute either to favorable or unfavorable
expectations of teacher-student interaction, which, according to prior research, may
influence study outcomes and contribute to students’ conception of their ableness as students either positively or negatively. For this reason, it is important to emphasize visual nonverbal behavior as a central constituent of teachers’ competence.

On the other hand, it is important for teachers to realize that students’ perceptions of teachers are not based on the quality of teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior in the classroom alone. Based on their prior experiences and knowledge of teachers, students bring along to the classroom the social representations of teachership available to them, which influence the way they relate to teachers and perceive them. However, this does not negate the importance of teachers’ visual expressiveness since it may trigger positively or negatively valenced social representations of teachership among students.

Closer to the societal level, this study raises critical awareness of the influence of media images on conceptions of teachership. It is important to understand the nature of images as constructed from various positions and motives – and not as manifestations of reality, per se. Hence, this research encourages teachers to not simply consume media imagery of teachers by either accepting or ignoring it. Instead, it encourages teachers to reflect on media imagery of teachers critically and to use their critical awareness not only to enhance their professional identity but also to challenge simplistic and stereotypical teacher representations in media and promote change at the societal level. Simultaneously, this study attempts to increase media professionals’ awareness of the influence of media images. For the purposes of increasing critical awareness, social representations theory, as a theory of social construction and change, provides rich potential.

Regarding further practical contributions, the design of the sub-studies might provide teacher education, for instance, with tools to promote student teachers’ awareness of both teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior and the influence of teacher imagery in media. Similarly, it might be applicable for the purposes of personnel development at various institutions of education. In addition, by providing an understanding of the social and cultural roots and functions of social phenomena, a social representations approach to teachership – as applied in this study – might provide teachers and education science scholars with a fresh angle to approach teachership.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the understanding of visual images – and the visual in general – in the processes of social representation, namely, anchoring, objectification, and naturalization. By paying attention to the visual nature and characteristics of images and the way visual images are constructed in order to communicate meanings, this study contributes to the understanding of image-based anchoring, objectification, and naturalization. In addition, combining a visual rhetoric approach to social representations theory is hoped to advance understanding of images as vehicles of naturalization. These aspects can be considered as the main contributions of this study to social representations theory.

The methodological contributions of the study relate to the application and development of image-based methods of analysis for the purposes of social representations research. More precisely, the contributions relate to the application of membership categorization analysis, based on perception of visual images in the process of anchoring, and the application of content analysis and semiotic analysis to the visual rhetoric of images in the processes of objectification and naturalization. Similarly, this study shows the potential of visual materials and methodologies to deconstruct naturalized and taken-for-granted social phenomena and advance critical
reflection on them. In addition, the way this study uses both participant-driven and researcher-driven analysis of images, participant-created data and found/naturally occurring data, as well as all three processes of social representation to enhance understanding of teachership provides an example of the analysis of one social phenomenon at the level of ontogenesis, microgenesis, and sociogenesis.

6.6 EVALUATION OF THE PROCESS AND THE OUTCOMES

This study has both strengths and limitations, which will be discussed in the following. Coming from visual culture studies background and being familiar with, for instance, phenomenological approaches to visual perception, the representation-based approach to perception provided by social representations theory has been challenging and inspiring. “How does this relate to images” has been a question that I have been asking myself over and over again during this research project. The visual culture studies background has served me as a critical perspective on the theory of social representations; similarly, social representations theory has challenged me to reflect on my prior conceptions of visual perception critically. Even though my conception of visual perception is not fully explainable through social representations theory, I find it highly interesting and am convinced regarding its value and usefulness in conceptualizing and studying social encounters, including visual encounters.

Based on the above reflection, I consider the interdisciplinary starting point to social representations theory as one strength of this study. Based on it, I regard the conceptualization of the contribution of visual images in the processes of social representation as well as the application of images in those processes as the key strengths of the study. In other words, the study proceeds from the theoretical conceptualization of image-based anchoring, objectification, and naturalization to their application at the level of practical analysis. In addition, the methodological design of the study, examining the topic through three processes of social representation at the ontogenetic, microgenetic, and sociogenetic levels, proved to be successful. Last but not least, the theoretical framework and research methods used in the study yielded findings that have practical contributions and applicability.

As to limitations, even though the methodological design and use of images were mentioned as strengths previously, there are some limitations related to them as well. First of all, the study used only visual materials as the starting point, which is justifiable in terms of the aims of the research. However, simultaneously, the focus on images excluded verbal communication and other-than-visual forms of nonverbal behavior that modify the perception of visual nonverbal behavior in classroom situations. Second, this study used only still images. Thus, students could perceive only static visual cues, which distances the research situation from observing real-life situations. In the future, it would be interesting to include either video clips or observation of classroom instruction in the study. In addition, students perceived and reflected on pictures of paintings selected by the researcher in Sub-study 1. The reason for this was that I attempted to select “teacher” images other than traditional or stereotypical ones in order to challenge students’ social representations of teachership. Nevertheless, the choice of images inevitably contributed to the results of the study because the selected images served as objects of perception that influenced the process of anchoring. When reflecting on the selected images afterward, I noticed the paintings could have been more diverse, depicting several people of color as well as disabled people with visible
disabilities, for instance. In the future, study designs in which participants choose images themselves should be developed and applied. In addition, instead of merely writing about images, it might be beneficial to include interviews in the data collection as well because, for some participants, it might be more convenient to speak about images than write about them. In addition, interviews would permit the possibility of posing clarifying questions.

Another set of limitations is related to the group of participants. This study was conducted in the context of upper secondary education: for this reason, both students and teachers were recruited from this context. A clearly defined context might be considered a strength, but, at the same time, it must be remembered that the results relate to that context. However, the fact that the group of participating students was the same in Sub-studies 1 and 2 must be considered a limitation. The participants were all students of visual culture studies and, thus, might pay more attention to visual messages in general and have better-than-average skills in making sense of visual materials related to teachers’ visual expressiveness. Reflecting on the recruitment of students afterward, it would have been appropriate to include students from two or several institutions of education, different study fields, different social backgrounds, and different geographical locations. A more diverse group of participants might have contributed to the findings, for instance, in terms of more heterogeneous categories of teachers (in Sub-study 1) and types of teachers (in Sub-study 2). In addition to the aforementioned limitations, apart from one student, all the participants were Finnish; for this reason, no multicultural aspect is included in the study. That being said, a multicultural aspect will serve as one focus of future research.

According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007, p. 120), reliability in qualitative methodologies includes “fidelity to real life, context- and situation-specificity, authenticity, comprehensiveness, detail, honesty, depth of response and meaningfulness to respondents.” In terms of these guidelines, I have familiarized myself with the data thoroughly and conducted the analysis carefully. In addition, parts of the data as well as the findings – meaning the categories and types of teachers – were quantified in order to evaluate the appropriateness of the findings. Triangulation, in terms of several types of data and different methods of analysis, was used. To elaborate how the findings are rooted in the data, both quotations of verbal data and image examples were included in the sub-studies. The translations of the data excerpts from Finnish into English were checked by a qualified translator. In terms of context, I have elaborated on the context of the study as well as the characteristics of the groups of participants, including myself as a researcher, that might contribute to the findings of the research. The analysis of visual materials is often regarded as highly subjective (Gilbert, 2008; Rose, 2016). For this reason, participant-created drawings were analyzed with and without the participants’ verbal accounts about them, and quantification was used to justify the findings (see, e.g., Bock et al., 2011). In addition, it would have been appropriate to ask one or two independent judges to evaluate the types and classes of teachers that I identified in the data.

When conducting qualitative research, truthfulness and providing the readers with detailed information about the choices made and measures taken are regarded as essential in terms of reliability (Cohen et al., 2007; Kuula, 2011). For this reason, all stages of the study – from data collection and analysis to reporting the findings – were explicated carefully. In addition, the theoretical framework and methods were elaborated in detail. Through the aforementioned measures, I have attempted to justify my conduct and reasoning and provide the readers with sufficient means
of evaluating the reliability of the study. What Moscovici (1961/2008, p. xxxii) states about communication – “Communication is never reducible to the transmission of the original messages, or the transfer of data that remains unchanged. Communication differentiates, translates and combines” – is relevant in terms of research as scientific communication as well. The interpretative approach exhibits the richness of qualitative research. At the same time, it necessitates reflexivity and appropriate conduct in terms of monitoring, explicating, and justifying the conduct of research (Gilbert, 2008). I have tried my best to meet these requirements.

6.7 **SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES**

This study generated a number of interesting topics for future research. First, it would be interesting to conduct a similar study in other cultural and national contexts. This kind of study would provide valuable information for instruction in multicultural contexts and classrooms. Since students and teachers coming from diverse cultural backgrounds might have different social representations of teachership – including teachers’ visual expressiveness – it would be important to identify possible problematic points in order to promote fluent and more culturally sensitive interaction.

In addition, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of social representations of teachership in Finland, it would be interesting to conduct a similar study among students and teachers at other levels and contexts of education as well as in other geographical locations in Finland. Similarly, it would be interesting to study, based on a larger quantity of data, whether social representations of teachership differ among female and male students and teachers, or among students and teachers of different ages. In addition, it would be highly interesting to apply the methods developed in this study to examine visual and social representations of teachership among student teachers. Furthermore, targeted research should be carried out among students and teachers belonging to diverse minorities. Together, these kinds of studies would provide an updated view on teachership in Finland, giving a voice to diverse experiences and understandings of teachership among both students and teachers that would promote critical reflection on the topic.

The design of the study at hand is well applicable to studying other social roles as well as interaction in other institutional contexts. Together with my colleagues, I have already applied a similar design to studying leadership. In the future, it would be interesting to conduct systematic research on visual and social representations of leadership. Since companies are becoming more and more international and multicultural, an international comparative study on visual and social representations of leadership in various cultures would be highly relevant.

Even though media representations of teachership have been studied extensively, there is less research on the topic using a social representations approach. This kind of study would be needed in order to discuss media representations in relation to their social and cultural roots and implications. This branch of research should include not only traditional forms of media (films, book illustrations, cartoons, magazine and newspaper images) but also contemporary forms of social media. To study this area, methodologies capable of taking the rhetorical functions of images into account should be developed further.

In terms of the theory of social representations theory, the nature and contribution of visual materials should be studied further. It would be important to explicate the
processes of anchoring, objectification, and naturalization in-depth from the point of view of visual materials and encounters. This would mean research that, on the one hand, systematically reviews and critically discusses the existing research on social representations using visual materials and methodologies and, on the other hand, drawing on semiotics explicates the specific nature of visual means of communication and discusses it in relation to social representations theory. The present study has attempted to take a step in that direction. Hopefully, it will encourage other researchers as well to continue exploring the visual dimension of social representation.
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Picture 5. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/17/Sofonisba_Anguissola_by_Van_Dyck.jpg (Anthony van Dyck, Sofonisba Anguissola, 1624)
Picture 15. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thomas_Stewart_%E2%80%93_Chevalier_d%27Eon.jpg (Thomas Stewart, Chevalier d’Eon, 1792)
ARTICLES

ARTICLE I

ARTICLE II

ARTICLE III

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ARTICLE I
HOW STUDENTS CATEGORIZE TEACHERS BASED ON VISUAL CUES: IMPLICATIONS OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION FOR CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT.

ABSTRACT

This article examines how students categorize teachers based on visual cues. The research drew on theories of social representations, social perception, and social categorization to study how students perceive and interpret teachers’ nonverbal communication. At a Finnish vocational college for culture studies, 17 paintings depicting a variety of people were shown to 65 students, who reflected on them as pictures of teachers. The data were analyzed applying membership categorization analysis. Five categories of teachers emerged from the data. The results show that students make inferences about teachers’ approachability and competence based on their visual cues, which might have implications for classroom management.

Keywords: categorization; classroom management; teachers’ visual communication; ecological theory of social perception; theory of social representations
1. INTRODUCTION

It is the beginning of the semester. A new teacher enters the classroom. The students stop chatting about their holiday experiences and follow the middle-aged serious-looking newcomer in her well-tailored red blouse, black knee-length skirt, and high-heeled shoes proceeding with quick steps to the front of the classroom. With a deep sigh, she unloads the heavy pile of papers onto the teacher’s table, raises her glasses, straightens her pearls, and sweeps her curly hair behind the ears. Then she raises her face and with a hint of a smile on her lips starts introducing herself, without being aware that the students have already categorized her in a number of ways based on the first impression mediated by visual cues.

The above situation is imaginary, but similar encounters occur frequently at all schools when teachers and students meet each other for the first time. Referring to Ervin Goffman’s (1990) dramaturgical perspective, one could argue that teachers are continuously on stage when in class, and both intentionally send and unintentionally emit visual messages (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993). Students, for their part, are experts in noticing even the most subtle visual cues, based on which first impressions, as well as initial categorizations, of teachers are formed (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993; Babad, 2009). These initial categorizations may be difficult to change (Skowronska & Ambady, 2008), which may have implications in terms of classroom management, understood as teachers’ ability to establish favorable conditions for learning and students’ social development, as well as to manage learning processes (Postholm, 2013). While teachers’ friendly and enthusiastic nonverbal expressiveness has been shown to contribute to successful classroom management, teachers’ authoritarian and disinterested nonverbal expressiveness has been related to difficulties in classroom management (Babad, 2009; Riniolo, Johnson, Sherman, & Misso, 2006). Thus, teaching is not a verbal act only, but equally a visual one, even though the role of the verbal domain has been emphasized in education research (Babad, 2009).

The visual dimensions of teachership are usually studied under the title of nonverbal communication, including elements such as physical appearance, facial expression, gestures, posture, movement, attire, and use of space (Babad, 2009). Nonverbal behavior is closely connected with the expression of emotions, which makes it indispensable in terms of social interaction (Barsade, 2002). That is also why it has gained more attention in educational research as an essential element of successful classroom management (Babad, 2009).

A result widely shared within the existing research on teachers’ visual features, such as physical appearance (Hamermersh & Parker, 2005; Riniolo et al., 2006; Westfall, Millar, & Walsh, 2016), facial expression, and gestures (Bull & Rumsey, 2012; Roth, 2001; Smotrova, 2017), pose, and body language (Hale, Freed, Ricotta, Farris, & Smith, 2017; Tai, 2014; White & Gardner, 2012), as well as attire (Gurung & Vespia, 2007; Joseph, 2017; Sebastian & Bristol, 2008), seems to suggest that physical attractiveness, enthusiastic and expressive nonverbal behavior, and appropriate clothing are favorably evaluated by students, contributing positively to their study performance. Furthermore, a number of studies imply that visual features of teachers have an impact on classroom interaction, as well as student motivation and study results, without explicitly specifying the nature of such an impact (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993; Babad, 2009; Veletzianos, 2010). In contrast, there seems to be less agreement concerning the impact of a teacher’s gender (Feldman, 1993; Hoffman & Oreopoulos, 2009; Young, Rush, & Shaw, 2009) and race (Dee, 2004; Egalite, Kisida, & Winters, 2015; Howsen,
2007) on student evaluations, as well as study performance, even in terms of whether or not there is such an impact.

The majority of the aforementioned research uses quantitative research methods detecting and measuring relationships between teachers’ visual features and students’ classroom behavior, motivation, and study performance. The qualitative research referred to above is based on either researchers’ observations (Smotrova, 2017) or experiences (Hale et al., 2017), whereas review articles (Roth, 2001; Tai, 2014) and books (Babad, 2009; Bull & Rumsey, 2012; White & Gardner, 2012) discuss the topic based on the literature. It can be concluded that there seems to be less qualitative research on the topic that attempts to detect students’ more nuanced experiences, in which students have the opportunity to express in their own words how they experience teachers’ visual features. This can be identified as a research gap, which this study addresses.

Until recently, most of the research on person perception has been based on verbal data such as trait lists or written behavioral descriptions (Johnson & Freeman, 2010). Deviating from that tradition, this study joins the increasing amount of recent research that uses visual material to study the topic. Since prior research, as indicated above, shows that students judge teachers based on their visual cues, and that teachers’ visual features influence study performance, it is important to study more closely how specific visual features of teachers are interpreted by students. The research at hand considers this knowledge as important, providing teachers with means of managing classroom situations more successfully in terms of their visual nonverbal behavior. Thus, the aim of this research is to study what kinds of categories of teachers students construct on the basis of visual cues, and what kinds of implications the categorization might have for classroom management. This seems to be a novel approach to studying the visual dimension of teachership.

2. THEORY

This research studies how students perceive and interpret teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior based on their common-sense understanding of teachers’ visual appearance. The theory of social representations provides a frame for such research, since social representations are defined as common-sense knowledge that people have of persons, objects, and phenomena (Moscovici, 2001). Part of this common-sense knowledge is visual (Hakoköngäs & Sakki, 2016; Moscovici, 2001), which can be characterized as culturally shared visual orders regulating the ways in which people produce and interpret visual messages (Hester & Francis, 2003; Seppänen, 2006). Social representations are used as resources for everyday life, helping people orientate themselves in the material and social world, as well as to make sense of material and social encounters (Moscovici, 2001). Since social representations consist of mundane knowledge taken for granted, people are not usually aware of their tacit influence in everyday social interaction. In this process of conscious and unconscious sense making, conceptualized as anchoring in social representations theory, categorization plays a significant role (Lahlou, 2015; Moscovici, 2001).

Categorization is considered to be a central operation in person perception, as well (Freeman & Johnson, 2016). While seminal studies on person perception regarded categorization as an inevitable and automatic process based on the perceivers’ cognition (Allport, 1954; Bartlett, 1932; Tajfel, 1969), more recent studies have challenged this
traditional view, suggesting that person perception is not influenced by the perceivers’
cognitive processes alone, but by the target persons’ visual features, as well (Hess,
Adams, & Kleck, 2008; Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2001). One theoretical approach that
bridges sensory and cognitive dimensions of person perception is the ecological theory
of social perception introduced by Leslie McArthur and Reuben Baron (1983). Based
on James Gibson’s ecological theory of object perception (1979), this regards person
perception as a joint contribution of affordances, namely the external attributes of
the target person, and attunements, namely the perceiver’s mood, expectations, prior
experiences, and cultural background (McArthur & Baron, 1983; Zebrowitz, 1990),
which largely correspond to the definition of social representations (Moscovici, 2001).

This research regards the ecological theory of social perception (McArthur &
Baron, 1983) as capable of conceptualizing person perception based on visual features
in the frame of social representations theory (Moscovici, 2001). Since culture can shape
processes of visual perception (Freeman, Rule, & Ambady, 2009), this research assumes
that students’ social representations of teacherness in terms of prior experiences, and
their cultural knowledge of teachers, form the attunement against which the visual
affordance of teacherness, provided by portrait paintings, is reflected on (Figure 1).
The ecological approach has been considered as valid when studying both real-life
interaction and the perception of people in images (Gibson, 1978; Steer, 1989; Windsor,
2004), and, for this reason, it is considered to provide an applicable theoretical
frame for the research at hand. Since categorization plays a significant role in the
ecological theory of social perception (Zebrowitz, 1990) and social representations
theory (Moscovici, 2001), this research analyses students’ perceptions by membership
categorization analysis.

Figure 1. Perception of teacher paintings based on the ecological theory of social
perception.

Membership categorization analysis originated from the work of Harvey Sacks in the
1960s. It focused on examining how people, as members of various social communities,
categorize people and their actions based on their common-sense reasoning (Sacks,
1992; see also Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015). Membership categories can be defined as
‘social types’ that are used to classify and describe people in order to provide members of communities with a sense of social order, facilitating interaction (Fitzgerald, 2015; Hester & Eglin, 1997). Sacks (1992) was particularly interested in the principles and methods that members use when categorizing other people, as well as themselves, into various membership categories in social situations. Furthermore, the interactional consequences of the categorization were at the core of Sacks’ interest (Fitzgerald, 2015). Membership categorization is not a neutral activity, but also a process that constructs social and moral norms by evaluating what is appropriate or inappropriate when acting in a specific social role (Jayyusi, 1984).

We do not categorize only verbally, but also visually (Lepper, 2000; Sacks, 1992). Even though membership categorization analysis has mostly been applied to verbal accounts (Francis & Hart, 1997), Sacks (1972, 1992) recognized and acknowledged the role of visual perception in membership categorization from the very beginning, based on his observations of people’s behavior in public places. Sacks (1972, 1992) regarded categorization based on visual cues as a means of making inferences about the people included in the category. More recently, photos, videos, and media images have also supplied material for membership categorization analysis at an ever-increasing pace (Ball & Smith, 2011; Francis & Hart, 1997; Watson, 2005). Because of its visual orientation, membership categorization analysis offers a methodological tool to study how students categorize teachers based on their visual cues.

3. METHOD

This research aims to find out how students perceive and interpret teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior, and what implications this suggests in terms of classroom management. In order to address the research task, students were asked to observe portrait paintings and write about the experiences generated by them. The data were analyzed using membership categorization analysis, which focused on examining how students categorize teachers based on visual cues.

The research at hand presupposes that observation of and reflection on artworks can produce relevant information about the ways in which students interpret teachers’ visual features in real life. This assumption draws, on one hand, on cognitive and social neuroscience, which often uses images of people to study social cognition (Risko, Laidlaw, Freeth, Foulsham, & Kingstone, 2012), and, on the other hand, on the theorizing of connective and relational aesthetics, according to which artistic perception and interpretation draw on people’s knowledge and experience of social life (Yang, 2015). Thus, artworks are considered as capable of functioning as facilitators of dialogue, inviting audiences to reflect on, express, and construct their relation to encounters in everyday social life, bridging the traditional divide between symbolic and actual practices (DeMarrais & Robb, 2013; Yang, 2015).

In this research, paintings function as “cultural mirrors” or “counter images” (Martikainen, 2011) through which students are invited to reflect on visual dimensions of teachership based on their culturally constructed common-sense understanding. On one hand, paintings are used as examples of teachers with specific visual features, providing students with visual affordances of versatile teachers. On the other hand, paintings activate students’ social representations of teachership, which are used in making sense of teachers’ nonverbal expressiveness. In other words, this research aims to gain insight into students’ attunements generated by various visual affordances
of “teachers,” as related to their experience and knowledge. For this purpose, both past and present paintings are considered as applicable since previous studies (Acevedo, 2011; Stedman, 2008; Wikström, 2000) have shown that observation of and reflection on paintings from various eras can produce relevant information in terms of contemporary matters.

In previous research, observation of and reflection on past and present paintings depicting people have been used to study and discuss contemporary leadership (Acevedo, 2011; Martikainen & Hujala, 2017; Stedman, 2008), interpersonal relations, diagnostic skills, and empathy in nursing situations (Klugman & Beckmann-Mende, 2015; Pellico, Friedlaender, & Fennie, 2009; Wikström, 2000, 2001), as well as person perception in general (Sakuta, Kanazawa, & Yamaguchi, 2014; Schenk & Stumpel, 2017). When observing people in artworks, the artistic and social realms become intertwined due to the empathetic and embodied involvement generated by works of art (Brinck, 2017; Kesner & Horáček, 2017), in which spectators anticipate, complete, and interpret depicted gestures and actions based on their experience and knowledge of social life (Steier, Pierroux, & Krange, 2015).

Even though the situations of perceiving people in images and in social interaction are different, research shows a number of similarities between the two processes. For instance, people’s eyes, gaze, and faces attract major attention in both situations (Oosterhof & Todorov, 2008; Risko et al., 2012); facial expressions, gestures, postures, and other visual cues are used as sources of making inferences about real and depicted people’s emotions, thoughts, and intentions (Brooks & Freeman, 2018; Oosterhof & Todorov, 2008); similar to real-life perceptions, the perception of people in images can influence the course of future behavior (Sutherland, Rowley, Amoaku, Daguzan, Kidd-Rossiter, Maceviciute, & Young, 2015); and finally, the perception of people in artworks and in real life merges bottom-up processes based on the visual qualities of target persons and top-down processes based on spectators’ prior knowledge and expectations (Albohn & Adams, 2016; Brooks & Freeman, 2017; Pelowski, Markey, Lauring, & Leder, 2016), reminiscent of the ecological theory of social perception (McArthur & Baron, 1983). Based on the aforementioned research, it is assumed that the picture-based study design of this research can produce relevant information about the ways in which students categorize teachers based on visual features in real classroom situations.

Images, that is, photos and paintings, are not transparent recordings of reality, but symbolical representations constructed by image makers through a number of visual choices (Mannay, 2016; Rose, 2016). Both photos and paintings have been used in picture-based research on various social roles. Prior research has found that photographic representations of teachers in Google images (Bergman, 2017) and magazine photographs (Cohen, 2010; Goldstein, 2011), for example, tend to be stereotypical. In order to provide students with a more versatile “teacher” imagery, this research deliberately chose to use paintings depicting a variety of people other than teachers, some of whom act, dress, and gesticulate in ways untypical of a teacher (list of paintings). (For this reason, the word ‘teacher’ will be written in quotation marks when referring to the persons in the paintings.) Previous research has found that deviating stimuli challenging normative expectations may lead people to notice tacit aspects of social perception (Freeman & Ambady, 2014; Martikainen & Hujala, 2017; Pelowski et al., 2016), as well as to become aware of hidden social representations influencing social perception (Moscovici, 2001). For this reason, the choice to use paintings depicting people other than teachers, instead of photographs of real teachers,
was regarded as an opportunity for students to notice and express their unconscious ways of interpreting teachers’ visual expressiveness. The author of this article, with his research colleague, has applied a similar method previously in a small-scale study in the context of leadership (Martikainen & Hujala, 2017).

In all, 65 students (51 female and 14 male) at a Finnish vocational college for culture studies, in which the researcher works as a teacher of visual culture studies, participated in this research. They studied visual arts (n=25), photography (n=20), textile and garment design (n=7), carpentry (n=7), and audio-visual communication (n=6). Apart from one student, all the participants were Finnish. Their age varied between 15 and 42 years, so that 53 students were between 15-20 years, eight students between 21-30 years, three students between 31-40 years, and one student between 41-50 years (Table 1). The participants were students on three courses on visual culture studies taught by the researcher. The distribution of the participants in terms of age, gender and study program is typical of study groups at the college in question.

Table 1. Information about the participants in the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sex</th>
<th>number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>study field</td>
<td>number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visual arts</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>photography</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>textile and garments design</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carpentry</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>audio-visual communication</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<td>15-20 years</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30 years</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students were asked to write, in their own words, what kinds of teachers the people in the paintings would be, and to form their opinions based on what they saw in the pictures. The instruction read: “Observe the paintings as pictures of teachers. What kinds of teachers would the persons in the paintings be? Write down your answers and justify your views using visual elements in the pictures.” In addition, it was clarified orally that the persons depicted in the paintings were not teachers in reality. The pictures were printed and handed out to students. They were arranged in numerical order, but the students could observe them in any order they wished. A period of 120 minutes was reserved for the assignment. The instructions were given in Finnish. Similarly, the students wrote about their experiences in Finnish. Afterwards, the comments were translated into English.

The length of students’ writings per painting varied from three words to 152 words, with the average commentary being approximately 50-60 words. This goes for both female and male students’ answers. Altogether, the data consisted of 116 typewritten pages. A typical answer named a couple of teacher characteristics and specified the
visual cues communicating them. A number of answers also included descriptions of emotional reactions generated when observing the portraits.

The portrait paintings were selected so that they depicted various types of persons in relation to age, gender, ethnic background, and sexual orientation, in order to study whether they have an impact on categorization. Furthermore, the paintings were selected so that both female and male “teachers” were depicted in similar ways; both women and men were depicted as old and young, formally and casually dressed, gesturing in a restrained and lively manner, being in the front and in the rear of the picture space, and looking serious and smiling. In addition, there was a lot of variety in people’s facial expressions, gestures, postures, clothes, actions, and location in the picture space. The elements of visual expression – such as colors, viewing angle, and composition – also varied in the paintings. This was thought to provide the participants with a rich visual affordance of versatile “teachers”.

Following Sacks’ (1972, 1992) interest in membership categorization based on visual cues, students were invited to observe and reflect on the images of “teachers.” The analysis focused on detecting what kinds of categories of teachers the students constructed when perceiving the persons in the paintings and writing about them. Following Jayyusi’s (1984) model of membership categorization, this study considers ‘teacher’ as the culturally available membership category, and attempts to detect students’ situational membership categorizations from the data based on “teachers’” visual cues. Visual cues act as “perceptually available category features,” (Jayyusi, 1984, 73) referring to certain types of teachers. Consequently, the analysis focused on examining which visual cues students mentioned when observing each painting, and what kind of teacher characteristics they derived from these cues. This process is understood as membership categorization based on visual cues (Sacks, 1972). Membership categorizations are named following the “adjectives-plus-a-category” model suggested by Jayyusi (1984, 20), in which an adjective referring to a teacher characteristic situationally modifies the culturally available membership category. Figure 2 elucidates the way in which membership categorization analysis is applied in this study (Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Application of membership categorization analysis in this study.](image-url)
4. RESULTS

The categorization of the people in the paintings was based on their visual features, which students associated with certain kinds of teachership. Students paid attention to a number of visual cues, such as facial expression, gestures, posture, clothes, hair-style, make-up, colors, and location in the picture space. These visual cues were regarded as expressions of the “teachers’” attitudes towards students, skills and knowledge, ways of communication, and personality. Students seemed to use their knowledge of social representations of teachers and cultural visual orders concerning teachers as they judged certain styles of clothing, ways of gesturing, and manners appropriate or inappropriate for a teacher. Students also created moral rules when reflecting on “teachers’” suitability for the profession.

*Her outfit is not suitable for a teacher because it’s too revealing. It is also disturbing that she smokes.* (student 28, painting 9)

*I don’t think he would be a good teacher because he looks very young and that’s why he may not be competent.* (student 28, painting 17)

The data revealed that students associated “teachers’” visual characteristics with a number of social characteristics that functioned as the basis of categorization. When analyzing students’ comments on “teacher” paintings using membership categorization analysis, five categories of teachers emerged most frequently: strict teacher, friendly teacher, distant teacher, communicative teacher, and indifferent teacher. The categories of strict teacher and friendly teacher are interconnected in terms of representing various aspects of teacher authority. Similarly, the categories of distant teacher and communicative teacher are interconnected as representing various aspects of approachability and communication. While the above categories communicate positive or negative teacher involvement in teaching and classroom interaction, the category of indifferent teacher is characterized by the lack of such involvement. From students’ categorizations, there seemed to emerge a space in which “teachers” were judged in terms of authority and involvement in communication (Figure 3).

![Figure 3. Categories of teachers located on the axes of communicativeness (communicative-noncommunicative) and authority (frightening-friendy).](image)
Some variation was detectable in students’ answers. Students of visual arts, photography, and audio-visual communication paid attention to three to five visual characteristics of teachers, whereas students of textile and garment design and carpentry noted typically two or three visual characteristics. In addition, twelve students’ answers were constantly shorter and paid attention to fewer visual characteristics than average. This group of twelve students—seven female and five male—included students from all study programs. Eleven of them were between 15-20 years and one was between 21-30 years. Apart from these students, the answers of the various age groups did not differ from each other significantly in terms of either length or versatility.

Even though the students categorized most paintings in a highly consistent manner, there was some individual variation in the categorization of all the portrait paintings, which was not relatable to any particular age group, gender, or study program. The quantification of the data revealed that the “teachers” in paintings one and three were most often categorized as strict, the “teachers” in paintings four and fifteen as friendly, the “teachers” in paintings twelve and sixteen as distant, the “teachers” in paintings six and seven as communicative, and the “teachers” in paintings two, nine, and seventeen as indifferent. Furthermore, the “teachers” in paintings five and fourteen were regarded as both strict and indifferent. The categorizations of the “teachers” in paintings eight, ten, eleven, and thirteen varied to the extent that no predominant categorization was apparent. Table two summarizes the three most frequent ways of categorizing each painting (Table 2).

Table 2. Quantification of the students’ three most frequent categorizations of each painting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PREDOMINANT CATEGORY IDENTIFIABLE</th>
<th>category: strict teacher</th>
<th>category: friendly teacher</th>
<th>category: distant teacher</th>
<th>category: communicative teacher</th>
<th>category: indifferent teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>painting 1</td>
<td>strict</td>
<td>arrogant</td>
<td>pedantic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>painting 3</td>
<td>strict</td>
<td>confident</td>
<td>unfair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>category: friendly teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>painting 4</td>
<td>friendly</td>
<td>sensitive</td>
<td>ordinary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>painting 15</td>
<td>friendly</td>
<td>open-minded</td>
<td>artistic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>category: distant teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>painting 12</td>
<td>distant</td>
<td>strict</td>
<td>confident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>painting 16</td>
<td>distant</td>
<td>adventurous</td>
<td>intelligent</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>category: communicative teacher</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>painting 6</td>
<td>communicative</td>
<td>supportive</td>
<td>ordinary</td>
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<tr>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>painting 7</td>
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<td>joyful</td>
<td>supportive</td>
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<tr>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>category: indifferent teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>painting 2</td>
<td>indifferent</td>
<td>insecure</td>
<td>kind</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<td>--------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>painting 9</td>
<td>indifferent</td>
<td>outrageous</td>
<td>incompetent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>painting 17</td>
<td>indifferent</td>
<td>relaxed</td>
<td>incompetent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NO PREDOMINANT CATEGORY IDENTIFIABLE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>painting 5</td>
<td>strict</td>
<td>indifferent</td>
<td>old-fashioned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>painting 8</td>
<td>reserved</td>
<td>strict</td>
<td>old-fashioned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>painting 10</td>
<td>appropriate</td>
<td>respected</td>
<td>friendly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of students</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>painting 11</td>
<td>unstable</td>
<td>stressed</td>
<td>enthusiastic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>painting 13</td>
<td>intelligent</td>
<td>committed</td>
<td>pedantic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>painting 14</td>
<td>strict</td>
<td>indifferent</td>
<td>reserved</td>
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<tr>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

The results will be presented as follows: first, there is the category label, followed by excerpts of data containing the visual cues on the basis of which the students constructed the category. This, in turn, is followed by a selection of students’ comments describing their emotional reactions generated by the visual cues, as well as their anticipation of the teaching methods or the quality of future interaction with the “teachers”. The excerpts of data chosen to illustrate each category represent a typical way of categorizing “teachers” in the paintings based on visual cues, in terms of both the visual cues used as the basis of categorization and their interpretation.

**Strict teacher**

The category of “strict teacher” was based on students’ comments that characterized “teachers” based on visual cues as “strict,” “demanding,” “mean,” or “frightening.” In addition, expressions referring to the authoritarian type of teacher, such as “keeping strict discipline,” were included in the category. In the category of “strict teacher,” the characterization most often mentioned dealt with the viewing angle, where the “teacher” looked downwards on the spectator. This, combined with the location in the center of the picture, seemed to create the impression of an arrogant and authoritarian “teacher” being above, who constantly evaluates and judges their students.

*A repulsive, arrogant, and strict teacher who would appreciate rules and discipline. The viewing angle and facial expression give the person a certain look, as if she was better than the spectator. Looks down on you. (student 2, painting 1)*

*The person attempts to be the boss, (…) since she is in the center of the picture. (student 5, painting 1)*

A serious-looking face with a stiff mouth and strict gaze were regarded as features of a cold “teacher” who neither sympathizes with students nor shows their emotions. In addition, strong make-up was seen as a sign of an authoritarian and strict “teacher”.

She does not smile and her facial expression is harsh and serious. As a teacher, she would be very demanding and irritable. Her cold facial expression creates that kind of impression. (student 53, painting 5)

Strong make-up makes her look determined and frightening. (student 43, painting 3)

Formal, tidy, and slightly old-fashioned attire in dark or strong colors made “teachers” appear respectful and appropriate. Hair tied in a bun or a short and straight hair-cut emphasized the image of a “teacher” being strict and self-confident. In addition, the disciplined impression of a “teacher” was frequently associated with a stiff posture that did not refer to any sort of prompt reaction or display of emotional response.

Hair tied simply in a bun and her serious facial impression refer to a strict personality. Formal, red garment with golden embroidery communicates her higher position. (student 32, painting 1)

She is very disciplined and arrogant. This comes to mind because of the posture of her mouth and neck. Her posture is very stiff. (student 42, painting 1)

The visual characteristics of the “teachers” in this category caused two major reactions in the students. The first was fear generated by the strict and judgmental features of the “teacher”. The other was that the “teachers” were expected to teach using old-fashioned teaching methods that emphasize lecturing and leave the students in a passive role.

She gazes contemptuously downwards. (…) I think students would be afraid of her because she looks strict and uncompromising. (student 25, painting 1)

On the basis of her overall appearance, she looks very old-fashioned. She keeps strict discipline in the classroom. (…) Her teaching is very theoretical and includes reading a lot of books and learning by heart. (student 8, painting 5)

The category of “strict teacher” characterized the “teacher” who arrogantly looks down on students, has a strict facial expression, uses strong make-up, wears formal clothes in dark or strong colors, and shows their spontaneous reactions neither with facial expressions nor with body language. This kind of visual appearance mediated impressions of a strict “teacher,” whose main concern is to judge and evaluate students. Furthermore, these visual features of a “teacher” caused feelings of fear and made students think of old-fashioned and teacher-centered teaching methods.

Friendly teacher

The characterizations of “teachers” as “friendly,” “kind,” “gentle,” “empathetic,” and “caring,” as well as references to “teachers’” “warm personality” formed the category of “friendly teacher.” In this category, the most decisive visual cue was a friendly facial expression. Friendliness was mainly construed by smile, round facial features, and physical attractiveness, which were also inferred as signs of a kind person in general.
Furthermore, a friendly and kind “teacher” was one who did not position themselves as superior to the students, but interacted with them at the same level.

*This is a very friendly teacher (...). Everyone would love her. (...) smile, and almost childish round face create the impression of friendliness and kindness. (student 15, painting 4)*

*She is a calm and well-liked person. (...) She is at the same level and looks straight at you. The face is calm and soft. (student 22, painting 4)*

A host of characterizations in this category clustered around clothes, hair-style, and make-up. Easy-going clothes and curly, untied hair made “teachers” appear kind and friendly. Casual attire and lack of make-up were associated with a genuine and unpretentious “teacher” who treats students equally. Colors associated with this category were tempered and warm, which were experienced as referring to the “teacher’s” warm, caring, and patient personality.

*She loves teaching and her students. (...) a calm face, and curly hair create the impression of kindness. (student 22, painting 4)*

*She looks really sensitive and empathetic. A real mother figure for her pupils. (...) She uses relaxed dresses and doesn’t use make-up. Natural. (student 60, painting 4)*

*Everybody’s favorite teacher. Warm colors reflect his warm personality. (student 45, painting 15)*

Friendliness was also inferred by the posture and body language of the “teachers” in the pictures. The descriptions of the body language most often mentioned in this category were “relaxed” and “calm”. In addition, “teachers” in this category looked and turned toward the spectator.

*Always friendly. (...) Friendly facial expression and a relaxed posture. (student 45, painting 15)*

*She wants everybody to learn (...). Her face is kind and her body language calm – you could ask her for advice. (student 21, painting 4)*

The visual features of this category seemed to encourage students to approach the “teachers” with their uncertainties and questions. On the other hand, features associated with kindness made a number of students doubt a “teacher’s” ability to maintain discipline in class. This type was even seen as too sensitive, resulting in a lack of respect.

*The face is relaxed, and the lack of make-up gives the impression of softness. A relaxed, confident, and reliable teacher. The kind of person you could take your problems to, without being judged. (student 49, painting 4)*

*He looks shy and very kind. (...) He could start to cry if a student raised their voice. (...) Students would not respect him. (student 25, painting 15)*
The category of “friendly teacher” was based on a smile, a relaxed and calm pose, and casual clothes in warm colors. These “teachers” were perceived to position themselves on the same level as students, creating a feeling of equality. The “teachers” in this category were perceived as approachable, but it was thought that too much friendliness could result in a lack of respect among students. This kind of “teacher” was often described as “motherly”.

**Distant teacher**

The category of “distant teacher” summarizes students’ notions of “teachers” as being “distant,” “cold,” “formal,” and “dignified,” or of “teachers” whose visual expressiveness was understood as signaling “lack of communication” or “detachment.” In the category of “distant teacher,” the “teacher’s” posture and position in the picture space played a major role. “Teachers” turning away from the spectator and not looking straight at them were interpreted as distant and withdrawn. In addition, a serious facial expression that did not reveal any emotion conveyed the sense of detachment, sometimes even shyness. These visual characteristics, combined with a stiff posture and a location at the rear of the picture space, contributed to impressions of a distant “teacher”.

*Distant and cold. He doesn’t make eye contact. (…) He wants to give an appropriate impression of himself, but doesn’t reveal anything personal.* (student 63, painting 16)

*Distant and formal judging by the long distance to other people. Wants to appear authoritarian.* (student 38, painting 12)

Clothing played a crucial role in this category as well. Formal clothing seemed to alienate the “teacher” from students and from the grass-roots level of every-day school work. Furthermore, cold and dark colors in “teachers’” clothes were experienced as signs of a formal relationship with the spectator and withdrawal typical for this category.

*Clothing and appearance tell about dignity (…). His formal appearance can make him appear a little bit distant to the pupils.* (student 13, painting 12)

*He would be the one who over-dresses at school. He would be dignified and respected, the principal of the school, for sure. (…) the black suit (…) makes the person appear dignified and proud.* (student 5, painting 12)

Thirteen students were concerned whether this type of “teacher” would actually be interested in teaching at all and regard it as meaningful, or just long for higher positions. The interaction between this type of “teacher” and students was considered problematic. Furthermore, eight students got the impression of a “teacher” who, besides being distant, would often be absent and leave students to study alone.

*This teacher has authority and is very distant. (…) He looks away, which gives the impression that he wants something bigger.* (student 37, painting 16)
The person is distant and dignified who doesn’t communicate with pupils (...). It gives an impression that this teacher is often absent from his work and leaves his pupils alone. His standing far away makes him appear distant. (student 47, painting 12)

The category of “distant teacher” was constructed on the basis of visual cues expressing withdrawal, such as turning away from the spectators or not looking straight at them. Serious facial expressions, formal clothes in dark colors, and stiff posture, especially when located in the rear of the picture space, were experienced as indicators of distant “teachers” far from grass-roots level. These visual cues made students worry whether the “teacher” is more interested in their own interests rather than the students’ learning.

**Communicative teacher**

The characterizations of “teachers” as “communicative,” “social,” “talkative,” “enthusiastic,” and “friendly,” together with impressions of “teachers” being “encouraging” and “easy to approach,” formed the category of “communicative teacher”. A friendly facial expression played a significant role in the formation of the category. A smiling face combined with direct eye contact made students interpret “teachers” as eager to communicate. Down-to-earth and warm colors also contributed to the impression of a communicative “teacher” who would encourage students to discuss and participate.

A smiling face and tidy clothes give a warm first impression. The colors are also very down-to-earth, which gives a feeling that this person is easy to approach. (student 46, painting 6)

The openness to communication was inferred from relaxed postures, vivid gestures, and unclasped hands, as well. A location at the same level as the spectator was understood as mediating the meaning of fluent communication. In addition, close-ups, where “teachers” seemed to be physically closer to spectators, conveyed the meaning of a sociable personality.

She laughs openly, an optimistic personality. She is at the same level as the spectator. She is relaxed on the basis of her blown hair. (...) The body is open and turned towards the spectator, communicating trust and openness. (student 38, painting 7)

The impression of a positive communicator was constructed based on clothes, as well. Casual, even youthful clothes were interpreted as signs of a communicative personality. Furthermore, restrained make-up was understood as a sign of unproblematic and fluent communication.

Her smile makes her appear a joyful and enthusiastic person. A competent teacher. She wears youthful and relaxed clothes. It would be easy to communicate with her. (student 40, painting 6)

Fun loving and easy going, but in a confident way. The make-up is restrained, hair and clothes casual. (student 59, painting 7)
The students wrote that these visual cues communicated impressions of a supportive “teacher” who favors student-centered and practical teaching methods that activate students to participate in many ways. In addition, this type of “teacher” was regarded as an open-minded and relaxed coach who encourages students to try their best without being afraid of making mistakes.

*The posture of the woman is open and her laughing mouth catches attention. I think she would be a cheerful and talkative teacher. She would be supportive and her teaching would be practical. (student 4, painting 7)*

*She is fun. Doesn’t get mad easily. Relaxed and doesn’t stress too much. You don’t need to be afraid of making mistakes. The lessons are relaxed and fun. Nevertheless, you learn a lot. (…) She would be a good teacher. (student 27, painting 7)*

The category of a “communicative teacher” was constructed on the visual cues of smiling facial expressions understood as referring to fluent communication. Casual clothes and a relaxed posture contributed to the impression of an open communicator. A further important cue was the “teacher’s” location on the same level as the spectator. These visual features were associated with positive and easy communication between the “teacher” and the students, so that the students seemed to feel they could trust this type of “teacher” to be supportive and understanding, even if they made mistakes. Furthermore, they predicted these “teachers” would use teaching methods that would be communicative and activating.

**Indifferent teacher**

The category of “indifferent teacher” was formed based on students’ inferences of “teachers” being “indifferent,” “disinterested,” “bored,” “irresponsible,” or “careless.” This category was clustered around facial expressions that were described as tired, frustrated, indifferent, fed up, or hollow. Indifference was also communicated through body language. “Teachers” turning away from the spectator were interpreted as people who are not interested in others.

*This teacher would be indifferent. (…) Her facial expression and posture seem to say that she couldn’t care less. (student 21, painting 9)*

*The feeling of indifference comes from the fact that she has turned away from me. (student 44, painting 2)*

In this category, students paid attention to old and worn-out clothes, as well as “teachers’” unpolished appearance in general, as signs of tiredness and a lack of energy to care about their looks. However, quite the opposite clothing style – too fine clothes – was also experienced to mediate a similar indifferent attitude toward students and teaching. It was thought that “teachers” who dress up focus more on themselves and “looking good” rather than being interested in the matters of the students. Eye-catchingly fine clothes were seen as a means of hiding a lack of competence.
Tired and in need of a break. (…) He would be too tired to take care of his physical appearance. The pupils would be afraid of him because of his looks. (student 58, painting 14)

This teacher is not interested in what the pupils do – but in looking good. (…) I get the feeling that flamboyant fine clothes are a means to hide inappropriate behavior and a lack of skills. (student 57, painting 2)

More than in any other category, age was discussed in this category. Old “teachers” were regarded as tired of teaching, waiting for their retirement, which in turn resulted in indifference in their teaching. Students also saw signs of indifference in “teachers” who were young, wore fashionable and relaxed clothes, listened to music through headphones, and seemed to act like youngsters. Headphones and closed eyes were seen as signs of isolation from the environment, giving the impression of an asocial personality not willing to communicate.

This teacher longs for her retirement (…). Tired eyes and dodging gaze express a lack of interest. (student 57, painting 5)

This teacher looks more like a student than a teacher. Headphones, absent-minded facial expression, and posture with his hands in his pockets create a casual and indifferent impression. (student 47, painting 17)

Another type of indifference became evident in terms of “teachers” looking extraordinary, who were experienced as not respecting the rules of the school but who showed their rebellious indifference toward the whole organization through their looks. Smoking, strong make-up, and revealing clothes were associated with this category. This impression was fostered by clothes in cold colors, which were seen to reflect a “teacher’s” lack of interest in the students.

This person would be irresponsible and careless. For a teacher, this outfit is indecent. She would not care about the rules of the school. (student 2, painting 9)

The colors in the picture are cold, and that's why I think he is not so interested in his pupils nor what they say. (student 5, painting 14)

The visual elements connected with the category of “indifferent teacher” made students anticipate this type of “teacher” and their teaching to be boring. They regarded the oldest “teachers” in the paintings as indifferent, thinking they do not put full energy into teaching because they are going to retire soon anyway. In addition, fine or eye-catching clothes were regarded as signs of “teachers” being more interested in themselves than in making an effort in order to promote students’ learning.

Her nun-like appearance makes me think of a religion teacher who is tired of her life. She will retire soon and that's why she doesn't put 100% effort into her teaching. (student 53, painting 5)

Clothes (…) give the impression of the person being flamboyant, maybe easy-going and fun loving. (…) Though her lessons may be fun, I get the feeling the teaching may not
be the best. As the teacher, she would be more interested in appearance than hard work.

(student 49, painting 2)

The category of “indifferent teacher” consisted of various types of “teachers” inferred by various visual cues. On one hand, they were “teachers” who did not seem to be interested in teaching and communicating with students, as signaled by turned-away poses, too fine clothes expressing egocentrism, shut eyes, or headphones expressing an inwardly turned personality. On the other hand, they were tired “teachers,” as signaled by old age, a tired facial expression, an unkept physical appearance, and inactive overall presence. “Teachers” characterized as indifferent by visual cues were expected to be boring, and to neither like teaching nor responsibly engage in student counseling. Furthermore, these “teachers” were expected to have problems with classroom management in terms of both inspiring students to learn and maintaining appropriate conditions for studying in class. A clearly deviating type of indifferent “teacher” was those who were experienced standing out, but in a rebellious way, communicating indifference toward school as an institution. These “teachers” were experienced as negative role models with a disadvantageous impact on students.

In summary, a preferred type of “teacher” in visual terms was a middle-aged and friendly looking person, characterized by enthusiastic but, at the same time, appropriate visual nonverbal features integrating the categories of “friendly teacher” and “communicative teacher”. These visual cues communicated a “teacher” who was willing to communicate with students and support their learning, which generated reliance on the “teacher” so that students did not need to be afraid of their reactions or worry how they would succeed in managing the classroom. Even though these two categories share some characteristics, “friendly teacher” was associated more with kindness and empathy, whereas “communicative teacher” was associated with activity, immediacy, and enthusiasm. In contrast, the categories of “strict teacher,” “distant teacher,” and “indifferent teacher” captured the disfavored types of “teachers”. These “teachers” seemed to judge students and maintain strict discipline, or withdraw from them due to disinterest, tiredness, or reserve. In visual terms, “strict teacher” and “distant teacher” shared features of formality, such as formal clothing in cold or dark colors, as well as signs of detachment from the students. In turn, “indifferent teacher” was characterized by either an unpolished and very relaxed or an over-groomed physical appearance and clothing. Students regarded “teachers” in these three categories as frightening, withdrawn, or boring. Despite the mutual differences, the common denominator was that their visual nonverbal expressiveness was experienced negatively, resulting in anticipations of problematic interaction.

5. DISCUSSION

The participants in this research were Finnish students who have been used to the Finnish education system, characterized by principles of equity, as well as student-centered and active methods of learning (Niemi, Multasila, Lipponen, & Vivitsou, 2014; Sahlberg, 2007) communicated by a certain kind of teacher, with visual expressiveness as well. For this reason, the results, meaning the categories of teachers, cannot be generalized into different educational traditions, including different visual orders of teachership. Furthermore, the students participating in this research may focus more on people’s visual characteristics in general, and may have better-than-average skills
in visual literacy, since they studied subjects with training in visual literacy skills. This might also have been one reason why the study design and visual material seemed to appeal to the students’ creativity and motivate them to delve into the task.

Despite the variation in the answers and ways of categorization, the students categorized the portraits in a notably consistent manner. Bearing in mind the heterogeneity of the participants, this finding is interesting and needs to be researched more closely in the future. At this point, one may only speculate whether it could be explained through the visual orientation of the participants, the clarity of the visual cues in the paintings, or the existence of distinct and commonly shared social representations of teachership in Finnish society. Within the scope of this article, it is not possible discuss this finding further.

In this research, the students evaluated “teachers” with the help of portrait paintings, whose selection naturally contributed to the results of the research. However, the written reflections on paintings representing different eras, styles, materials and techniques did not deviate from each other in terms of length or versatility. The study design using still images emphasized the role of the visual, ruling out other aspects of nonverbal expressiveness, as well as time-related flows and changes in nonverbal behavior, which might influence the results of the study. On the other hand, this study design resembles many situations of impression formation, in which inferences are drawn by visual information alone (see Riniolo et al., 2006).

In this research, students observed paintings of people who were not teachers in reality. However, they were asked to observe them as pictures of teachers. The assignment seemed to inspire the students, since they were able to empathize with the persons in the paintings as if they were their teachers in reality. In addition, the visual characteristics of the people generated multimodal experiences, such as about voices and scents: “She is a teacher (...) who uses strong perfume, laughs aloud, and gossips. Somehow her face and leopard pattern give this impression” (student 34, painting 3). “Teacher” portraits also reminded students of their previous teachers, teacher characters in films, and other familiar persons in their lives: “I was startled when I saw her because she reminds me of my former English teacher, who always wore covering clothes, had a tight bun, shouted a lot with a high-pitched voice, and complained about everything.” (student 54, painting 8). The data revealed that observing pictures functioned as “embodied simulation” (Gallese, 2009) in which “teachers’” visual characteristics addressed students’ knowledge and experiences of the social world, which they used as a frame when categorizing portraits.

Bearing the aforementioned limitations in mind, this research shows that facial expression, gestures, posture, clothes, hair-style, make-up, colors, and location in the picture-space were considered as mirroring “teachers’” professional competence, as well as their relation to students in terms of authority and approachability. “Teachers’” gender, ethnic background, or sexual orientation did not emerge as a distinct basis for categorization in this research. However, visual features expressing the category of “communicative teacher” were more often perceived in paintings depicting female “teachers”, whereas the category of “distant teacher” was mainly constructed based on paintings depicting male “teachers”. Additionally, men dressing up were sometimes regarded as school principals, whereas women dressing up were understood as vain or as concealing their incompetence through excessive clothing. In the process of categorization, perceived visual cues and prior experiences about various types of teachers seemed to intertwine, as suggested by the ecological theory of social perception (McArthur & Baron, 1983).
The results of this study show that the categories of “friendly teacher” and “communicative teacher” represented positively perceived teachers, whereas the categories of “strict teacher,” “distant teacher,” and “indifferent teacher” represented negatively perceived teachers. In terms of social representations of teachership, the level of authority and involvement in communication seemed to be the most significant anchors used in making sense of “teachers’” visual characteristics. Students clearly favored “teachers” who seemed to be friendly, enthusiastic, and communicative. This notion is compatible with prior research on classroom management (Babad, 2009; Postholm, 2013).

The finding that “teachers’” visual nonverbal behavior generated various emotional reactions from trust to fear, and was regarded as communicating aspects of “teachers’” authority and approachability, is significant in terms of classroom management. Research shows that a teacher’s warm, positive, and enthusiastic nonverbal expressiveness is strongly related to a positive classroom climate, as well as increased motivation and better study achievements (Babad, 2009). On the other hand, a teacher’s negative nonverbal expressiveness might damage the classroom climate and have negative effects on student motivation and study performance (Babad, 2009; Riniolo et al., 2006). Therefore, it is important that teachers are aware of their visually communicated messages, as well as their potential contribution to classroom management.

The ecological theory of social perception combined with social representations theory might offer a plausible theoretical frame for studying how students interpret teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior, since the way in which the visual affordances communicated by teachers’ visual cues are interpreted may reveal students’ attunements in terms of culturally typical ways of interpreting teachers’ visual expressiveness (Freeman, Rule, & Ambady, 2009; McArthur & Baron, 1983; Moscovici, 2001). Research applying and further developing this theoretical approach might produce information on social representations of teachership influencing social perception as well as provide an insight into “how teachers are present in practice,” which Postholm (2013, 399) regards as a significant aspect of future research on classroom management.

6. CONCLUSION

What makes the informative value of visual nonverbal features problematic is that, maybe more than words, their meanings and levels of intentionality are often ambiguous. Teachers’ visual features are hardly all meant as mediators of deliberate meanings, but they may become interpreted as such by students. The awareness that students make judgements of teachers based on visual cues, as gained through this type of research, might positively inform teachers’ self-presentation and behavior. As the ecological theory of social perception posits, perceivers’ prior experiences influence their perceptions (McArthur & Baron, 1983). Thus, the way in which students categorize teachers is inevitably beyond the teachers’ own control, to some extent. Nevertheless, teachers’ skillful management of their visual nonverbal expressiveness is of utmost importance, since it may direct students’ perception in a way that positively contributes to successful classroom management (Babad, 2009).

This small-scale study, in which students observed and reflected on portrait paintings of non-teachers as pictures of teachers, paying attention to their visual cues as
communicating certain teacher characteristics, raises current issues in teaching in our visual era, which can be summarized as visual pedagogy. Differing from the existing definition of the concept of visual pedagogy (Goldfarb, 2002), which focuses on the use of visual study material, this study regards teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior as the major constituent of visual pedagogy. The role of pedagogically justified and culture-sensitive visual communication by teachers is important in contemporary, and future, schools in which classrooms are not only increasingly inclusive, but also increasingly multicultural (see Postholm, 2013). Perhaps the picture-based method based on the ecological theory of social perception, as used in this study, could offer a practical tool for teacher education to increase future teachers’ awareness of their visual nonverbal behavior and its potential implications for classroom management.

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REFERENCES


ARTICLE II
Social representations of teachership based on students’ and teachers’ drawings of a typical teacher

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Abstract
This study examines social representations of teachership based on students’ and teachers’ drawings. Fifty-nine students and thirty-nine teachers in upper-secondary education in Finland participated in the research, drawing a picture of a typical teacher and commenting on their drawings verbally. The study focuses on what kinds of social representations of teachership the drawings suggest and how teachers’ and students’ social representations relate to each other and to Finnish education policy. The data were analyzed by content analysis. This study shows that teachers’ and students’ social representations of teachership differ from each other and also deviate from Finnish education policy to some extent. Furthermore, the results suggest that teachers do not pay sufficient attention to their visual nonverbal behavior, which might contribute to the formation of unfavorable social representations of teachers among students, influencing interaction and learning negatively.

Keywords Social representations theory · Social representations of teachership · Visual nonverbal interaction

1 Introduction

We live in a visual world and use visual elements to construct and communicate our understanding of it (Fleckenstein 2007). In social interaction, meanings are not communicated only verbally, but also visually through people’s visual appearance, as well as their nonverbal visual behavior, deliberately and undeliberately (Hess et al. 2008). In social perception, these situationally perceived elements merge with one’s prior experiences of social interaction and people acting in various social roles, as well as knowledge of cultural conventions regarding them (Balcetis and Dunning 2010; McArthur and Baron 1983). According to Moscovici (2001a), these conventions, norms, and rules make symbolic behavior possible.
Cultural conventions regarding people’s visual appearance and behavior can be conceptualized as visual orders (Hester and Francis 2003; Seppänen 2006). Different times and cultures have different visual orders that create conditions for constructing, perceiving, and interpreting the visual (Seppänen 2006). Thus, visual orders mediate between the visual and the social. Occupations are surrounded by a number of normative expectations about people performing different kinds of jobs (Hedenus 2016). These expectations embrace visual characteristics as well, forming occupation-related visual orders of how people look and act in their occupational roles (Seppänen 2006). Clothes, work tools, and other workplace objects, for instance, become visual representations of occupations and their practitioners (Hedenus 2016). This sphere of visual orders, understood as visual common sense regarding people acting in various occupations, constitutes a part of culturally shared understanding that Moscovici (2007) conceptualized as social representations.

Culturally shared visual orders influence teachers’ visual appearance and visual nonverbal communication, as well as people’s conceptions about them (Kamila 2012). Recently, several kinds of visual data have been used to explore both visual representations of teachership and cultural conceptions of teachership embedded in and represented through visual images. For instance, Beyerbach (2005) and Dalton (2010, 2013) studied representations of teachers in movies, whereas Bergman (2017), Cohen (2010), and Goldstein (2011) examined representations of teachers in the printed and popular media. These studies recognize various, often stereotypical, types of teacher representations in media and discuss their role in influencing the conceptions of teachers among the public at large. They also raise the need for more critical and nuanced teacher representations in the media. In addition, Beltman et al. (2015), Harrison, Clarke, and Ungerer (2007), and Kesiiciogly and Deniz (2014), among others, have used participant-created drawings in researching teachership. Even though the participants of these studies varied from children to pre-service teachers, these studies share the notion that drawings may help to grasp the cognitive and affective factors influencing the relation to teachers and teachership.

In Finland, for example, Miettunen and Dervin (2014) studied representations of teachers in a Finnish TV-series, noting that art teachers were represented in a more positive way than general teachers. Punakallio and Dervin (2015), for their part, focused on studying how teachers are represented in headlines and photos on Finnish tabloid front pages between 2000 and 2013, finding parallels between the changes in teacher representations and the changes in pedagogical thinking and conceptions of teachers’ status. In addition, several Finnish students of education sciences have utilized visual data in order to study teachership in their Master’s theses. For instance, Keskiviäli (2012) and Nygren (2007) studied representations of teachers in Finnish films, recognizing gender differences in, often stereotypical, teacher representations. Hakaniem (2014) integrated teachers’, students’ and pupils’ drawings of a teacher into her research on teachers’ visual appearance and found that visual appearance plays an important role in mediating ideas and values connected with teachers.

Even though recent research has shown increasing interest in the visual dimensions of teachership and has also discussed their social implications, none of the above studies, for instance, applies social representations theory as its theoretical frame. Social representations theory could offer a theory that connects the visual
nonverbal behavior to social understanding of teachership. By contrast, research on social representations of teachership based on verbal data exists (e.g., Minervini and Fontani 2003; Pardal et al. 2015; Rochira et al. 2015; da Silva 2012), but is not numerous, either. For this reason, teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior and communication from the perspective of social representations theory, as well as social representations of teachership based on visual data, can be identified as a research gap, which this study addresses.

Social representations theory suggests that different social groups construct different kinds of social representations of the same target (Sakki et al. 2014). In addition, members of one social group, and even one individual, can have diverse and contradictory representations concerning the target, which Moscovici (2001a) characterizes as the polyphasic quality of common-sense knowledge. Following Moscovici’s (2001a) recommendation to compare social representations of various social groups in relation to the topic, and Bauer and Gaskell’s (1999) suggestion to select natural groups that in reality deal with the target of research, this study compares students’ and teachers’ social representations of teachership based on drawings. Consequently, students and teachers at the upper-secondary level of education in Finland were asked to draw a picture of a typical teacher and elucidate their drawings verbally. It will be examined what kinds of social representations of teachership these drawings suggest. Furthermore, this study explores how students’ and teachers’ perspectives relate to each other, as well as to Finnish educational policy, in which teachers are regarded as skillful and consultative educators encouraging and nurturing pupils’ and students’ personal growth (Kumpulainen 2014; Malinen et al. 2012; Räty et al. 2012). Finally, the results of the comparison will be discussed in terms of classroom interaction and learning. This procedure attempts to extend the analysis from understanding pictures to understanding social reality, which Sakki et al. (2014) set as the aim when studying social representations through visual images.

2 Theory

Social representations theory is concerned with the ways members of communities produce and share knowledge through interaction and communication, and by doing so construct their social reality (Moscovici 2001a). Serge Moscovici introduced the term ‘social representation’ in 1961 in his study of people’s common-sense understanding of psychoanalysis in France in the 1950s (Moscovici 2007; see also Duveen 2001). The social representations approach focused on examining how new and unfamiliar phenomena are made understandable and transformed into shared common knowledge, meaning social representations, through the processes of anchoring, objectification, and naturalization (Moscovici 2001a; Sakki and Menard 2014). Moscovici (2001a) defines social representations as popular knowledge and symbolic behavior that help members of communities orientate themselves in their material and social worlds and communicate about them with each other. He posited social representations at the crossroads between the psychological and sociological, the mental and social, emphasizing the primacy of the social in the formation of
social representations. In this very quality, they provide an integrative approach to observing individual and social worlds as intertwined and mutually influencing each other (Abric 2001; Moscovici 2001a; Philogène and Deaux 2001).

Moscovici’s theorizing on social representations drew on Emile Durkheim’s concept of collective representations, but he chose to use the term ‘social’ instead of ‘collective’ in order to emphasize the dynamic quality of social representations (Duveen 2001; Moscovici 2001a). Moscovici regarded social representations as phenomena in the process of constant reconstruction: when people make sense of their encounters by leaning on existing social representations, these representations do not remain unaltered but become modified (Moscovici 2001a). In addition, Moscovici (2001a) regarded knowledge as polyphasic, acknowledging that communities and individuals do not employ the same social representations consistently, but use diverse and even contradictory social representations, depending on the context.

Structurally, social representations are regarded as being composed of relatively stable central elements and more elastic peripheral elements (Abric 2001; Moscovici 2001b). The central elements, conceptualized as ‘themata’ or ‘core notions’ by Moscovici (2001a) and as ‘central core’ by Abric (2001), are determined by the values and norms of the community and influence people’s relations to the target in question (Abric 2001). They represent the deep structure of the community developed over a long period of time, which often becomes so naturalized that people are not conscious of it any more (Räty et al. 2012; Sakki et al. 2014). Peripheral elements, in turn, are organized around the central core, forming the most accessible aspect of social representations (Abric 2001). According to Moscovici (2001a, 2001b), themata never reveal themselves clearly; that is why they must be studied through symbolic expressions such as images and verbal accounts. Through objectification, social representations become observable phenomena (Moscovici 2001a). For Moscovici (2001a, p. 49), “to objectify is to discover the iconic quality of an imprecise idea or being, to reproduce a concept in an image.”

Social representations theory is not interested in texts and speech only, but also in visual images, since imagery is a central part of social common sense, today even more than earlier (Sakki et al. 2014). Moscovici (2001a) himself argued that the core of social representations is figurative, consisting of a group of images. In addition, he regarded pictures as compressed social representations reflecting cultural meanings deeply rooted in the norms of a social group and taken as self-evident (Räty et al. 2012; Sakki et al. 2014). For this reason, images can reveal information on social representations that is not expressed verbally or consciously, or whose expression is socially undesired (Räty et al. 2012; Sakki et al. 2014). De Rosa and Farr (2001) and de Rosa (2014), for their part, consider images to be interesting because they can be understood as sources activating social representations, products expressing social representations, and tools spreading social representations.

Even though social representations research has mostly used verbal data (de Rosa 2014), Moscovici (2001a) regarded the visual as an essential constituent of social representations from the very beginning. Recently, visual materials have gained increasing attention within social representations research (Hakoköngäs 2017; Hedenus 2016; de Rosa 2014; Sakki et al. 2014), since images are considered as important in terms of both shaping and investigating social representations (de Rosa...
Social representations of teachership based on students’…

Among others, Milgram and Jodelet (1976), de Rosa (1987), and Räty et al. (2011, 2012) used participant-created drawings as material for studying social representations. It has been argued that visual materials may give insight into unconscious and emotional layers of common sense that are difficult to articulate verbally (Sakki et al. 2014; de Rosa 2014). It is important to study these dimensions, since social representations influence social interaction (Philogène 2001).

This research studies social representations of teachership. Teachership cannot be considered as the sort of new or unfamiliar phenomenon in which the social representations approach was initially interested (Moscovici 2001a). However, as Hakoköngäs (2017) and Sakki and Menard (2014) suggest, the social representations approach can be used to study conceptions and phenomena already naturalized in the culture that we take for granted. In order to make students’ and teachers’ social representations of teachership accessible, they were asked to draw a picture of a typical teacher and elucidate their drawings verbally. The acts of visualization and verbalization were associated with the act of objectification, materializing social representations of teachership (see Sakki and Menard 2014; Hakoköngäs and Sakki 2016). This study understands drawings and verbal accounts as visual and verbal objectifications materializing social representations of teachership and reflecting the core elements of these social representations that direct thoughts, perceptions, and actions in relation to teachers (see Abric 2001; Moscovici 2001a). From the social representations theory point of view, the aim of this study is to explore and compare students’ and teachers’ common-sense understanding of teachership through their drawings, as well as to trace the core notions influencing their conceptions of teachership.

3 Method

3.1 Setting and participants

The students and teachers participating in this research came from the context of upper-secondary education in Finland. Fifty-nine students (47 female, 12 male) in a vocational upper-secondary college for culture studies participated in the research. Their age varied between fifteen and 42 years old, but the majority of them were between 15 and 20 years old. The group of participants included students majoring in visual arts, photography, audio-visual communication, textile and garment design, and carpentry. They were students on three courses on visual culture studies taught by the researcher of this study. Approximately half of them were first-year students who had just started their studies in the college, and half of them were third-year students. By including freshmen in the group of participants, this study intended to make sure that the drawings of a typical teacher are not too much influenced by the observation of teachers in their current school. Except for one, all the students were Finnish. The sample represents the typical distribution of students in the college in terms of age, gender, and study program.

In addition, 39 teachers (26 female, 13 male) of various subjects from a number of upper-secondary schools and vocational colleges from Eastern and Southern
Finland participated in the research. The researcher inquired about the willingness of the teachers in these upper-secondary schools and vocational colleges, including the college where he is employed, to participate in the research via the Internet. Those who volunteered were sent the research material. Their age varied between 28 and 60 years old. All the teachers were Finnish.

### 3.2 Procedure and data

The data for this research were collected in autumn 2015. The students and teachers were asked to draw a picture of a typical teacher and comment briefly on their drawings in writing. No further instructions were given. The instruction read: “Draw a picture of a typical teacher and write briefly what makes it a picture of a typical teacher. You may use colors if you wish so.” The students produced the data at their college during the lessons on visual culture studies. A period of 45 min was reserved for them to accomplish the assignment. It took approximately 15 to 30 min for them to complete the assignment. They were provided with paper, pencils and colors. All the students accomplished the assignment willingly. The teachers received the assignment via e-mail. They drew the pictures when convenient to them and sent them with verbal comments via e-mail to the researcher.

The data consisted of 59 students' and 39 teachers' drawings, representing a typical teacher. In addition, students and teachers elucidated their drawings verbally. The length of students' verbal comments varied from a couple of words to a maximum of ten sentences, whereas the length of teachers' verbal accounts varied between two and fifteen sentences.

Participant-created drawings were the primary data, and the role of the verbal data was to elucidate the drawings. This choice was motivated by research showing that visual materials may encourage participants to express their lived experiences and issues they might not express verbally (Mannay 2016). Furthermore, visual materials may reveal tacit conceptions as well as emotional experiences (Banks 2008; Rose 2014). In fact, Mannay (2010, 2016) argues that visual materials may have the potential to make the familiar strange again by involving participants in observing and reflecting on social phenomena from an unusual perspective. Since pictures are created from a number of motivations not detectable by observing the visual expression alone, the participants were asked to write about their drawings as well (Mitchell et al. 2011; Rose 2014). Within the frame of social constructionism, drawing pictures can be understood as a process of visual sense-making, interlacing subjective experiences with social and cultural practices (Clark and Morris 2017; Mitchell et al. 2011).

### 3.3 Analysis

This study applies qualitative content analysis in analyzing students’ and teacher’ drawings and verbal accounts. By doing so, it joins the strong tradition of qualitative research and content analysis in research on social representations (Sakki et al. 2014). As is typical of content analysis, it is used in this research to detect
and classify meanings and themes from the data (Krippendorff 2004). In practice, the analysis focused on detecting inductively what types of teachers the students’ and teachers’ drawings and verbal accounts suggest (see Hughes et al. 2016). The teacher types detected from the data were considered to reflect the participants’ social representations of teachership (see Moscovici 2001a).

Visual content analysis is based on what is directly visible in the image. Identifying these visual characteristics constitutes the basic procedure of the analysis (Johnson and Christensen 2013). However, there are some difficulties in conducting content analysis in visual material. Firstly, as Rose (2016) points out, such analysis is generally based on very subjective assessments. Secondly, quantification of individual visual elements simplifies the image, since they do not exist as separate elements but interact with each other and modify each other’s meanings (Hedenus 2016). On the other hand, the visual material can be made more accessible for analysis through quantification (Bock et al. 2011). Bearing these limitations in mind, the results of quantification should be understood as tendencies detected in the visual data rather than capturing them, per se, explicitly (Hedenus 2016).

At first, the drawings were analyzed without reading the participants’ verbal accounts. In this way, the researcher wanted to observe the visual characteristics of the teachers drawn as well as to examine what types of teachers they suggested, without being influenced by the participants’ verbal accounts. When typifying visual teacher representations, attention was paid to facial expressions, gestures, postures, clothes, hair styles, backgrounds, and environments. In addition, it was observed whether students were included in the drawings. This stage of analysis was followed by the analysis of the verbal data, in which the researcher focused on detecting the types of teachers explicated verbally. After this initial typification, the visual features of the drawings, as well as their verbally expressed characterizations, were quantified. The purpose of quantification was to evaluate the appropriateness of the initial findings, as well as to find out whether any type of teacher was predominant in the data (see Hedenus 2016). Finally, the analyses of visual and verbal data were compared with each other in order to observe the drawings in the light of participants’ verbally expressed intentions. The procedure of analyzing the visual and verbal data first separately and only afterwards in relation to each other was motivated by the aim of exploring whether the teacher types detected in the visual and verbal data produced by each participant were consistent. In addition, this study design aimed to trace the tacit dimensions of social representations that the visual is supposed to bring forth (Sakki et al. 2014; de Rosa 2014).

4 Results

The types of teachers detected in the students’ and teachers’ data deviated to some extent from each other. For this reason, the findings of students’ and teachers’ data will be presented separately. On the other hand, the comparison of the visual and verbal data produced by students and teachers showed that similar types of teachers were depicted visually and verbally. Consequently, the findings from the visual and verbal data will be presented together, commenting on and elucidating each other.
4.1 Students’ representations of a typical teacher

Forty-two students depicted a typical teacher as a woman and fourteen students as a man. All the male students depicted a typical teacher as a man. Except for two, all the female students depicted a typical teacher as a woman. In addition, three students depicted a typical teacher as androgynous. The majority of teachers were depicted frontally, looking toward the spectator; the rest of them were looking past the spectator and turned slightly sideways. Even though it is challenging to estimate the teachers’ age in the drawings, a vast majority of them looked middle-aged. Only some of the teachers looked distinguishably young or old. Female teachers were mostly depicted wearing ordinary and appropriate clothes. The majority of them wore trousers, a cardigan or jacket, and a blouse. Female teachers with more formal clothing wore a dress or a skirt and a piece of jewelry. The majority of female teachers had a shoulder-length bob haircut. Far less common was short hair or hair tied in a bun. Except for one, all the male teachers were depicted wearing casual but appropriate clothes consisting of a shirt and trousers. They had a short hair-cut and most of them had a beard. A total of thirty-nine teachers wore spectacles, which turned out to be the most common visual element characterizing a teacher. Another common visual element was a key strap hanging around the neck. No student drew students or pupils in the picture, only the teacher.

Three clearly distinct types of teachers were detectable in students’ visual and verbal data, which constitutes the main result regarding the students’ data. These types were, in order of frequency, a formal and authoritarian teacher, a bored and indifferent teacher, and a friendly and communicative teacher. Because same types of teachers were detected in both visual and verbal data, these results are intertwined in the presentation. However, since almost all the female students depicted a typical teacher as female and all the male students depicted a typical teacher as male, with slightly different overtones compared to teacher types detected in female students’ drawings, both female and male students’ drawings are presented below, in order to elaborate the data landscape.

Female students’ drawings
Male students’ drawings

4.1.1 Formal and authoritarian teacher (Figs. 1, 4)

In the drawings, a vast majority of the teachers were depicted standing and holding their hands at their sides or clasped in front of their stomach. Their facial expression was serious and they wore formal, appropriate, and tidy clothes. In their verbal accounts, some students thought this kind of visual appearance was deliberate in order to create an impression of authority.

Spectacles and a bob haircut with a fringe create an intelligent first impression. A tidy, simple blouse and pearls make her look appropriate. (...) A serious
facial expression with a slight hint of a smile communicates authority. (student 48)

A typical teacher wears tidy clothes (...) in order to communicate her authority. (student 54)

Whereas some students considered the impression of authority to be positive in terms of maintaining order in class, several students regarded the authoritarian type of teacher as strict and even frightening. This type of teacher was assumed to keep an eye on students’ mistakes, as well as to criticize them.
She looks angry, frightening, and confident. Glances at students under her glasses. (student 5)
She is serious, never smiles, hair in a tight bun. (…) She blames students for everything. (student 3)

4.1.2 Bored and indifferent teacher (Figs. 2, 5)

Thirteen students identified a typical teacher as tired or bored, characterized by a dull facial expression, casual clothes, and a slack overall appearance. According to students’ written reflections, these visual characteristics were intended to communicate a teacher’s lack of initiative and indifference in relation to students.

She is an extremely dull teacher hated by every student. She wears impersonal, non-flattering clothes and her facial expression is bored. Flat hair and a stiff posture also reflect her personality. (student 22)
Some students saw teachers’ tiredness as resulting from stress, a busy timetable, and work overload. Furthermore, they assumed tiredness and boredom might be due to challenging students who don’t seem to learn and achieve study goals.

She is exhausted and tired of her life. (…) Dark circles around the eyes tell about sleepless nights (because of correcting exam papers). (…) She is hide-bound both in her personal life and in her work. (student 8)
I regard a typical teacher as bored with his job. Every day he tries to teach the same things to his students, who don’t seem to comprehend. (student 57)

4.1.3 Friendly and communicative teacher (Figs. 3 and 6)

Seventeen teachers were depicted with a hint of a smile. However, in their verbal accounts, the students did not always describe the smile as welcoming but as evaluating. In all, only eight students considered a typical teacher to be a person who is friendly and welcoming, ready to give advice and help students. The most important visual cue communicating friendliness was a smile.
A typical teacher is usually good tempered and smiles, which makes her appear friendly. (student 16)

In addition to a smile, the students expressed these teacher qualities with relaxed clothes and warm colors. Furthermore, friendly and welcoming teachers were depicted in a relaxed posture referring to an act of communication, for instance, stretching their hands towards the spectator.
A typical teacher looks friendly. She is middle-aged. Her style is simple and
groomed. She looks her students in their eyes, smiles, and tilts her head a
little bit to the side because she is listening. (student 26)
A very neutral appearance not attracting any attention makes her a typical
teacher. She smiles (...) and looks patient – and is interested in people. (stu-
dent 36)

In their written accounts, nine students identified the influence of their previous
teachers, and two students identified the influence of films and media on their vis-
ual conception of a typical teacher. Some of them wrote that they had combined
the characteristics of various teachers in their visual representations, whereas oth-
ers recognized one single teacher, in the early stage of their school education,
as affecting their conception of a typical teacher. When looking at her drawing
afterwards, one student realized, to her surprise, that it was unintentionally remi-
niscent of her previous teacher. It seemed that conceptions of a typical teacher’s
visual appearance sometimes emerged from unconscious layers concretizing and
visualizing tacit knowledge.

He is a typical teacher – quite old, normal posture, a key strap around his
neck. Afterwards I realized that I had drawn a picture of my former compre-
hensive school teacher. Teachers usually lean on a teacher’s table. (student
23)

Summarizing the female students’ drawings and verbal accounts, a typical teacher
was female. In their verbal accounts, the majority of students described teachers’
visual appearance as communicating their teacher characteristics. The same three
types of teachers emerged from the visual and verbal data. The most frequently
depicted type was a serious- or strict-looking, appropriately and neutrally dressed
teacher, who stood in a stiff posture with their hands hanging at their sides or hold-
ing books and papers. She did not show any signs of activity or communication.
This type of teacher was described as formal and authoritarian (Fig. 1). The second
type of typical teacher was a bored or tired-looking teacher who seemed to lack both
interest and energy, and whose posture expressed indifference and unwillingness to
communicate (Fig. 2). The third, and least common, type was a smiling teacher who
looked welcoming and was experienced as friendly. She wore more casual clothes
and her posture and gesticulation referred to communication (Fig. 3).

Interestingly, all the male students depicted a typical teacher as a man. Basi-
ically, the same types of teachers emerged from the male students’ drawings as
from the female students’ drawings. Slightly differing from them, the formal and
authoritarian teacher was depicted as more strict (Fig. 4), the bored teacher as
tired and exhausted under their workload (Fig. 5), and the friendly teacher as
more humorous (Fig. 6) than in the female students’ drawings.

The types of teachers detected from the data each valorize a different kind of
teachers’ interactional position towards students. Authoritarian, indifferent, or
friendly types of teachers suggest various kinds of relationships between teachers
and students. Based on this notion, the type of teacher–student relationship can be
Fig. 4 Strict and authoritarian teacher (student 33)

Fig. 5 Bored and exhausted teacher (student 59)
regarded as the core notion of the participating students’ social representations of teachership.

4.2 Teachers’ representations of a typical teacher

Of the total of thirty-nine teachers, twenty-three teachers depicted a typical teacher as a woman, eight as a man, and eight as androgynous. Both female and male teachers drew pictures of female and male teachers. Thirty teachers drew a black-and-white picture, three teachers used moderate colors, and six teachers used bright or dark colors. No teacher explicated verbally any colors communicating certain teacher characteristics. However, one gets a feeling that moderate color choices accompany the ordinary looks of teachers. Twenty-five teachers drew a full-body picture, and seven teachers drew a torso and face, whereas the remaining seven teachers drew only the face of a typical teacher. In their verbal
accounts, one teacher said that a close-up deliberately communicated the warm and caring personality of the teacher. When it comes to age, the majority of teachers looked middle-aged. Both female and male teachers were depicted wearing appropriate but casual clothes. Most female teachers had a shoulder-length bob haircut, but some of them had their hair tied in a bun or ponytail. Male teachers’ haircuts were short. Fewer than half of the teachers in the drawings wore spectacles. Typically, the drawings depicted only a teacher in the picture. Deviating from this, eight teachers included pictures of students in their drawings. In all of these drawings, the classroom setting was traditional, with the teacher teaching by the chalkboard and the students sitting at their desks.

Three types of teachers were distinguishable in teachers’ visual and verbal data. In the order of frequency in the visual data, these types were an expert teacher, a social and multitasking teacher, and a friendly and communicative teacher. Because the same types of teachers were detected in both visual and verbal data, these results are intertwined in the following presentation. Since the expert type of teacher was depicted either alone or with students, this type will be elucidated with two drawings.
(Fig. 7a, b). However, when writing about the drawings, the majority of the teachers did not pay any attention to the teacher’s visual characteristics at all, and did not explicate the visual features as expressing certain social characteristics or teacher qualities. Eleven teachers described both visual and social cues, but did not necessarily articulate visual features as signs of certain teacher characteristics. As a result, the majority of verbal comments characterized a typical teacher at a more general level without becoming explicitly anchored to the drawings. For this reason, the drawings brought out shades of teachers not identifiable in the verbal comments. This is something that clearly differs from the data produced by the students, who articulated visual elements as expressing certain teacher characteristics.

4.2.1 Expert teacher (Fig. 7a, b)

The majority of expert teachers were depicted standing still without reference to any particular activity. Typically, they had a serious facial expression, but some of them could be interpreted as angry, stressed, or tired, as well. These teachers wore tidy, neutral, and appropriate clothes. Typically, they carried a briefcase, books and papers, or a pointer indicating their role as a knowledgeable teacher. Another type of expert teacher detected in the visual data was a traditional instructor who stood by the chalkboard and taught pupils who sat at their desks turned toward the teacher. This kind of classroom situation and setting clearly visualized a teacher-centered way of teaching based on one-way communication and delivery of information. Interestingly, the participants depicted small children, or pupils, instead of students in their drawings, even though they themselves worked in the upper-secondary level of education.

Even though this type of teacher was depicted in drawings most frequently, less than one-third of the teachers commented on expertise verbally. In the verbal accounts, expert teachers were described as knowledgeable and eager to educate themselves further. They were confident, appreciating their knowledge and skills acquired through education and experience. In several comments, this kind of teacher appeared as a role model of a good and responsible citizen.

Teachers are very work- and factually oriented. (…) Status, casual formality, and dynamism characterize expert teachers. (teacher 7)

Because of their education and experience, a teacher has knowledge and skills to create profitable conditions for students’ growth. (teacher 22)

Interestingly, only one teacher’s verbal account can, indirectly, be understood as characterizing an authoritarian teacher or teacher-centered way of teaching, even though this type of teacher was much more often distinguishable in the drawings.

The teacher teaches their class holding a pointer in their hand. (teacher 3)
4.2.2 Social and multitasking teacher (Fig. 8)

The second type of teacher detectable in the visual data was an active, social, and extrovert multitasker. The teacher was depicted busy doing a number of things simultaneously or multitasking between several roles. Drawings representing this type of a teacher did not realistically depict a teacher and their visual features. Rather, teachers harnessed their visual expression to metaphorically visualize their experience and knowledge of the profession. For instance, teachers had several hands or legs in order to cope with the challenges.

In teachers’ verbal accounts, this type of teacher was the most frequently identifiable. The teacher was considered as someone who is and has to be very versatile, multitalented, and active in order to meet the challenges of their profession. Many of them described a typical teacher as a superwoman or superman multitasking and
zigzagging between various roles. This teacher type was represented in the visual data as well.

Today’s teacher is a combination of a teacher, mother, and superwoman. Many irons in the fire at the same time (...). Busy, busy. You cannot give up and you must keep abreast of the times. (teacher 6)

A typical teacher feels often that being a normal person is not enough. He should have several hands, legs, eyes, mouths. As a matter of fact, he has them, but they are not visible. (teacher 25)

The needs of versatile students, constant technical development, and the requirement to update one’s knowledge and skills in a nonstop manner painted a picture of a teacher who tries to navigate between a plethora of challenges. A characteristic feeling of a typical teacher seemed to be inadequacy in terms of fulfilling the expectations and requirements that the constant change in the work environment and students’ increasing challenges set.

A typical teacher tries to balance between various demands and challenges they meet and tries their best to cope with their job. But it is not easy. (teacher 31)

More often she feels tired because pressures grow all the time. Communication technologies change constantly, students have more and more difficulties. (teacher 35)

4.2.3 Friendly and communicative teacher (Fig. 9)

The third type distinguishable in the data was a friendly and communicative teacher. This type of teacher was notably more often detectable in the verbal than the visual data. The most obvious characteristic in the drawings mediating this type of teacher was a smiling face. In addition, these teachers often gesticulated with their hands, suggesting a greeting or interaction in general. However, the overall impression of these teachers was often cautious, sometimes even inactive.

In the verbal comments, this type of teacher was characterized as a friendly and caring educator. The teacher was commonly characterized as having good social and communication skills. Teaching emerged as collaboration and teamwork including not only students and colleagues but also parents and others.

A teacher is like a gardener, trying to grow something specific out of the seam. (teacher 22)

But above all, social and communication skills are the most important features and requirements of a teacher. (teacher 8)

A friendly and caring educator could be characterized as a servant teacher, whose orientation to teaching is student-centered. The student emerged as a customer with personal needs, motivations, and strengths, which formed the basis for instruction and interaction.
The teacher is there for the students – at present – listening, seeing, and feeling (...), and accepting the students as they are (...) respecting and appreciating them as well as their views and values. (teacher 21)

A teacher must take students’ individual needs (...) into consideration. (teacher 2)

In summary, three types of teachers emerged from the teachers’ data. One of them can be identified as an expert teacher depicted as a serious-looking, appropriately dressed teacher either standing still without any reference to communication and the school environment, or teaching pupils in the front of the classroom (Fig. 7a, b). In the verbal data, this type of teacher was characterized as knowledgeable and capable of meeting the requirements of their profession based on education. However, the authoritarian and teacher-centered type of expert teacher identifiable in the visual data was not directly explicated in the verbal data. The second type depicted a social and multitasking teacher balancing different roles as well as a range of challenges.
This type of teacher was the most commonly characterized in the verbal data, constructing an image of a social, dynamic, and efficient teacher who, on one hand, aims to meet the challenges of the profession and, on the other hand, feels inadequate and tired in the middle of them. The third type can be characterized as a friendly and communicative teacher, expressed through a smile and greeting gestures in the drawings (Fig. 9). In the verbal accounts, this type of teacher was regarded as caring and welcoming, focusing on the needs of students.

The types of teachers detected from the teachers' data suggest three core notions of social representations of teachership. The first two of these can be characterized as expertise based on education and a challenging profession. The third core notion can be identified as pedagogy. The findings based on visual and verbal data are controversial: while verbal accounts emphasized student-centered and consultative pedagogy, a number of drawings suggested a more teacher-centered pedagogy.

5 Discussion

Despite the unique features of each drawing, both students’ and teachers’ drawings clearly shared characteristics forming distinguishable types of teachers, which can be interpreted as the influence of socially constructed and culturally shared conceptions of teachership (see Räty et al. 2012; Sakki et al. 2014). Thus, the drawings functioned as means of objectifying social representations of teachership visually (Sakki and Menard 2014).

In the students’ data, three kinds of representations of teachership were identified. Students’ drawings and verbal reflections elucidating them constructed social representations of teachers as being, in order of frequency, formal and authoritarian, bored and indifferent, or friendly and communicative. The same social representations were identifiable in both visual and verbal data. The way of interacting with students can be crystallized as the core of social representations of teachership in the students’ data. When taking all the participants’ data into account, social representation of teachership was not gendered, since both female and male teachers were drawn. However, when female and male students’ drawings are observed separately, social representation of teachership seemed to be gendered, since all the male students drew a picture of a male teacher, and except for two, all the female students drew a picture of a female teacher. This is an interesting finding that cannot be explained by the data and the setting of this research, and it should be studied further in the future.

In the teachers’ data, three kinds of representations of teachers were identified as well. They constructed social representations of teachers as knowledgeable experts, social multitaskers, and friendly communicators. While expertise was emphasized in the visual data, facing multiple challenges was the most frequently discussed topic in the verbal data. Based on these findings, expertise based on education and a challenging profession were identified as the dominant core notions of teachers’ social representations of teachership. In the third core notion, pedagogy, visual and verbal data seemed to suggest different approaches. On one hand, verbal data pointed
towards student-centered, consultative pedagogy, and on the other hand, visual data pointed more strongly towards teacher-centered pedagogy.

The analysis of the verbal data revealed that most teachers neither reflected on teachers’ visual features in the drawing at all nor mentioned teachers’ visual cues as communicating teachership qualities. In addition, the contents that the teachers expressed in writing did not quite match their drawings. Furthermore, a number of teachers did not depict teachers realistically, but expressed experiences and knowledge of the profession metaphorically in an unrealistic manner. These findings create the impression that the teachers did not pay conscious attention to the messages conveyed by their teacher images or did not regard teachers’ visual features as communicating certain teacher characteristics.

Interestingly, social representations of teachership detected in the teachers’ verbal accounts correspond to the definitions of official educational policy in Finland that emphasize the role of teachers as knowledgeable, skillful, and consultative educators encouraging and nurturing pupils’ and students’ personal growth (Kumpulainen 2014; Malinen et al. 2012; Räty et al. 2012). However, visually mediated social representations of teachers being serious and neutral, or even angry, as well as teacher-centered authorities, clearly deviate from the official policy. This notion further supports the conclusion that verbal accounts were constructed more consciously than drawings. Consistent with the research on the potential of participant-created drawings to tease out tacit conceptions and experiences (Mannay 2010, 2016), it seemed that teachers’ drawings expressed tacit and hidden, or even silenced and politically incorrect, social representations of teachership.

In contrast, students’ data showed that they paid careful attention to the visual expressiveness of their teacher images. They regarded teachers’ visual appearance as referring to certain teachership qualities and as meaningful in terms of interaction. Even though this study examined social representations of teachership and not teachers’ performance in actual classroom situations, one is tempted to ask whether this notion also applies to actual classroom situations. If teachers do not pay conscious attention to their visual nonverbal behavior and visual appearance when teaching, and if students interpret teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior as intentional, problems may arise. In fact, this is exactly what prior research has shown: on one hand, teachers do not pay sufficient attention to the visual dimensions of teachership, and on the other hand, students observe teachers and pay attention to their visually communicated messages (Ambady and Rosenthal 1993; Babad 2009; Quigley 2016).

The representations of ‘formal and authoritarian teacher’ and ‘bored and indifferent teacher’ identified in the data were based on teachers’ negative visual expressiveness that is shown to have negative impact on student motivation and study performance (Babad 2009; Riniolo et al. 2006). In contrast, the representation of ‘friendly and communicative teacher’ was based on teachers’ warm and enthusiastic visual nonverbal behavior that is associated with increased student motivation and better study achievements (Babad 2009). Since teachers’ visual nonverbal behavior influences the classroom climate and has an effect on student motivation, as well as study performance (Babad 2009; Riniolo et al. 2006), it should be regarded as an essential component of teachers’ pedagogical competence and more attention should be paid to in teacher education.
The variety of social representations of teachership detected in the data is understandable in terms of the polyphasic quality of common-sense knowledge (Moscovici 2001a), suggesting that social groups and individuals can have multiple, even contradictory, social representations of the same target. However, it attracts attention that students’ and teachers’ social representations of teachership differed from each other to such a notable extent. Teachers’ representations of enthusiastic, active, social, and multi-talented teachers are more or less non-existent in students’ representations of teachers, and strongly deviate from students’ visual depictions of teachers who stand in a stiff position and look formal, tired, or bored. The lack of enthusiastic, social, and active types of teachers in students’ data may be due to the fact that the teachers’ job includes a lot of preparation and other duties outside the lessons that are not visible in the classroom. However, since social representations are based, in addition to cultural and social conventions, on people’s own experiences (Moscovici 2001a), this result may also refer to students’ experience that, in practice, teaching is not always as student-centered and consultative as official educational policy suggests.

When comparing the students’ and teachers’ data, one is tempted to see another explanation for the difference in the data set as well. Perhaps there could be a relation between the social multitaskers identified in the teachers’ data on one hand, and the tired, indifferent teachers identified in the students’ data on the other hand. Perhaps this finding could be interpreted so that students perceive in class the outcome of the challenging profession, namely, an exhausted teacher who is busy with a number of challenges outside the classroom but too tired to put full energy into classroom teaching, including the management of messages conveyed by their visual nonverbal behavior. The findings of numerous studies on teacher stress (e.g., Collie et al. 2017; Pyhältö et al. 2011) support this interpretation. In addition, research shows that the burnout level among teachers in Finland is higher than in other human services and white-collar jobs (Hakanen et al. 2006).

Social representation theory offers one further explanation for the emergence of the social representation of a typical teacher as being formal and authoritarian. Structurally, social representations can be divided into central and peripheral elements. Central elements constitute the core of social representations evolved over a long period of time and incorporating deep-rooted, cultural conceptions of objects and phenomena of the material and social world. These central elements tend to resist change and direct perceptions in accordance with cultural conventions (Abric 2001). Even though student-centeredness, equality, and a narrow power distance are current ideals in the Finnish educational system (Räty et al. 2012), this change has occurred little by little over the course of past few decades. Before that, there was a long tradition of teacher-centered school education in Finland, where teachers were authorities (Räty et al. 2012), which could explain the emergence of an authoritarian teacher among social representations of teachership in this research.

In addition, the authoritarian type of teacher is a common character in a number of Finnish works of art, such as Aleksis Kivi’s widely known and iconic Finnish novel “Seven Brothers,” featuring a strict and authoritarian teacher who tries to teach the stubborn brothers how to read. This imagery of a strict teacher is widely...
known and circulated by Finnish painters, film-makers, and book illustrators. Since media and other imagery play an important role in forming and spreading social representations (Moscovici 2001a), perhaps the image of an authoritarian teacher circulated in both Finnish works of art and media has become a part of Finnish people’s common-sense understanding of teachership. This could explain the depictions of an authoritarian teacher with traditional emblems of teachers, such as chalkboards, pointers, and globes, but not computers, laptops, and iPads, for instance, which teachers use in contemporary classrooms.

In summary, the results of this research revealed a discontinuity between students’ and teachers’ social representations of teachership. In addition, students’ and teachers’ social representations of teachership deviated from the guidelines of Finnish educational policy. The results of the analysis suggest three outcomes. Firstly, teachers did not seem to regard the visual expressiveness of teachers as being as important as verbal expressiveness, or they did not pay conscious attention to the meanings communicated by teachers’ visual features. This is problematic, since students paid attention to the visual appearance of teachers as well as their visual nonverbal behavior, and made inferences based on them regarding the interaction between the teacher and students. Secondly, the emergence of the formal and authoritarian type of teacher in the teachers’ visual data, as well as in the students’ visual and verbal data, seems to suggest that student-centered teaching is not rooted in everyday teaching practices to the extent that official educational policy in Finland suggests. Thirdly, the results raise the need to critically discuss and study further whether teachers are able to invest sufficient resources in the actual pedagogical interaction itself, including its visual dimension, when confronted by a plethora of challenges.

6 Strengths and limitations

There are both strengths and limitations regarding this study. First, the visual approach to studying teachership, characterized by both the inclusion of visual nonverbal behavior of teachers and participant-created drawings, diversifies the scope of prior research on the topic. Similarly, the study design, in which researcher-driven analysis of drawings is combined with analysis of drawings based on participants’ verbally explicated intentions, can be regarded as a strength, since it provides an opportunity to trace the participants’ tacit conceptions of teachers. In addition, social representations theory gives a novel perspective for discussing the visual dimension of teachership in relation to social interaction.

The students participating in this research studied in an upper-secondary vocational college for culture studies in which visual skills are trained extensively. Therefore, they might have better than average visual skills, being able to produce visually rich data. On one hand, this can be regarded as a strength of this study. On the other hand, it may be a limitation as well, since students with other study orientations may be neither as skilled in visual literacy nor as used to expressing themselves visually. It must also be noted that this research was carried out in Finland. All the participants, apart from one student, were Finnish. In addition, the participants in this study were students and teachers in upper-secondary education, characterized by
specific goals differing from other levels of education. Since social representations and visual orders are culturally specific (Moscovici 2001a; Seppänen 2006), the results may vary in other cultural or educational contexts. Despite common official policy and principles of education in Finland, individual schools may also have local educational cultures contributing to the nature of social representations of teachership. Thus, when students’ and teachers’ social representations of teachership are compared in this research, it must be taken into consideration that they come from a number of schools. For the aforementioned reasons, the results of this research cannot be statistically generalized. In the future, it would be interesting to conduct similar research in other settings as well, and to compare the results with the findings of this study.

7 Conclusion

The fact that students’ social representations of teachership included such aspects as formality, authority, lack of communication, and boredom does not benefit learning, regardless of the reason for these representations. Social representations actualize a certain kind of relationship between people and their social world (Moscovici 2001a), which includes the dimension of attitudes (Sakki et al. 2014). Social representations influence people’s behavior toward each other, as Moscovici (2001a, p. 28) claims “people become fashioned in relation to social representations.” The way in which teachers are represented socially shapes the way we think of and act toward them. Negatively valenced social representations of teachership may have a negative impact on social interaction between students and teachers as well as on learning. In contrast, positive social representations of teachership may motivate students and contribute to their study performance positively. (Babad 2009; Riniolo et al. 2006) Pedagogically appropriate and positively valenced teachers’ nonverbal visual behavior may advance not only learning but also interaction between students and teachers, which in turn may decrease teachers’ fatigue and promote job satisfaction.

Moscovici (2001a) conceptualized social representation as a phenomenon in which people make sense of their encounters with the social and material world by fitting them into prevalent social representations (see also Philogene and Deaux 2001). It should not be forgotten that, when teaching, teachers simultaneously present their teachership to students both visually and verbally in every lesson. Students perceive, experience, and interpret this presentation of teachership filtered through the social representations of teachership prevalent in the culture. Teacher presentations may foster, or challenge, existing social representations of teachership. When writing about the role of pictures in social representations research, de Rosa and Farr (2001) claim that changes in the pictures can lead to changes in social representations. Similarly, it is justifiable to think that pedagogically meaningful and appropriate visual expressiveness by teachers may contribute to more favorable social representations of teachership. Therefore, it is time to pay conscious attention to the role of teachers’ visual nonverbal expressiveness and its impact on learning. In addition, it is time to critically discuss whether
Social representations of teachership based on students’

teachers’ visual nonverbal expressiveness is consistent with the principles, ideals, and aims of contemporary pedagogy, as well as teachers’ own pedagogic vision.

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Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interests The author declares that he has no conflict of interests.

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ARTICLE III
Original Research Reports

Social Representations of Teachership Based on Cover Images of Finnish Teacher Magazine: A Visual Rhetoric Approach

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Abstract

Media plays an important role in the formation of social representations. This study examines the cover images of Finnish Teacher Magazine published by the Trade Union of Education as means of communicating social representations of teachership among its readership consisting of teachers and student teachers. In order to critically discuss the structure of the cover images and their implications in terms of teachers' professional identity, the study applies a visual rhetoric approach to the study of visually mediated social representations. The data consist of 138 cover images of Teacher Magazine between the years 2013 and 2017. The analysis of visual rhetoric was conducted using content analysis and semiotic analysis that provided means of examining both the visual form of the cover images and meanings communicated through them. Even though this study detects a variety of social representations of teachership, it also identifies a highly homogeneous type of teacher throughout the imagery, which is understood to present the members of the Trade Union with an ideal type of their profession. Consequently, cover images of Teacher Magazine appear to be vehicles of inclusion and exclusion, strengthening certain social representations of teachership and marginalizing others.

Keywords: social representations, teachership, professional identity, trade union, objectification, naturalization, visual rhetoric

Cover images of magazines are often regarded as display windows to their contents, playing a crucial role not only in attracting readers’ attention but also in distributing ideas within a culture (Popp & Mendelson, 2010; Pyka, Fosdick, & Tillinghast, 2011; Xu, 2018). The powerful impact of cover images is often related to their ability to evoke emotional responses, which also makes them more memorable than textual elements (Popp & Mendelson, 2010; Xu, 2018). Rodriguez and Dimitrova (2011) characterize images as framing devices that organize people’s perceptions, experiences, and conceptions (see also Popp & Mendelson, 2010; Xu, 2018). In this sense, cover images can be conceptualized as forms of visual rhetoric, meaning visual arguments or statements, communicating persuasive messages (Xu, 2018). This research examines how the cover images of Finnish Teacher Magazine communicate teachership.
There is an extensive body of international research on media representations of teachers in movies (Ambrosetti, 2016; Beyerbach, 2005; Dalton, 2010), printed media (Cohen, 2010; Goldstein, 2011), and the Internet (Bergman, 2017; Guimarães & Guimarães, 2014), which argue that teacher representations in media are often stereotypical. Similar outcomes can be found in research on teacher representations in popular media, as conducted in Finland.

In their studies on teacher representations in Finnish films, Keskiiväli (2012) and Nygren (2007), for instance, recognized a traditional gender-based divide between female and male teachers in terms of both teachership characteristics and physical appearance. While female teachers were represented as motherly or strict educators with an extremely tidy appearance, male teachers were represented as rigid or helpful instructors wearing disheveled or formal attire (Nygren, 2007). Kujala’s (2008) dissertation on representations of male teachers in Finnish films showed that recent films also portray male teachers as supportive educators. Miettunen and Dervin (2014) also recognized stereotypical and one-dimensional representations of teachers in Finnish TV series. However, they found that, compared to other teachers, art teachers were depicted in more versatile ways, challenging normative expectations (Miettunen & Dervin, 2014). Based on this research, representations of teachers in popular media can be characterized as stereotypical.

Magazine covers tend to follow certain conventions of depiction. Since their purpose is to appeal to readers and promote sales, they generally depict attractive and happy-looking persons, resulting in stereotypical representations (Bazzini, Pepper, Swofford, & Cochra, 2015; Spiker, 2015; Yan & Bissel, 2014). Stereotypical teacher representations in media may also be due to the fact that they are made by media professionals who themselves do not belong to the group of teachers. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) shows that stereotypical thinking is often stronger when members of an ingroup (in this case media professionals) observe and represent members of an outgroup (in this case teachers). In contrast, the observations and representations of ingroup members about themselves tend to be more diverse (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Because Teacher Magazine is published by the Finnish Trade Union of Education, it can be regarded as representing the voice of the ingroup (teachers). Additionally, as Teacher Magazine is not a commercial magazine, the imagery does not have the aim of promoting sales. For these reasons, one could hypothesize that the representations of teachers in its cover images may be less stereotypical.

Differing from prior research on media representations of teachers in Finland, this research approaches the topic from a social representations point of view, which provides means for discussing teachership in relation to the processes and implications of social sense-making. Media imagery and media at large play a significant role in the construction of social representations influencing both self-conception and social identity, as well as social interaction (Moscovici, 2001; Salesses & Romain, 2014). Since media images also influence professional teacher identities (Kirby, 2016), this research regards it as important to discuss critically the impact of media images on the formation of social representations of teachership.

What further differentiates the research at hand from previous research on media representations of teachers in Finland is the fact that Teacher Magazine cannot be characterized as popular media, since it is a magazine published by the Finnish Trade Union of Education. For this reason, the visual representations of teachers on the covers of this magazine can be understood as representing not only the conception of the magazine but also that of the Trade Union itself. The Trade Union of Education in Finland is a labor market organization that promotes the status and interests of education professionals and, in addition, actively influences educational policies, educational legislation and teacher training in Finland. It is an independent trade union and not linked to any political party. Approximately 90% of teachers in Finland are members of the Trade Union, and teachers from preschools...
to universities as well as student teachers and retired teachers are eligible for its membership (Trade Union of Education in Finland, 2018, pp. 1-5.) Due to its national, regional and local cooperation networks, the Trade Union of Education plays an influential role among Finnish teachers.

Teacher Magazine is posted to all—more than 120,000—members of the Trade Union, including teachers at all levels of education (http://www.oaj.fi, retrieved 23.3.2018), as well as to more than 7,000 members of the Teacher Student Union of Finland (https://www.sool.fi, retrieved 23.3.2018). In addition, Teacher Magazine is posted to all Members of Parliament in Finland (Trade Union of Education in Finland, 2018, p. 5). With a circulation of almost 130,000, Teacher Magazine is the “principal Finnish-language magazine for the teaching profession in Finland,” as stated on the homepage of the Finnish Trade Union of Education (http://www.oaj.fi, retrieved 23.3.2018). Having this status, it has a hegemonic role in distributing, discussing, and constructing views on teachership among Finnish teachers and student teachers.

The Present Research

The aim of this research is to find out what kinds of social representations of teachership the Trade Union of Education in Finland communicates through the cover images of Teacher Magazine, and to discuss the findings critically. When examining the cover images, attention is paid not only to types of teachers depicted in them but also to types of teachers not depicted in them. Since absence or nothingness included in images can be understood as a way of silencing or denying certain aspects of social representations (see Barreiro & Castorina, 2017), it is important to focus on depictions both included in and excluded from the cover images. The cover images of Teacher Magazine may be understood as cultural mirrors of teachership provided by the Trade Union of Education influencing the members’ self-reflection on their own professional identity.

Because of the targeted readership, consisting of teachers and student teachers, this research does not discuss social representations of teachership and their implications in terms of the public at large, but focuses on the teaching professionals’ point of view. To highlight the critical potential inherent in the theory of social representations (Howarth, 2006; Voelklein & Howarth, 2005), this study integrates the visual rhetoric approach to the study of social representations. In prior research, Billig (1988, 1993), Byford (2002), and Lyut (2003), for instance, have discussed the rhetorical aspect of verbally communicated social representations, relating anchoring and objectification to discursive communication with ideological and social functions. In contrast to a number of studies focusing on verbal communication, there seem to be notably fewer studies using the rhetorical approach to explore visually communicated social representations (e.g., Finn, 1997; Hakoköngäs, 2017). Thus, the application of the visual rhetoric approach to studying social representations constitutes the theoretical contribution of the research.

Theoretical Frame

Theory of Social Representations

The founder of the theory of social representations, Serge Moscovici, defined social representations as common-sense knowledge constructed by members of societies in social interaction (Moscovici, 2001). Social representations embody knowledge and experience of past and contemporary people, helping members of societies act in a material and social world (Höijer, 2011; Moscovici, 2001). However, social representations are neither static nor determine people’s thoughts and actions; instead, they are modified, challenged, objectified, and reconstructed in everyday situations, and more specifically in the processes of anchoring and objectification (Höijer, 2011; Moscovici, 2001; Sakki, 2016). Due to this fluctuation, Moscovici (2001) characterized social representations as polyphasic,
meaning that individual persons, as well as social groups, may have several, even contradictory, social representations of the same phenomenon (see also Jovchelovitch, 2008). However, certain social representations may obtain a hegemonic status within the culture (Höijer, 2011).

Anchoring refers to the act of situational sense-making, in which encounters with the material and social world are interpreted against the culturally and socially shared knowledge that people possess of them (Lahlou, 2015; Moscovici, 2001; Sakki, 2016). Originally, Moscovici (2007) conceptualized anchoring as a process in which new phenomena are made familiar in the frame of existing knowledge and experience, but recently the scope of anchoring has been widened to include familiar and naturalized phenomena as well (Hakoköngäs, 2017; Hakoköngäs & Sakki, 2016). Objectification, for its part, refers to the act of expressing abstract phenomena by using, for instance, verbal and visual means of symbolic communication. Through objectification, social representations receive a tangible, material form, providing means for detecting the core notions or themata around which social representations are formed (Moscovici, 2001; Philogène & Deaux, 2001). Some social representations are integrated into everyday knowledge to the extent that they become naturalized. At this stage, social representations gain a taken-for-granted quality, for instance, through frequent repetition in the media (Höijer, 2011; Moscovici, 2001). When naturalized, the constructed nature of social representations becomes obscured and finally forgotten, making them appear as “the reality” itself (Flick & Foster, 2010; Moscovici, 2001).

The theory of social representations has been criticized for being acritical, discussing the structures and contents of social representations but ignoring their functions, as well as the questions of power related to them (Howarth, 2006; Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). However, a number of scholars have recognized the critical element inherent in theorizing on social representations, and have discussed social representations as vehicles legitimizing and marginalizing social groups, issues, and phenomena (e.g., Howarth, Andreouli, & Kessi, 2014; Liu & Hilton, 2005; Lozada, 2014; Sarrica, Mazzara, & Brondi, 2016). Hence, social representations are not neutral or disinterested, but instead, “different representations compete in their claims to reality, and so defend, limit and exclude other realities” (Howarth, 2006, p. 8). For this reason, Voelklein and Howarth (2005) regard it as important to strengthen the critical stance of the theory of social representations.

Visual Rhetoric

This research uses visual rhetoric as a critical approach to scrutinize the visual construction of cover photographs of Teacher Magazine, understood as visual objectifications of social representations of teachership. It draws on Michael Billig’s (1988, 1993) rhetorical approach to study social representations. Billig (1993, p. 47) argues that by emphasizing the role of communication, the theory of social representations implicitly recognizes the role of rhetoric, since both communication and rhetoric are characterized by “a dialect between criticism and justification.” Consequently, Billig (1988, 1993) regards anchoring and objectification as processes and mechanisms of selection between opposing views. Moscovici (2001) himself regarded Billig’s rhetorical approach as complementing the theory of social representations.

Rhetoric originated as a branch of knowledge in classical Greece and focused on studying how symbols were used for communicative, mainly persuasive, purposes (Foss, 2004; Sonesson, 2013). Traditionally, its attention focused on verbal texts and speech, but in the 1970s its scope widened to include visual images (Foss, 2004; Olson, Finnegan, & Hope, 2008). In contemporary times, visual imagery constitutes a significant part of what Foss (2004, p. 142) calls the “rhetorical environment” and provides an effective means of influencing and persuading people through its emotional appeal (Danesi, 2017; Lefsrud, Graves, & Phillips, 2015; Olson et al., 2008). Conse-
quently, in addition to the visual-communicative quality of the images themselves, the ways in which images are used to create meanings and influence people’s thoughts and actions can be identified as within the scope of visual rhetoric research (Olson et al., 2008).

Visual images are not neutral records of reality, but intentional compositions of visual elements aiming to communicate particular meanings (Howarth, 2006; Lefsrud et al., 2015). While a number of scholars (e.g., Foss, 2004; Olson et al., 2008) define visual communication at large as the scope of visual rhetoric, Danesi (2017) and Phillips and McQuarrie (2004), for instance, conceptualize visual rhetoric more specifically as an approach examining visual images as rhetorical structures with specific purposes. They regard the visual qualities of the image as devices framing the subject matter in a particular way, with the aim of influencing the spectators’ perception and sense-making (see also Lefsrud et al., 2015; Sonesson, 2015). Focusing on both the structure of images and their functions in terms of influencing and constructing social relations and views (Danesi, 2017; Olson et al., 2008; Sonesson, 2013), visual rhetoric provides a tool for critically discussing the structure and social function of visual images.

This research conceptualizes the cover images of Teacher Magazine as visual objectifications of social representations of teachership. The visual elements of the cover images (both the subject matter and the elements of visual expression, such as composition, color, texture, and viewing angle), in turn, are regarded as the constituents of visual rhetoric, constructing the objectifications visually. When attention is paid to visual elements that are both included in and excluded from the images, the visual rhetoric approach may contribute to a critical understanding of cover images of Teacher Magazine as vehicles strengthening certain social representations of teachership and marginalizing, even silencing, others.

**Method**

**Data**

The cover images of Finnish Teacher Magazine during the past five years (2013–2017) form the data of this research. The period of the past five years was chosen because this research is interested in the current imagery of teachership. In addition, the layout of the cover page of Teacher Magazine changed during 2012. While the former cover page consisted of a large photograph on versatile subject matter, with a couple of small photographs of teachers (only faces, mostly), the updated cover page features a large photograph depicting a teacher or a group of teachers. In terms of the comparability of teacher images, a similar layout was considered to be important. Of 147 cover images, 138 images were photographs of people and 9 cover images were photographs of objects (2 images), graphs (3 images) or graphic art pieces depicting people metaphorically (4 images). Because of the different subject matter and media of expression, these nine cover images were ruled out of the data. Thus, the data includes 138 photographs depicting either a teacher or a group of teachers in an environment ranging from school to a leisure-time setting.

The cover images included in the data are all photographs. The apparent realism of photographs may conceal their constructed nature (Barthes, 1977; Hook & Glăveanu, 2013). However, regardless of the similarity that photographs appear to have with reality, they are not direct recordings of reality as such, but are constructed through a variety of choices in terms of visual expression (Rose, 2016). While the persons, objects, and environments included in the photograph construct the subject matter (i.e., what is depicted), the means of visual expres-
sion, such as framing, viewing angle, lighting, and color (i.e., how it is depicted), construct the stance to the subject matter (Hook & Glăveanu, 2013). Together, these two levels form the visual rhetoric of the image, communicating certain social representations of teachership. It is important to note that when analyzing the photographs of teachers, this research does not make any claims about the personality or professional characteristics of the teachers depicted in the photos. Instead, photographs are regarded as objectifications of social representations of teachership of the Trade Union of Education in Finland. Similarly, this research does not discuss the relation between the photographers and the publishing board, such as whether or not the assignments include direction in terms of visual expression. The analysis concentrates on what is visually perceivable.

The cover pages of Teacher Magazine include verbal elements, as well. In addition to the name of the magazine at the top of the page, there is a short caption related to the cover image. Since captions direct and influence the perception of images, highlighting certain visual traits and marginalizing other traits (Barthes, 1977), the images were analyzed without reading the captions. This choice was designed to accentuate the role of the visually communicated meanings (see Lefsrud et al., 2015).

Analysis

This research applies the visual rhetoric approach to study social representations of teachership. In other words, it analysis the visual rhetoric of the cover images of Teacher Magazine as means of communicating certain social representations of teachership. The analysis of the visual rhetoric presupposes that attention is paid to elements presented in the image and elements suggested by the image (Foss, 2004). While presented elements refer to the persons, objects, and environments depicted in the image, as well as to means of visual expression (composition, shape, color, space, etc.), the suggested elements refer to the meanings constructed based on visually presented elements (Foss, 2004). In this research, the analysis of visual rhetoric is operationalized using content analysis and semiotic analysis. This combination allows the analysis to discuss both the subject matter and the structure of the images, as well as their meanings and functions (see Danesi, 2017).

Danesi (2017) regards visual rhetoric as closely related to visual semiotics, with the aim of exploring the meaning of visual elements in a cultural context (see also Foss, 2004; Lefsrud et al., 2015). The ways in which meanings are produced, conveyed, and interpreted are at the center of semiotics (Sonesson, 2013). Two levels of meaning—the denotative and the connotative—play an important role in both visual rhetoric and visual semiotics, with the denotative level communicating the literal meaning and the connotative level communicating the culturally specific, associative, and affective meanings (Danesi, 2017; Veltri, 2015).

To elucidate and discuss both these levels of meaning in visual images, this research draws on Sonesson’s (1989) concepts of “iconic language” and “plastic language” of images. The image contains both languages simultaneously: the iconic language identifies the denotation of the image (what is depicted), whereas the plastic language refers to the way in which the denotation is expressed visually (how it is depicted) (Sonesson, 1989). Visual rhetoric is constructed at both levels. In addition to Sonesson’s (1989) concepts of “iconic language” and “plastic language” to study denotive and connotative meanings, the semiotic approach of this study draws on social semiotics of visual communication, which provides a tool for analyzing the cultural and social meanings of visual elements (Jewitt & Oyama, 2004; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Even though the visual elements direct the perception and sense-making of images, the meaning is not in the visual elements themselves, but is constructed by viewers based on a cultural matrix of meanings, both explicitly and implicitly (Hook & Glăveanu, 2013; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Despite the culturally preferred ways of interpreting the visual (Danesi, 2017; Kress & van
Leeuwen, 2006), different people may and do perceive and interpret the same image in different ways due to their different motivations, goals, knowledge, and prior experiences (McArthur & Baron, 1983).

Visual content analysis commonly focuses on classifying people, objects, and settings depicted in images (Bell, 2012; Rose, 2016). When classifying people, it often uses facial expressions, gestures, and clothing, for instance, as the basis of classification (Bell, 2012). In order to extend the scope of visual content analysis from the observation of the mere iconic language of images to include the elements of visual expression at the level of plastic language, this research complements content analysis with features of compositional analysis (e.g., Rose, 2016) and formal analysis (e.g., Schroeder, 2006). This kind of extended content analysis provides a tool for scrutinizing and classifying the components of visual rhetoric at large, consisting of persons, objects, and environments and their visual characteristics, as well as elements of visual expression such as color, light, composition, and viewing angle (Bell, 2012; Hook & Glăveanu, 2013). In turn, (social) semiotic analysis is used for making sense of the findings provided by content analysis and interpreting them within the matrix of socially constructed meanings (Jewitt & Oyama, 2004; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). This study design provides a methodological frame for examining the components and meanings of the visual rhetoric of cover images communicating certain kinds of social representations of teachership. Figure 1 elucidates the methodological design of this research.

![Analysis of visual rhetoric](Image)

*Figure 1. The methodological design of the research.*

**Procedure**

The cover images of Teacher Magazine during the years 2013–2017 are archived in electric format on the homepage of Teacher Magazine and were easily accessible. The cover images were downloaded and ordered according to the year of publication. In the next phase, the cover images were scaled smaller, arranged in a Word document, and printed. This was considered beneficial in terms of classifying and comparing the cover images.

At first, data were analyzed using content analysis. The cover images were sorted into groups intuitively, based on their visual characteristics, such as the teacher’s gender, age, facial expression, gestures, and attire, as well as the number of teachers in the image, the action, and the environment. This initial classification was refined through a more careful and detailed examination of the images, based on which classes of teachers started to emerge. These findings of the iconic language of the images were set into dialogue with the characteristics of the plastic language of the images, scrutinizing the composition, viewing angle, color, lighting, and location in the picture space as means of modifying the choices made at the level of iconic language.
Subsequently, the visual elements identified at the level of iconic language and plastic language were analyzed using semiotic analysis, in which they were furnished with their denotative and connotative meanings and interpreted in relation to each other. At this point, classes of teachers were named by anchoring them to a cultural matrix of meanings, combining social representations of teachership and cultural meanings of visual communication. An example elucidating the stages of analysis is provided in Appendix 1. After having observed what is included and depicted in the cover images, attention was directed to what is excluded and not depicted in them. Finally, the findings of the analysis were related to recent discussions related to teachership and education.

The analysis is based on the perception and interpretation of visual images. The meaning is not in the image itself, but is constructed in the process of perceiving and interpreting it (Hook & Glăveanu, 2013). Since the analysis is researcher-driven, it is appropriate to sketch the researcher’s background briefly. He is a Finnish, middle-aged teacher of visual culture studies and a post-graduate student of social psychology, whose current research interests focus on the visual dimensions of teachership, as well as the functions of the visual in everyday social interaction. Student-centeredness and collaboration characterize his pedagogic approach. He is interested in issues related to multiculturalism, diversity, and equality, as well as ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities. Despite this profiling, the results of the research reflect social understanding of teachership, since the interpretation anchors cover images to the matrix of social representations of teachership in Finland, as well as to socially constructed meanings of visual communication in western cultures.

Findings

The data consisted of 138 cover images that were photographs depicting only one teacher (85 images), a pair or a group of teachers (42 images), or a teacher with pupils (11 images). A large majority of the images (80 photographs) depicted only female teachers, 32 photographs depicted only male teachers, and 26 photographs depicted both female and male teachers. Of the photographs, 75 depicted teachers indoors (mostly school interiors) and 63 depicted teachers outdoors (either in a school yard or in nature). A vast majority of the photographs (106) depicted teachers smiling, whereas in the remaining 32 photographs the teachers looked serious. Even though it is difficult to estimate age based on the image alone, most teachers seemed to be between 30 and 50 years, with the exception of approximately 10 teachers who looked younger than 30, and 2 teachers who looked older than 60. Teachers looked tidy, appropriate, and moderate. Table 1 summarizes the quantification of the visually perceivable features in the cover images.

The cover images of Teacher Magazine depicted a variety of teachers. However, four classes of teachers emerged from the data. These classes were, in order of frequency, experts (n = 59), pranksters (n = 31), recreationists (n = 27), and educators (n = 11). Ten cover images couldn’t be included in the classes mentioned above and didn’t form any specific class. Examples of images in each class are presented in Appendix 2. This research does not suggest that the classes were mutually exclusive in reality, so that only some teachers were experts whereas other teachers were always pranksters, for instance. Rather, these classes must be understood as aspects of teachership common to teachers at large. The aspect that dominates depends on the situation. In the following, each class will be presented with an analysis at the level of iconic and plastic language, paying attention to both denotative and connotative meanings.
Table 1

Quantification of Visually Perceivable Features in the Cover Images

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Depiction</th>
<th>Number of Cover Images</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of cover images</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of teachers depicted</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one teacher</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two or more teachers</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one teacher with pupils</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>teachers’ gender and sexual orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female teachers only</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male teachers only</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female and male teachers</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female teacher with pupils</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male teacher with pupils</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visually identifiable features of teachers representing gender minorities</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visually identifiable features of teachers representing sexual minorities</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>teachers’ age</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers younger than 30 years old</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers between 30-50/60 years old</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers older than 60 years old</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>teachers’ ethnic origin</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers with visual features of typical Finnish ethnic origin</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers with visual features referring to other ethnic origin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>teachers’ facial expression</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smiling teachers</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>serious looking teachers</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>teachers’ body shape</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slim (not overweight)</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plump</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fat (very overweight)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cannot be estimated</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>teachers’ attire</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tidy, neutral, appropriate attire</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eye-catching / extravagant attire</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>teachers’ environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers indoors</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers outdoors</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Experts**

One clearly distinguishable type of teacher can be identified as the expert (Appendix 2, Images 1, 2, 3). Expert teachers, equally female and male, are depicted as knowledgeable professionals either with or without reference to their subject. When these references exist, they create a traditional divide between female expertise (such as nursing and textile work) and male expertise (such as machinery and technical work). Surprisingly, music is also depicted as gendered, belonging to the field of male expertise. Most expert teachers look middle-aged, with only a few recognizably younger teachers, suggesting that expertise grows with experience and age. However,
teachers older than middle-age are not included among experts. Experts are depicted neither in the act of teaching nor with pupils or students. Instead, they are depicted alone indoors, in an environment that can be associated with a school interior. Even though the data includes photographs in which teamwork between teachers is visualized, far more often, teachers seem to be private entrepreneurs meeting the challenges of their profession alone.

Expert teachers are not involved in an activity, but stand or sit still, turning towards the spectator. Typically they hold a laptop, books, or folders that can be interpreted as signs of expertise and knowledge. Occasionally, they are depicted folding their arms across their chest, communicating persistence but also detachment. In addition, expert teachers wear formal and neat clothes, such as a suit or a blazer with a skirt or trousers, mostly in shades of black, blue, or gray. A number of experts wear spectacles. The majority of experts look at the spectator with a hint of a smile. However, the aforementioned elements signaling formality and detachment modify the smile from an expression of mere friendliness to an expression of self-esteem and dignity. On one hand, the fact that the teachers look at the spectator creates the impression of communication. On the other hand, posing and looking straight at the camera creates the impression of rationality, control, and prudence. The experts do not seem willing to throw themselves spontaneously into situations, but rather prefer to have control over them.

In addition to facial expression, posture, gestures, attire, and environment, the impression of expertise is constructed through elements of visual expression. The colors in the images are mostly cold, shifting toward blue or gray, creating the impression of distance and formality. Combined with brightness, these colors also seem to refer to “the light of reason,” conceptualizing teachers as rational and knowledgeable professionals guided by reason. The brightness of images may also communicate trustworthiness, since nothing is hidden in the shade. The impression of distance and formality is further signaled through half-length or full-length photographs, which frame the person further away from the spectator than a close-up would do. In terms of composition, experts are mostly located in the middle of the image, emphasizing their status. The shots are taken either at eye-level or from a low angle, with the latter making the teacher appear imposing and hegemonic.

When the elements of iconic language and plastic language of images are observed together, they create the impression of expert teachers as knowledgeable professionals characterized by reason, trustworthiness, restraint and formality. They seem to have a positive attitude towards teaching, facing the challenges of their profession with heads high, mostly alone, but sometimes also with their colleagues. Some images depict teachers’ expertise in terms of the traditional division between female and male subjects. The teachers in the photographs communicate with the spectator through eye contact. However, communication with students, or instances related to education, is not visualized in the photographs.

Pranksters

A number of cover images depict teachers playing the fool and having fun (Appendix 2, Images 4, 5, 6). These “pranksters” include young and middle-aged teachers who break the rule of formality with their more relaxed attitude. Pranksters are depicted either alone or with their colleagues, but no students are included in the photographs. Teachers peeking through a magnifying glass, playing with a globe, or wrapping themselves up in a curtain communicate playfulness and joy. Typically, pranksters wear casual clothes that add to the air of informality. Even though these images include more colors, teachers’ clothes are predominantly dark or gray. These teachers smile or laugh with their mouth wide open and gesticulate in versatile ways. However, the fact that almost all of them look at the spectator diminishes the impression of immediacy and casualness, adding the flavor of calculated posing for the images.
The humoristic atmosphere is created through elements of visual expression, as well. Some photos contrast dark shadow and bright light next to each other, which dynamizes the images and increases the feeling of mystery, adventure, and excitement. Even though both female and male teachers are depicted as pranksters, the contrasting play of light and shadow is visible only in photos of male teachers, which makes adventurousness and excitement gendered and typical for men only. This division is increased by the objects included in the photos: whereas male teachers peek through magnifying glasses, reminiscent of detectives, female teachers hold cone cows, referring to a more traditional kind of play with children. Images of pranksters include close-ups as well as half-length and full-length shots. However, close-ups are used more than for other classes of teachers, creating a feeling of sociability. The colors shift toward cold shades. On one hand, they communicate freshness, but on the other hand, distance, contradicting the warmth and immediacy created by smiles, casual clothes, close-ups, and eye-level angles.

Taken together, pranksters are playful teachers characterized by immediacy and spontaneity. In these images, teachers act and gesticulate in a more relaxed, vivid, and enthusiastic way, which makes them appear easy to approach. However, the impression of spontaneity and immediacy is restrained by the teachers posing for the spectator, which adds a flavor of artificiality to the images. Despite this fact, the images represent joyful and good-tempered teachers, who are not afraid of throwing themselves into play. However, the images suggest that adventure and excitement are more apt to male than female teachers.

Recreationists

A number of cover images portray teachers outdoors (Appendix 2, Images 7, 8, 9). Apart from a few urban scenes, the outdoor environment is depicted as “uninhabited” greeneries, forests, paths, and lake shores, which characterize nature as the place of peace and relaxation. Except for a few winter scenes, the photos show summer-time nature, in which teachers are enjoying their summer holidays. The impression of relaxation is fostered through teachers’ casual clothes and smiling faces. The majority of recreationists are female teachers. The few male teachers are depicted mostly in action—playing football, for instance—whereas female teachers are depicted as tranquil flaneurs seeking recovery.

Apart from a few cover pages on which two teachers or a small group of teachers are depicted in nature, teachers are typically alone outdoors. This manner of depiction characterizes nature as teachers’ private sphere, giving them a possibility to delve into their own thoughts and experiences as a counterbalance to their socially active and challenging profession. The impression of privacy is stronger in the photos in which the teachers are not turning toward or looking at the spectator. However, these photographs are in the minority. In most cover images, the teachers turn toward the spectator, make eye contact, and smile. This manner of depiction communicates contradictory messages: on one hand, the teachers are depicted seeking privacy, but on the other hand, they are also presenting teachership when relaxing in nature.

At the level of plastic language, most photographs are characterized by bright and warm colors, as well as sunshine. These color choices fill the photographs with a joyful, light, and cozy atmosphere, forming an impression of un-stressed and care-free leisure time or holidays. However, the photographs in which teachers are depicted as more serious and thoughtful make use of more dull and grayish colors contributing to the air of contemplation. In these images, teachers wear clothes in more tempered and earthy colors, as well. In terms of composition, the teachers are not placed at the center of the image but in the golden section, which adds to the connotation of teachers
being at leisure. The framing favors half-length and full-length images, which detaches the teachers from an intimate relation with the spectator, giving them privacy in nature.

In summary, the cover images with teachers photographed outdoors construct the impression of teachers as recreationists enjoying their holidays or seeking recovery in nature. The unstressed holiday-makers are depicted with smiles, relaxed postures, and casual clothes in brightly lit photos. In contrast, the photos with contemplative teachers make use of more down-to-earth and grayish colors, also due to the typically cloudy weather of these images. Most often, the teachers are alone in nature. The air of privacy is further constructed through framing the teachers further away from the front of the picture space. Recreationists are typically depicted in the golden section, which shifts them away from the center of the image, connoting meanings of leisure. However, in a number of photos, the teachers turn toward the spectator and smile, which creates the impression of deliberate posing, diminishing the impression of privacy. In terms of gender, the majority of recreationists are female. In addition, male teachers at leisure are depicted as more active and extrovert than female teachers.

Educators

The last group of teachers, the educators, is based on images depicting a teacher with pupils (Appendix 2, Images 10, 11, 12). In the data of 138 cover pages, 11 cover photographs depict pupils, as well. The small number of such photographs may be due to matters related to consent and permission for photography. For this reason, the small number of images should not be overemphasized. Apart from one male teacher, all teachers depicted with pupils are female, and the pupils seem to be either pre-schoolers or comprehensive school pupils. Two photographs show action, in which teachers are playing with pupils. In all the other photos, students are composed around the teacher in a manner reminiscent of a mother surrounded by her children. Smiling faces and casual clothes contribute to a cozy and friendly atmosphere.

In most photographs, the teacher is depicted in the middle of a group of pupils. On one hand, this composition can be interpreted as portraying a student-centered teacher among her pupils. Together with the smiling faces, the teacher’s location lower than the pupils and the high angle of the shot foster the impression of a consultative, servant-type of teacher. On the other hand, the central composition may also be interpreted as referring to a teacher-centered pedagogy, as well as discipline, especially when pupils are composed more or less symmetrically around the teacher. The colors and light in the photos tend to be cold rather than warm tones, increasing the impression of appropriateness and slight formality.

Visual elements of the iconic and plastic language of images construct a somewhat controversial image of educators. On one hand, the photographs depict smiling female teachers surrounded by smiling students, which at first creates the impression of coziness and friendly, unproblematic interaction between the teacher and students. In addition, teachers are located lower than students, which makes them appear to be a consultative, servant-type of teacher at the grassroots level, equal to the pupils. However, the symmetrical composition of students around the teacher in the center can be associated with a teacher-centered approach to teaching, as well. Together with coldish colors, this type of arrangement communicates an air of discipline and formality. The fact that teachers and students all pose for the photographer and for the spectator, further diminishes the impression of natural and easy-going interaction. It rather seems that teachers and students are acting out a friendly and cozy scene in a play on education.
Summary of Results

Four classes of teachers—experts, pranksters, recreationists, and educators—were identified in the data, reflecting various visually mediated impressions of teachers in the cover images of Teacher Magazine between 2013–2017. While experts and educators were more closely connected with the teacher’s occupation in terms of being knowledgeable pedagogues, pranksters and recreationists expressed more relaxed types of teachers having fun or spending leisure time. The analysis at the level of the iconic language of images served as a basis for the classification of teacher representations. The findings at the level of plastic language either fostered or challenged the classification, merging denotative and connotative meanings.

The clear majority of cover images depicted female teachers, which characterized teaching as a predominantly “female profession.” In terms of gender, traditional female and male teacher roles seemed to emerge, with female teachers being those who nurse, bake, knit, and dance, and male teachers being those who are technically oriented, inventive, and adventurous. In addition, apart from one photograph in which a male teacher played ice-hockey with pupils, interaction with pupils was related to female teachers. Even though a number of cover images depicted a pair or a group of teachers, the clear majority of them depicted a teacher alone indoors or outdoors. These depictions created the impression of teachers as autonomic individuals who face both the joys and challenges of their profession alone, or seek recreation in privacy.

Through all four classes of teachers, there seemed to be a preferred type of teacher who is good-tempered, neutral looking, between 30-50 years old, slim, and fit. When the focus is extended from what is being included in the cover images to what is being excluded from them, the lack of diversity in terms of ethnic background, gender, and sexual orientation, for instance, becomes apparent. It can be concluded that the imagery of teachership communicated by cover images of Teacher Magazine is highly homogenous.

Discussion

In this research, cover images of Finnish Teacher Magazine were understood as visual objectifications of social representations of teachership, representing the ideas, values, and visions of the Trade Union of Education in Finland. According to Moscovici (2001, 2007), common-sense social representations sediment around core notions related to the phenomenon. However, core notions never reveal themselves directly; that is why they must be studied via their material expressions, created through objectification (Moscovici, 2001).

Cover Images as Vehicles of Inclusion and Exclusion

This study detected four classes of teachers from the cover images of Finnish Teacher Magazine between 2013–2017, suggesting four different core notions of social representations of teachership, namely expertise, pedagogy, playfulness, and recreation. These four core notions seem to be interconnected, since on one hand, pedagogy is part of educational expertise, and on the other hand, pedagogy operationalizes educational expertise. Playfulness, for its part, can be used as a pedagogical approach. In addition, playfulness and recreation can be understood as teachers’ means of charging their batteries in order to cope with the challenges of pedagogical expertise. Moscovici (2001) characterized social representations as polyphasic, meaning that an individual person, as well as a group of people, may have a number of social representations of one phenomenon. Thus, the four classes above constitute various facets of social representations of teachership. Similar social representations of
teachership have also been found in other national and cultural contexts. For instance, several studies conducted among Brazilian teachers have identified expertise based on knowledge as the key constituent of social representations of teachership (Carneiro & Monteiro, 2018; Camargo, 2017; da Silva, Dias, & Pimenta, 2014). Da Silva (2012) and Fischman (2000), in turn, found that teaching in basic education is often regarded as a female profession. In their study on social representations of teachers’ role identity conducted among Italian teachers, Rochira, Guidi, Mannarini, and Salvatore (2015), for their part, identified pedagogic competence, authority and deterioration of the image of teachers as the cores of social representations of teachership.

When the results of the analyses of both iconic and plastic language of images are taken into consideration, further core notions of social representations of teachership can be identified in this study. The vast majority of teachers were depicted smiling and laughing, communicating joy, happiness, and an absence of problems. Combined with a deliberately arranged composition, the smiles created the feeling of “keeping up appearances,” intended to communicate a positive image of teachership. Even though the genre of magazine covers may limit the way in which people are depicted, one is left wondering whether it is regarded as unprofessional for a teacher to show sorrow, failure, or fatigue, for instance. Similarly, the fact that most teachers are depicted alone attracts attention. One might expect that, in contemporary times, when counseling, peer support, networking, and multiprofessionalism characterize professions in the field of education (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Webb, Vuilliamy, Sarja, Hämäläinen, & Poikonen, 2009), this networking type of teachership would occupy a more prominent role in the cover images of Teacher Magazine. Research shows that teachers are still commonly regarded as autonomous actors in Finland, taking responsibility for their students and teaching alone (Huusko, Pietarinen, Pyhältö, & Soini, 2007; Webb et al., 2009). On the other hand, research also shows that a large number of Finnish teachers suffer from work-related stress, fatigue, and burnout (Collie, Perry, & Martin, 2017; Pyhältö, Pietarinen, & Salmela-Aro, 2011). Based on the cover images of Teacher Magazine, happiness and autonomy/individualism can be regarded as core notions of the social representations of teachership of the Trade Union of Education. Bearing the aforementioned research in mind, one is tempted to ask whether the imagery of happy and autonomous/individualistic teachers might increase teachers’ pressure to “bear the burden” alone and hide the hardships behind a smiling façade, contributing to work-related stress and fatigue.

The notably high number of cover images depicting female teachers suggests that, at the core of social representations of teachership, there is a conception of teaching as a predominantly female profession. In the light of statistics, there are more female than male teachers in pre-school, comprehensive, vocational, and upper-secondary education in Finland (Kumpulainen, 2017). In addition, this research identified gender-based teacher roles as a core notion of social representations of teachership. While female teachers were profiled as teachers of domestic science, textile work, and nursing, male teachers were profiled as teachers of forestry, engineering, and technology. Furthermore, female teachers were depicted with pupils in a manner evoking feelings of motherly care. Wall (2008) found similar results when studying images of teachers in British trade union publications between the years 1940–2000. In Finland, Keskiväli (2012) and Nygren (2007), for instance, have found gendered teacher representations in Finnish films. Lahelma (2011), for her part, has recognized that students in Finnish teacher education tend to select subjects based on a traditional division between female and male subjects. Lahelma (2011, p. 226) regrets that the theoretical and empirical results of gender research in education have scarcely been included in teacher education curricula in Finland and calls for gender awareness, since “unquestioned cultural gender assumptions are reproduced in teacher education.”

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When attention is paid to types of teachers excluded from the cover images, social representations of teachership communicated by Teacher Magazine gain additional features. In 2014, Miettunen and Dervin wrote about Finnish teachership that “it is a well-known fact that the diversity of the teaching body in the Nordic country is far from diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, and language” (Miettunen & Dervin, 2014, p. 22). Now, three years later, the situation may have changed in terms of teacher diversity, but the cover images of Teacher Magazine in the past five years do not show such a development. Transgender teachers, teachers belonging to sexual or religious minorities, teachers with a visible handicap or injury, teachers with eye-catching looks (such as tattoos, piercings, extraordinary clothing style), fat teachers, and elderly teachers are absent in the imagery of Teacher Magazine. Even though belonging to a sexual or religious minority, for instance, cannot necessarily be judged based on visual features, it would be possible to construct images so that these aspects were visually perceivable.

The Trade Union of Education explicitly mentions on its homepage that “there is no such thing as the right type of teacher” (www.oaj.fi/en/, retrieved 13.6.2019). In addition, Integration compass 2019 published by the Trade Union (2019, p. 9) points out that “more teachers with an immigrant background must be trained for all levels of education.” However, the cover images of Teacher Magazine between the years 2013 and 2017 seem to communicate a different message. When images included in and excluded from the cover images of Teacher Magazine are reflected against each other, it seems the ideal type of teacher at the core of social representations of teachership of the Trade Union of Education can be characterized as a white (Finnish) woman or man, heterosexual, 30-50 years old, healthy, slim and fit, and neutral looking. This result resonates with prior research on teachers’ gender and sexuality (e.g., Lahelma, 2011; Valkonen, 2002), ethnic background (Lefever et al., 2014), age (Kumpulainen, 2017), and attire and appearance (Hankaniemi, 2014; Kamila, 2012). In the light of these findings, one can conclude that the initial hypothesis of teacher images being more diverse in Teacher Magazine than in popular media was not tenable. Representations of teachers in Teacher Magazine seem to be equally stereotypical as in popular media.

The research at hand does not claim that visually perceptible diversity is the only mode of diversity. Neither does it argue that all diversity is visually perceptible. However, it shows that the visual imagery of teachers in the cover images of Teacher Magazine between 2013–2017 is highly homogenous in terms of ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, age, and physical appearance. In addition, the imagery communicates a gender-based divide between traditional roles of female and male teachers. From the social representations point of view, this is problematic. Media participates powerfully in circulating and constructing social representations of teachership (see Höijer, 2011). Through extensive repetition, the constructional nature of images becomes obscured and the naturalized imagery “becomes a replica of reality, a simulacrum in the true sense of the word” (Moscovici, 2001, p. 51). These naturalized social representations circulate in societies through the cycles of anchoring and objectification, affecting people’s thoughts and actions (Hakoköngäs & Sakki, 2016; Räty et al., 2012).

Images can be conceptualized as “cultural mirrors” or “counter images” (Martikainen, 2011) that viewers use as means of reflecting on themselves as members of societies and constructing their social identities. It is reasonable to think that the readership of Teacher Magazine, namely teachers and student teachers, use the cover images of Teacher Magazine in mirroring their own teachership and professional identity as teachers (see Kirby, 2016). This research shows that several types of teachers, who are excluded from the cover images of Teacher Magazine, may not find a point of identification in the imagery included in the magazine covers. Barreiro and Castorina (2017, p. 83) regard repressing, silencing, and denying as operations of social representations, stating that “nothingness is constructed because some specific characteristic of the symbolical status of the object is disturbing for social
groups.” Visually communicated exclusion from social representations of teachership positions the excluded as “others”, which may have destructive consequences not only in terms of their professional identity and work-related matters, but also in terms of their life in general. In addition, one may ask whether deviation from the prevailing imagery might be a cause of discrimination.

Social representations not only construct the present but also anticipate the future (Liu & Hilton, 2005; Sakki, 2016). Social practices are permeated by power: we use and perform power in our everyday acts verbally, visually, and bodily (Foucault, 1980). The way things normally appear is not a natural, unbiased state of affairs, but ultimately tied to social interests and views (Barreiro & Castorina, 2017; Foucault, 1980). In this sense, social representations are vehicles of power (Barreiro & Castorina, 2017). In order to challenge and interrupt the naturalized circulation of social representations, the process of objectification plays a key role (de Rosa & Farr, 2001; Moscovici, 2001). De Rosa and Farr (2001) claim that changes in the images can lead to changes in social representations. For this reason, it is important to reveal the constructed character of naturalized images and raise critical awareness of their social implications. The research at hand is an attempt to contribute to this awareness by applying the approach of visual rhetoric to studying visual objectifications of social representations of teachership in Finland.

Strengths, Limitations, and Suggestions for Future Research

One strength of this research is its innovative theoretical and methodological design. On one hand, it combines social representations theory with a rhetoric approach, and on the other hand, it uses visual data to study social representations, and analyses them using content analysis and semiotic analysis. This design creates a critical approach to discuss visual images as objectifications of social representations in terms of both visual structures and communicators of meanings. Another strength is the researcher’s experience in visual methodologies. This, however, may also be a limitation, since not all members of the readership may be that experienced in visual literacy, and thus, some visually communicated meanings presented in this research might be beyond their reach. Similarly, since people from different occupational, educational, and cultural contexts may possess a number of social representations of one phenomenon (Moscovici, 2001), the results of this researcher-driven analysis cannot be generalized to other cultural contexts, for instance.

The exclusion of textual elements of cover pages, as well as photographs on other pages of the magazine, might also be considered as a limitation, since this choice narrows the scope of the material used as basis for discussion of the topic. On the other hand, the focus on the cover images alone is justified because of their important communicative value, as explicated in the method section. However, in the future, it would be interesting to systematically study and compare both verbally and visually communicated social representations of teachership in Teacher Magazine.

In addition, it would be interesting to see how the image of teachers detected in this research relates to the image of teachers in other national contexts. Perhaps this study could be replicated in other national and socio-cultural contexts in the future.

Conclusions

This research shows that cover images of Teacher Magazine function, either consciously or unconsciously, as mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, legitimizing and marginalizing certain kinds of teachership. As the main publication of the Finnish Trade Union of Education, with a large circulation among teachers and student teachers, Teacher Magazine occupies a powerful position in issues related to teachership. For this reason, the teacher imagery
it communicates may importantly contribute to the formation of social representations of teachership among its readers influencing the self-reflection on their own professional identity as teachers. Therefore, it is important to discuss critically and raise awareness of visually mediated meanings in this particular magazine, as well as in magazines published by trade unions in general. Instead of ruling out certain groups of teachers and mediating traditional social representations of teachership, Teacher Magazine, as well as other related media, could use imagery as constructive rhetorical acts to communicate anticipatory social representations of teachership (see Philogène, 1999), paving the way to more diverse and inclusive teachership in the future.

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### Appendices

#### Appendix 1

**Table A.1**

*Example of the Analysis of Visual Rhetoric (see Image 11, Appendix 2)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT ANALYSIS</th>
<th>SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>iconic language</strong></td>
<td><strong>plastic language</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>female teacher</em></td>
<td><em>friendliness</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>teacher and pupils smile</em></td>
<td><em>approachability</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>teacher wears casual clothes</em></td>
<td><em>calmness</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>calm gestures and posture</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>teacher is depicted with pupils</em></td>
<td><em>interaction</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>teacher kneels / sits on the floor</em></td>
<td><em>togetherness</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>environment can be identified as a corner of the classroom</em></td>
<td><em>counseling</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>framing:</em></td>
<td><em>care</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>composition:</em></td>
<td><em>equality</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>focus on a restricted part of the classroom where the teacher and pupils are framed outside the image</em></td>
<td><em>servant-type of teacher</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>other classroom items are framed outside the image</em></td>
<td><em>no emphasis of status</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>colors:</em></td>
<td><em>intimacy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>warm, bright colors</em></td>
<td><em>coziness</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>high angle</em></td>
<td><em>joy</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2

Experts:

Image 1
Photograph: Ari Korkala
Opettaja 6/2017

Image 2
Photograph: Jussi Vierimaa
Opettaja 10/2014

Image 3
Photograph: Jussi Vierimaa
Opettaja 1/2017

Pranksters:

Image 4
Photograph: Leena Koskela
Opettaja 2/2016

Image 5
Photograph: Veliiko Somerpuro
Opettaja 18/2014

Image 6
Photograph: Veliiko Somerpuro
Opettaja 40/2013

Recreationists:

Image 7
Photograph: Jussi Vierimaa
Opettaja 24/2014

Image 8
Photograph: Maiju Pohjanheimo
Opettaja 3/2014

Image 9
Photograph: Lauri Rotko
Opettaja 12/2016

Educators:

Image 10
Photograph: Veliiko Somerpuro
Opettaja 7/2017

Image 11
Photograph: Veliiko Somerpuro
Opettaja 26/2015

Image 12
Photograph: Ari Korkala
Opettaja 16/2017

By permission of the Teacher Magazine and the photographers. ©

Figure A.1. Image examples of the classes of teachers.
JARI MARTIKAINEN

This dissertation examines social representations of teachership of students, teachers, and the Finnish Trade Union of Education through visual representations of teachership. In addition, it contributes to the understanding of visual images in the processes of social representation and the development of qualitative image-based research methods in social representations research. The study design and the findings can be applied, for instance, in teacher education.