



# THE IMAGE OF A TEACHER AS A SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL PHENOMENON

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## Abstract

This article examines the external and internal aspects of a teacher's image, analyzes its components, and reviews the perspectives of scholars on the concept of image. The paper also presents methodological approaches to the effective study of image and provides definitions of the concept proposed by various researchers.

**Keywords:** image, teacher, impression, worldview, culture, nonverbal communication, verbal communication.

## Introduction

The Image of a Teacher is a complex socio-psychological construct that reflects the combination of a teacher's personal, professional, and communicative characteristics as perceived by society, students, colleagues, and parents. It is formed through the process of pedagogical interaction and has a direct impact on the effectiveness of the educational process. The teacher's image is a multilayered phenomenon that includes both external and internal components, which are interconnected and mutually influence each other. The external aspect creates the first impression and helps establish trust and respect, while the internal aspect reflects the professional and personal content of the teacher, including their worldview and system of values. The external (visual) component is the first element perceived by others. It forms the initial impression and sets the tone for pedagogical interaction. Appearance and dress culture include neatness, tidiness, moderation in style, and appropriateness to the situation and the teacher's professional status. Clothing should not distract students' attention but rather emphasize the teacher's professionalism and good taste.



Speech culture includes clear diction, a rich vocabulary, and the absence of speech clichés and rude expressions. A teacher’s speech is an important instrument of influence, instruction, and education. Nonverbal means of communication include facial expressions, gestures, posture, and eye contact. These elements convey up to 70% of information in communication. A confident, open gaze and friendly facial expressions create trust and a sense of psychological safety. Voice characteristics such as timbre, intonation, volume, and rhythm of speech influence the emotional perception of information. Monotonous or excessively harsh speech reduces the effectiveness of communication. Manner of behavior includes posture, gait, and movement. Balance and calmness in behavior demonstrate inner harmony and confidence.

Thus, the visual image is a kind of “psychological facade” of a teacher’s personality through which their attitude toward themselves, their profession, and their students is manifested. The professional component is the core element of the teacher’s image and reflects the level of the teacher’s competence and professional maturity.

Main characteristics:

Pedagogical competence — mastery of teaching and educational methods, knowledge of students’ psychology, and the ability to individualize the approach to each child.

Pedagogical mastery — the ability to inspire, engage students, and transform the learning process into a creative activity.

Innovativeness — readiness to use modern educational technologies, ICT tools, as well as project-based and game-based learning methods.

Responsibility and discipline — reflected in effective planning, thorough preparation for lessons, and the fulfillment of professional duties.

Authority — the result of the combination of professionalism and personal qualities, which builds trust among students and colleagues.

The professional component determines the perception of the teacher as an expert and mentor who is capable not only of transmitting knowledge but also of developing the personality of students.

Communicative component - a teacher’s image is inseparably connected with their communicative culture. Communication is the main tool of pedagogical activity, and the classroom atmosphere largely depends on it. Empathy — the



ability to understand the emotional state of others, to empathize, and to provide support. Openness and friendliness - create a trusting atmosphere and reduce students' anxiety. The ability to listen and truly hear others - is an important aspect of psychological competence. Speech etiquette represents a respectful form of communication with students, parents, and colleagues. Constructive interaction refers to the ability to cooperate and effectively resolve conflict situations. A teacher who possesses a high level of communicative culture is able to create a positive emotional climate and stimulate students' cognitive activity.

**Moral and Ethical Component** - this component reflects the inner spiritual core of the teacher's personality, their worldview, and their system of values. Moral principles — honesty, fairness, and respect for the personality of each child. Responsibility and humanism — the teacher is aware of their influence on the formation of students' moral character. Ethics of behavior — adherence to professional ethics and the inadmissibility of humiliating a student's dignity. Tolerance — acceptance of individual differences, including cultural, ethnic, and personal characteristics. Pedagogical love — not sentimentality, but a conscious benevolent attitude based on care and understanding. The moral and ethical character of the teacher serves as a model of behavior for students and strengthens the educational potential of the learning process.

**Reflective Component** - the reflective component expresses the teacher's ability to be aware of themselves, to analyze their own activity, and to evaluate the impression they create. Self-assessment — an adequate understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses, along with a readiness for professional self-development. Self-regulation — the ability to manage emotions, behavior, and stress reactions.

**Reflection on professional activity** — the analysis of successes and mistakes, as well as the aspiration to improve one's pedagogical style. **Impression management** — the conscious formation of a positive perception of oneself by others (students, parents, and colleagues). **Self-improvement** — the continuous development of personal and professional potential. Reflection helps the teacher maintain emotional stability, prevents professional burnout, and contributes to the formation of a harmonious and authentic professional image.

The interconnection between the external and internal image creates a holistic psychological portrait of the teacher. While the external appearance forms the



first impression, the internal content builds long-term trust, respect, and influence. The modern pedagogical image is the result not only of natural qualities but also of conscious self-development, professional culture, and personal maturity.

The concept of image belongs to the category of issues that require continuous study and is examined within the frameworks of psychology, sociology, pedagogy, philosophy, and other academic disciplines.

Russian scholar G. M. Andreeva, analyzing the concept of image, interprets it as a new socio-psychological paradigm, as well as socio-psychological knowledge within a modern social phenomenon concerned with socio-psychological explanation and systematization [6, p. 24]. One of such phenomena is image — a multifaceted and complex phenomenon that influences many spheres of modern society. However, its essence, manifestations, and mechanisms have not yet been clearly defined.

Since the interpretation of image still remains relatively rare, there is a need to approach it from both theoretical and methodological perspectives.

One of the most methodologically effective approaches to the study of image is to analyze its structure and underlying patterns through the theory of social representations, developed by scholars such as S. Moscovici, J.-C. Abric, D. Jodelet, and others.

The theory of social representations has served as the foundation for a number of scientific studies and has also stimulated research among representatives of Russian social psychology.

Although the need for social theory in the study of social psychology continues to grow, it should be noted that it is not always sufficient for a comprehensive analysis of image, which requires additional theoretical and methodological clarification.

In this regard, the study of image within the framework of social perception is considered as an important methodological basis.

According to the theory of social representations proposed by S. Moscovici, when choosing methods of action, a person relies not so much on the stimuli of objective reality as on how these actions and situations are subjectively perceived and visualized.



It is important to note that in S. Moscovici's concept, which is based on É. Durkheim's theory of collective representations, social representations function as a factor that creates reality not only for an individual but also for the entire group, reflecting specific aspects of different cultures, classes, or social groups. This idea was expressed as "a part of individual consciousness that is characteristic of members of a given social group" [2, p. 148].

As K. A. Abulkhanova noted, "Moscovici considers social representation as a channel between identity and reality, which further influences human consciousness. A representation is a special form of everyday collective knowledge acquired by an individual" [3, p. 92].

Thus, according to the theory of social representations, a social representation is a form of "everyday knowledge" that differs from scientific knowledge. This type of knowledge is generated through countless interactions, communications, and dialogues that arise in the process of social communication and are preserved in language. Social representation, as a method of interpretation and understanding, represents a specific form of social cognition that includes everyday reality and the cognitive activities of individuals and groups.

Based on this, social representation can be interpreted as a tool or as a "form" of understanding social reality, according to the definition proposed by G. M. Andreeva. However, the cognitive function of social representations is not the only one.

S. Moscovici substantiated the following five functions within the sphere of interpretation of social representations: Maintaining the stability of consciousness within the structure of both the individual and the group. Adaptation of new information to the existing system of social representations. Mediation and regulation of existing relationships and actions. Synthesis of content. In the works of Russian scholars, several attempts have been made to interpret the functions of social representations.

Thus, O. E. Baksansky considers three functions of social representations to be fundamental: Social representations as a means of cognition, whose distinctive feature is their role in explaining and understanding descriptions of reality. Social representations mediate the behavior of members of different groups in accordance with the norms, ideals, and values accepted within those groups.



Social representations relate ongoing events and observed phenomena to already established views, thoughts, and evaluations [4, p. 283].

Thus, the author substantiates the cognitive, value-oriented, and adaptive functions of social representation.

The consideration of the main provisions of the theory of social representations makes it possible to formulate several preliminary observations related to the analysis of the essence of image as a socio-psychological phenomenon.

First of all, it is necessary to emphasize the special communicative nature of this phenomenon, which arises in the process of social communication. I. P. Shkuratova noted that a representation appears only in a situation of interaction between the bearer of the image and the audience for which it is intended. Information transmitted by its carrier cannot form an image without an audience, because every image is addressed to someone and ultimately is generated through this interaction [6, p. 64].

Image, like social representation, is a phenomenon of mass consciousness that acts as a factor constructing reality not only for an individual but also for social groups.

Thus, image, like social representation, is not a “copy” of the absolute similarity of objects of social cognition; rather, it is both a process and a result of the active socio-psychological structuring of social reality.

Image, like social imagination, also depends on the cultural and historical context. E. B. Perelygin notes that the composition of the audience and its characteristics as a social group significantly influence the decisions made by the subject regarding the content of the image, the methods of image formation, and the channels of information transmission [1, p. 64].

Specialists in legal sociology interpret this concept as a generalized and emotional notion in social and individual thinking that reflects legal activity in the form of a complex of ideas about the methods and patterns of socio-legal influence (V. V. Oksamytniy, *Legal Ethics of the Individual*).

A specialist in the field of image sociology and management, V. M. Shepel, defines image as follows: “Image is an individual image or representation created by mass media, social groups, or the actions of the individual themselves with the aim of attracting attention. The marketing scholar F. Kotler, in turn, defines image as “the perception of a company or its products by society. A specialist in the field



of management, O. S. Vikhansky, provides the following definition of image: “The phenomenon of image is a stable perception of the characteristics, distinctive qualities, and identities inherent in a particular phenomenon.”

A. B. Zverintsev understands image as “relatively stable representations of a particular object,” focusing on the development of communicative technologies. Such lists of proposed definitions could be continued. Their common drawback is that they are often superficial, excessively abstract, and do not fully reflect the essence of the phenomenon.

The English researcher E. Simpson, speaking about personal image, identifies three types of image depending on external and internal factors: self-image, perceived image, and required image. This typology reflects different perspectives on image — from the viewpoint of oneself and others, as well as from the standpoint of reality and expectation. Self-image is formed based on previous experience, and self-esteem reflects the current level of self-confidence. Perceived image refers to how others see us. Naturally, this perspective differs from the previous one. We often do not know how others actually perceive or characterize us. Required image means that certain professions demand specific image characteristics. In some cases, this is reflected in the type of clothing associated with a profession. For example, a military uniform or a royal crown are elements of image that indicate particular social roles.

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